

TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT
FEBRUARY 2000

ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE REINSPECTION MAY
2001

Yeovil College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- ◆ work-based training for all people over 16
- ◆ provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- ◆ the University for Industry's *learndirect* provision
- ◆ adult and community learning
- ◆ training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Grading

In summarising their judgements about the quality of provision in curriculum or occupational areas and about the quality of leadership and management, including quality assurance and equality of opportunity, inspectors use a five-point scale. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- ◆ grade 1 – outstanding
- ◆ grade 2 – good
- ◆ grade 3 – satisfactory
- ◆ grade 4 – unsatisfactory
- ◆ grade 5 – very weak.

SUMMARY

The original inspection of Yeovil College was carried out by the Training Standards Council's inspectors. The inspection resulted in less than satisfactory grades being awarded for hair and beauty, health, care and public services, equal opportunities and trainee support. These areas have been reinspected against the requirements of the *Common Inspection Framework* by the Adult Learning Inspectorate, which replaced the Training Standards Council on 1 April 2001. The sections of the original report dealing with hair and beauty, health, care and public services, equal opportunities and trainee support have been replaced with the findings of the reinspection. Also, the report summary, report introduction and introduction to the inspection findings have been updated and reflect the findings of the reinspection. Sections of the report, dealing with areas which have not been reinspected, have been left in their original form. The amended inspection report is published on the Adult Learning Inspectorate's website (www.ali.gov.uk).

Yeovil College's trainees have good work placements across all the occupational areas. The college provides good training in engineering and business administration. A high proportion of trainees in engineering remain on their programmes and achieve their qualifications. Employers provide good opportunities for trainees to progress in their careers. Trainees in business administration receive excellent training away from the workplace, with imaginative projects to develop their key skills. Training in hospitality is satisfactory, with programmes tailored to individual trainees and employers' needs. Training in hair and beauty was unsatisfactory at the original inspection and remains unsatisfactory. Although there are good resources at the salons and trainees have a clear understanding of NVQs, there is a low rate of achievement of apprenticeship frameworks. Training in health, care and public services is now satisfactory. Well-qualified staff supervise trainees closely in the workplace, and trainees receive effective training at college. At the original inspection arrangements to ensure equal opportunities were less than satisfactory but are now satisfactory. The college protects trainees from discrimination at college and requires employers to protect them in the workplace. Staff involved in work-based training have received training in equal opportunities. Support for trainees was less than satisfactory at the original inspection but is now satisfactory. Potential trainees receive useful information about the learning programmes available. Reviews of trainees' progress are satisfactory and appropriate targets are set. Management of training is satisfactory. The college identifies and meets employers' needs for specific skills. There is effective communication among the college's staff. Data relating to work-based training are difficult to obtain from the college's management-information system. Quality assurance is satisfactory, with frequent questionnaires, effective reviews of programmes and regular observation of the training given at college. However, the college does not use data on trainees' destinations to evaluate its programmes.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Engineering	2
Business administration	2
Hospitality	3
Hair & beauty	4
Health, care & public services	4

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	4
Trainee support	4
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	3

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Hair & beauty	4
Health, care & public services	3

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Trainee support	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective response to local employers' needs for skills
- ◆ high rates of retention and achievement in engineering
- ◆ wide range of good work placements
- ◆ good NVQ portfolios
- ◆ excellent staff development
- ◆ thorough initial assessments together with arrangements for appropriate support

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ slow rates of progress in childcare
- ◆ ineffective use of management information
- ◆ low rates of achievement of apprenticeship framework in hair and beauty

INTRODUCTION

1. Yeovil College is a tertiary college offering education and training to learners over the age of 16. It operates from two sites within the market town of Yeovil and serves Yeovil and a large rural area of south Somerset and north Dorset. The college employs 440 staff and has over 5,000 learners. The college's main source of funding is the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Higher-education courses account for 10 per cent of the training programmes. The work-based training is funded through Somerset Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). The original inspection covered programmes of work-based training for 327 trainees: 203 in engineering, 37 in business administration, 21 in hospitality, 10 in hair and beauty, and 56 in health, care and public services. At the original inspection, there were two New Deal clients following the full-time education and training option and a small number of trainees in five occupational areas which were not inspected. At the time of the reinspection, there were 300 trainees. The distribution of the trainees across the occupational areas was similar to that at the original inspection, except that the number of trainees in health, care and public services had fallen to 32. Yeovil College's staff carry out reviews of trainees' progress and are responsible for most of the training which takes place away from the workplace. Assessments are carried out by college staff or by work-based assessors.

2. Yeovil's travel-to-work area has a population of approximately 150,000. A large aerospace manufacturer and related engineering companies employ one third of the workforce. In Yeovil, the service sector is small but is likely to grow as the area develops economically as a subregional centre. There is a small food-processing industry in the small market towns surrounding Yeovil. The economy in Yeovil is growing strongly and the population is increasing. In 1998, the unemployment rate was 2 per cent, less than half the national average. In August 2001, this rate had not changed significantly. It is difficult to reach Yeovil College by public transport.

3. Less than 1 per cent of Somerset's population is from minority ethnic groups. In 1999, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 52.7 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. In 2000, the proportions were 55.3 and 49.2 per cent, respectively. In the Southwest, the proportion of school leavers who continue in education is low compared with the country as a whole. In Yeovil, this proportion has been approximately 67 per cent for the past three years.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. Before April 2001, the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) carried out yearly inspections of Yeovil College. The college is, therefore, familiar with the process of self-assessment in preparation for inspection. The college produced its first self-assessment report for the Training Standards Council (TSC) in March 1999. The vice-principal, business-development manager and curriculum managers attended a one-day training event and were involved, with the training co-ordinators, in the process of self-assessment. They submitted the finalised report to the college's quality assurance committee, which is chaired by the principal. In November 1999, Yeovil College produced its self-assessment report for the TSC's original inspection. This report included an action plan to rectify weaknesses. The college had rectified some of the weaknesses by the time of the original inspection. Yeovil College produced a further action plan as a result of the findings of the original inspection. In February 2001, the college produced a report on its progress in implementing the action plan. The college produced a further self-assessment report in August 2000. A revised version of this was prepared for the reinspection by the Adult Learning Inspectorate in May 2001.

5. The original inspection was carried out jointly between the TSC and the FEFC. Eight inspectors from the TSC spent a total of 34 days at Yeovil College. They interviewed 49 staff, 47 workplace supervisors, managers and trainers, and 89 trainees. They observed and graded instruction in the classroom, visited 54 work placements and examined trainees' files, management information and promotional material.

6. Four inspectors from the Adult Learning Inspectorate reinspected work-based learning at Yeovil College in May 2001 using the *Common Inspection Framework*, and spent a total of 12 days at the college. They interviewed 29 trainees and 26 workplace managers, supervisors and trainers. They visited 21 work placements and examined the college's new procedures, promotional literature and material used for induction and training. They observed one assessment in care and three reviews of trainees' progress.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at the original inspection:

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Engineering	2	5	3			10
Business administration	1	1				2
Hospitality		2				2
Hair & beauty		2				2
Health, care & public services		1		1		2
Total	3	11	3	1	0	18

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Engineering

Grade 2

7. There are 193 modern apprentices and 10 national trainees in engineering training. One hundred and two trainees are on mechanical engineering courses, all of whom were modern apprentices, apart from 10 national trainees. A further 23 modern apprentices are on electrical engineering courses, and the remaining 68 modern apprentices are on aeronautical courses. A large variety of engineering employers are available in the college's travel to work area. Size varies from the smallest company, in which one trainee works with the owner and four other skilled employees, to a large company with 70 trainees and more than 3,000 employees in total. Some employers have staff qualified to carry out assessments in the workplace. One of the employers also has an internal verifier. Most others rely upon the college to provide workplace assessments and internal verification. The college's engineering staff, who are located on two sites in Yeovil, provides most off-the-job training. A variety of programmes is offered. The college recruits a mix of company sponsored and non-sponsored trainees who undertake an intensive one-year programme of workshop training supported by part-time study during which they acquire theoretical knowledge. Six female trainees are on engineering programmes. There are no trainees with disabilities or from minority ethnic groups. Most strengths given in the self-assessment report were either considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice or were not agreed by inspectors. Two of the weaknesses were agreed and the third one had been resolved prior to the inspection. The inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ high retention and achievement rates
- ◆ good opportunities for progression
- ◆ wide range of good quality work placements
- ◆ good quality portfolios

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some weak assessment practices
- ◆ inconsistent teaching of key skills
- ◆ missed opportunities for co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ lack of understanding of NVQ process by trainees and employers
- ◆ poor resources for off-the-job welding training

8. Over the last three years, five trainees left their course early in 1998, four left early in 1999 and one in 2000. The total number of trainees on programmes in 1998 was 180, rising to 204 in late 1999. Over 95 per cent of these trainees completed their training. All trainees who completed their programmes achieved their qualifications. While these data were not readily available from the

management information system, they were readily obtained by the training co-ordinator from paper records. Employers and college staff encourage trainees to undertake additional training beyond that specified in their individual training plan. Many trainees take advantage of this opportunity and a wide range of courses is on offer. These include additional welder training, courses on abrasive wheels, on working with adhesives, overhead crane instruction, and higher certificate and diploma qualifications. Of the trainees, 90 are employed in companies which have annual appraisal of performance, including the acquisition of additional skills and qualifications. This can influence salary increases. This encourages trainees to continue learning.

9. Trainees are employed in a wide range of work placements. One trainee works with three skilled fitters and the owner of the firm in a remote farm building. They serve farmers up to 60 miles away by providing an immense range of engineering solutions for broken equipment. Elsewhere, 63 trainees work in a company with more than 3,000 employees in which newly recruited trainees are introduced to a variety of departments on the site. The different departments included electrical and mechanical subassemblies, as well as the final assembly of complex finished equipment which involves several weeks of work. During their time in each department trainees are assigned learning tasks which require them to work with others. The supervisor reviews their performance before they leave each area. These experiences enable trainees to make informed choices later in their training when deciding on their preferred final department for employment. Every workplace offered training in a broad range of skills. In total, the 203 trainees on the programme are working in 40 different companies.

10. Portfolios are well organised, clearly indexed and presented to a very high standard. One trainee, who was working in the technical design office of a company manufacturing large fabrications for the heavy construction industry, had established a high level of confidence among his managers. His portfolio contained copies of detailed parts lists and reports of site visits involving discussions with site engineers about technical specifications of the product to be fabricated. Minutes of the discussions had been faxed to the site and copies retained in the portfolio. Extensive use of a camera portrayed the manufacturing process at important stages, as well as recording the finished product. Other evidence not only adequately conveyed the skills acquired during the project but also showed evidence of his development of several key skills, including communications skills at higher levels, and competence in information technology.

11. Assessment procedures are sometimes poor. Some final year trainees within a few months of completion had not received an assessment for up to 14 months and had no units signed off. Other trainees approaching the completion of their training were receiving fortnightly assessment visits in an effort to complete both their work skill and key skill portfolios in time. Trainees who had started training within the last 18 months were being assessed on a six to eight weekly basis, with regular target dates being set. The assessment procedures now in place will benefit all trainees.

12. Training in key skills is not consistent. Some final year trainees are retrospectively reviewing their portfolios for evidence of their competence in key skills which they can transfer to their key skills portfolio. The last minute rush to complete the key skills portfolio causes a conflict of priorities for trainees who, at the same time, are completing the work skill portfolios and other off-the-job training. In contrast, some first year trainees, because they lack the skill and experience early on to collect evidence of their vocational skills due to the high precision of the employer's products, focus heavily on key skills. This applies where trainees are sampling each work area within the company. Meeting with people they have never met before to work on structured assignments encourages team working. Key skills are well integrated into NVQs in the second and third year of the programme.

13. Many employers and trainees show little understanding of the NVQ framework, the importance of key skills or the requirement to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training. The review and assessment sessions with trainees do not always include the employer who could be more involved in the trainee's training and progression through the programme. Because of this, some portfolio building is slow. An area in which there is good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is in the aeronautical engineering courses, in which the college works with a larger employer.

14. Several trainees expressed concerns about the lack of resources within the college's welding workshop. Training has been delayed or interrupted by frequent equipment failures, by a lack of appropriate test pieces for welding exercises, and a shortage of welding rods. Managers in the engineering department have agreed that new investments are required in the area. Additional resources have been approved and the problems are currently being addressed.

Business administration

Grade 2

15. There are currently 37 young people following programmes in business administration. Twenty-two are working towards level 2 NVQs in administration, 10 are working towards level 3 in administration, two are working towards level 2 in the use of information technology, three are working towards accounting NVQs. Of these, 10 are youth trainees, 12 national trainees, 13 modern apprentices and two New Deal clients. Eight trainees are employed by one large local company, which the training is carried out by the college in a training room on the employer's premises. The other administration trainees are employed or on work placements in local small businesses, and attend college one day a week for off-the-job training. The two information technology trainees are permanent employees of the college who are working as information technology support technicians. Trainees have the opportunity to obtain additional qualifications such as computer information and information technology, integrated business technology, mailmerge and textprocessing. Trainers and assessors are well

qualified and have relevant occupational experience. Over the last three years, a total of 116 trainees have started courses. Of these, 33 left their course early and 24 completed their programme. In 1997, five trainees achieved their full qualification and 13 left early, and in 1999, 13 trainees achieved their qualification and eight left their programme early. In 1999, 81 per cent of trainees obtained jobs and 75 per cent of trainees complete the programme. The self-assessment report gave a good picture of the training, but underestimated the positive impact on the trainees of high standard of the training and the strong links forged with employers. Some of the strengths given in the report were considered to be no more than normal practice, but the inspectors found additional strengths. The grade awarded was higher than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good integration of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ excellent off-the-job training
- ◆ imaginative projects for the development of modern apprentices' key skills

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ slow achievement rates of some trainees

GOOD PRACTICE

School leavers enrolling for programmes starting in September can achieve a certificate in computer and information technology (CLAIT) before starting their NVQ programme in September. They gain this by attending the drop-in office technology centre over the summer. This enables them to progress more quickly on their NVQ in September.

16. Trainees are carefully matched to their placement and receive a high level of support from their employers. They are visited by the training co-ordinator in the workplace on a three-monthly basis for written reviews with the employer. Unrecorded reviews and action planning take place weekly at the college. Training plans are regularly updated. The training co-ordinator works closely with employers to ensure that workplace training is dovetailed with off-the-job training and provides the trainees with schemes of work. One major employer recruits eight national trainees each year, using a number of individual and group selection methods to ensure the best fit for the job and the training. On-the-job training is planned so that trainees move from department to department to gain the experience required for particular NVQ units. Qualified workplace assessors are used where possible to maximise opportunities for on-the-job assessment. All employers are positive about the support received from the college and value the speed with which any issues are addressed by the training co-ordinator. The excellent relationships have resulted in mutual benefits. For example, one employer voluntarily extended a trainee's work placement by six months until she had finished her NVQ. For its part, the college screens suitable work experience candidates for the employer and this leads to permanent employment opportunities.

17. Off-the job training is of a high standard. The teaching is flexible, and takes place either on employers' premises or at the college in one of the workshops which have been recently refurbished with new computers and industry standard software. There is access to the Internet and e-mail, and paper resources include textbooks, reference books, and tailor-made learning packages. One large employer has a training suite in which the eight national trainees are trained by

college staff on a weekly basis. This employer works in partnership with the college, using its qualified assessors for on-the-job assessment. Trainees have access to the same type of training facilities as offered within the college. There is also an open learning centre in which the eight trainees have access to computer-based training packages to supplement their NVQ. The college trainers use a variety of learning techniques, including group sessions and one-to-one tuition.

18. Key skills are effectively integrated into the programmes of national trainees and modern apprentices from the start of the programme. The college timetables key skills sessions on a regular basis. Trainees are set challenging and interesting projects which help trainees produce evidence for key skills and their NVQ. One workplace project was to arrange an induction programme at head office for a group of recently recruited engineering apprentices. Another project was to make arrangements for the personnel manager to visit universities throughout the United Kingdom to recruit engineering trainees. The arrangements included organising speakers, refreshments and travel bookings. For trainees unable to complete projects at work, an imaginative project was devised in which day-release trainees were required to raise £1,000 from local businesses for cancer research, part of which involved planning a sponsored trip to Ireland. This involved correspondence, making travel arrangements and bookings.

19. Some trainees have taken a long time to achieve their NVQs. For example, two information technology trainees have been on the programme for over two years. Since the appointment of a new training co-ordinator a year ago, regular assessment has been arranged and the trainees are rapidly completing their training plan. Last year modern apprentices also made slow progress. More rigorous target-setting and action-planning have recently been introduced to enable all trainees to complete their NVQ as quickly as possible.

Hospitality

Grade 3

20. Yeovil College has 21 trainees in hospitality and catering. Of these 14 are modern apprentices working towards qualifications in general cookery, on-licensed premises supervision, hospitality services, food service, patisserie and multi-skill hospitality services. Of the five national trainees, four are working towards food preparation and one towards bar service qualifications. One New Deal client is undertaking a qualification in food and drink service and one other trainee is studying for a bar service qualification. All trainees are employed within the industry. The self-assessment report identified the major strengths and weaknesses within this area of work. Inspectors agreed with the main findings given in the report but also identified other strengths and weaknesses.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ variety of good work placements

- ◆ good access to supportive staff
- ◆ programmes developed to meet individuals and employers' needs

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor achievement rates
- ◆ unstructured on-the-job training

21. All trainees receive an interview prior to joining their training programme to assess their suitability for training and the appropriate level of programme. The NVQ process is explained in detail to both themselves and their employers, although some employers fail to have a full understanding of the process. A good induction programme follows this. An assessment of the trainees learning needs is undertaken where appropriate. Good course handbooks are provided for trainees by the college and there is also an employer handbook.

22. College staff have good vocational and training qualifications as well as comprehensive industrial experience. A detailed and well-documented staff appraisal and development system is closely linked to the demands of the curriculum. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities for training programmes. There is good communication between them which is often not recorded. Trainees are well supported by both college staff and workplace supervisors both of whom are readily available to them. Resources within the college are appropriate and reflect industry standards in food preparation and service. The variety of well-chosen work placements provides trainees with a good range of experiences. Resources within these work placements are generally of a high standard. Trainees receive appropriate learning materials during training. Written work is well marked with detailed comments on the trainees' progress.

23. Trainees work towards the appropriate standards which meet the requirements of the awarding body. The college's schemes of work are detailed and identify the intended outcomes but they do not always take full account of the trainees' experiences at work. Employers are provided with schemes of work for their own reference. Key skills have been integrated into the training programmes. Although there are good relationships between the college and the workplace staff, there is little structured training that takes place on the job. There is a lack of work-based assessment in food preparation. This results in missed opportunities to gather evidence of trainees' work-based competencies through the direct observation of trainees by assessors.

24. Trainees are encouraged to negotiate when their assessment should take place and to take responsibility for their own learning. Some trainees attend college one day a week and others are attending open learning programmes once every four weeks. This is for trainees for whom the necessary resources for training and assessment are not available within the college. Attendance by this mode has supported the policy of widening participation of trainees because the necessary resources were unavailable in some of the workplaces.

25. All trainees undertake qualifications in basic food hygiene and basic health and safety, in addition to their primary training goal. Assessments are well recorded. There is well-established process of internal verification, which is carried out both during and at the completion of the programmes. Programme reviews which are undertaken by the college are recorded and include clear action plans to help improve training programmes further. Targets for the achievement of both units and the full qualifications, and which are included in the trainees' individual training plans, are not sufficiently detailed or demanding and the lack of on-the-job assessment in some cases reduces the rate of achievement for some trainees. There are no targets set for the retention of trainees or for their achievements. In 1997-98, there were 14 trainees who started the course and four trainees who were continuing with their training. Of these, nine left without a qualification, resulting in a 50 per cent retention rate. For 1998-99, 14 trainees were recruited with nine continuing. Eight achieved a qualification and nine left without achieving a qualification resulting in a 61 per cent retention rate and a 40 per cent achievement rate. Retention has improved during the past three years. Trainees attendance is well monitored both at college and in the workplace.

Hair & beauty

Grade 4

26. There are eight trainees in hairdressing. Three are advanced modern apprentices and five are foundation modern apprentices. All the trainees are working towards NVQs at levels 2 or 3 and towards the key skills of communication, application of number and information technology. All the trainees are employed by salons within 15 miles of Yeovil. Most trainees find employment before they join the learning programme. All the trainees attend college for one day each week during term time. During July and August, trainees do not receive any training away from the workplace. There are, however, plans for the training co-ordinator to assess trainees in the workplace during these months. The training co-ordinator is a hairdresser and a member of the college's hairdressing team. She visits trainees in their workplaces to review their progress with their employers every 12 weeks. She now also gives training sessions in key skills every three weeks. In addition, trainees have the opportunity to meet with the training co-ordinator each week. Between 1997 and 1999, all the trainees left their training programmes early, having completed an average of 27 weeks' training. Between 1997 and 2000, 24 trainees started training. Of these, one trainee, who started in 1997, achieved an NVQ at level 2 in September 1999. A further seven of the trainees completed NVQs at level 1 in 1999, after approximately seven months' training, and are now working towards NVQs at level 2. For a period ending in July 1999, no trainee was able to gain a certificate because the awarding body temporarily withdrew its approval for the college to carry out assessments. Recently, however, the college has received a positive external verifier's report. Over the past two years, 12 trainees have started training. Of these, four have left early and three have achieved a level 2 NVQ, but none have achieved key skills. The proportion of trainees remaining on their programmes has improved, rising to

50 per cent in 1999-2000 and 75 per cent in 2000-01.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ absence of key skills training
- ◆ poor achievement rates at level 2 NVQ
- ◆ slow pace of learning and assessment
- ◆ weak co-ordination of off-the-job training

27. Since the original inspection, Yeovil College, has improved its training in key skills. However, it is too soon for this to have had an impact on the rate of achievement of apprenticeship frameworks. The rate of achievement of NVQs at level 2 is increasing. The co-ordination of training given at college and training in the workplace remains weak. The most recent self-assessment report identified four strengths and four weaknesses. All the strengths were the same as, and all the weaknesses were similar to, those identified at the original inspection. Inspectors agreed with three of the strengths and two of the weaknesses and identified a similar strength and two similar weaknesses. The inspectors awarded a grade lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-resourced salons
- ◆ good training at college
- ◆ clear understanding of NVQs by trainees
- ◆ good portfolios of evidence

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ late introduction of key skills in the programmes of some current trainees
- ◆ low rates of achievement of apprenticeship frameworks
- ◆ slow rates of progress
- ◆ weak co-ordination of training at college and training in the salons

28. Trainees work in well-resourced salons. The salons vary in size, in the treatments offered and in the clients they attract. Most are well equipped, with modern facilities and a good range of products for use in the salon and for retailing. Most trainees work alongside senior staff and have frequent opportunities to practise new skills on models.

29. The training given at college is good. It covers theory, key skills and practical skills in hairdressing. In 1999, the college moved practical training in hairdressing to a new salon on the ground floor. This salon has good resources for training, including a video recorder, a television, a large stock of practise heads and a well-lit area for demonstrations with carefully positioned mirrors. There is a large dispensary and an attractive display of retail products. The college markets the salon and the number of clients is increasing. Recently, trainees have benefited

from the support of a very experienced assessor in the practical sessions, as well as a trainer. Trainees' understanding of the assessment process has improved. This has enabled them to plan more frequent opportunities for assessment. In the weeks before the reinspection, there had been frequent assessments, both in the workplace and at college. The hairdressing team has recently introduced new systems and documents.

GOOD PRACTICE

NVQ logbooks are now at the front of trainees' portfolios. Trainees find the monitoring sheet contained in the logbook very useful. They are all aware of their current levels of achievement. This enables trainees to plan their own assessments.

30. The trainees have a clear understanding of the structure of their NVQs. They can explain how different hair treatments and their roles at work relate to the requirements of the NVQ. The college's trainers and the training co-ordinator help trainees to cross-reference clearly the evidence in their portfolios to the NVQ standards. The portfolios of trainees working towards level 2 NVQs contain good work, which is neatly presented and often produced using computers. Many trainees use computers at their homes because of the difficulty of travelling to college when the computer suite is open. Assessors make clear and helpful comments on trainees' work. The college introduced many procedures shortly before the original inspection, including internal verification and the planning of work-based assessment by the college's assessors.

31. At the time of the original inspection, the trainees were spending the first year of their training working towards the NVQ at level 1. This was delaying their achievement of units towards the NVQ at level 2. All trainees now work towards the level 2 NVQ from the start of their training. Some trainees have not yet had their competence assessed at tasks which they carry out regularly in the workplace. However, the new training co-ordinator is rectifying this by helping trainees identify opportunities for assessment in the workplace and carrying out assessments on Saturdays. The rate of achievement of the level 2 NVQ is increasing slowly. Since 1997, seven level 2 NVQs have been achieved. Since the original inspection, the college has introduced an initial assessment of trainees' key skills. Trainees now attend training in key skills every three weeks. The activities at these sessions are related to hairdressing. In addition, the college now issues trainees with workbooks to help them work towards key skills in their own time. Trainees now have a better understanding of how key skills relate to their jobs and to their NVQs. However, it is too soon for these recent changes to have had an impact on the rate of achievement of key skills. The rate of achievement of apprenticeship frameworks, therefore, has not increased since the original inspection.

POOR PRACTICE

The evidence which trainees gather for their portfolios for the level 1 NVQ in hairdressing is good. However, it is not cross-referenced to the standards for the NVQ at level 2. Nor is it accredited to enable trainees to achieve their level 2 NVQ more swiftly.

32. Since the original inspection, there have been some improvements to the co-ordination of training in the salons and training at college. The new process for reviewing trainees' progress involves the training co-ordinator, the trainer, the employer and the trainee. Employers are now aware of their trainees' achievements and short-term targets. Some employers now assist in planning work-based assessments. One workplace supervisor holds the assessors' award and plans to start carrying out work-based assessments. Another workplace supervisor has made arrangements to work towards the assessors' award. The college now asks employers to provide witness testimony. Employers, trainees and trainers now

receive termly reports on trainees' progress. Employers also receive information about their trainees' work for the coming term. The college now writes to employers when trainees fail to attend their training at college. However, many of these improvements are too recent to have affected trainees' rates of progress.

33. Despite recent improvements, the co-ordination of training at college and training at the salons remains weak. Although some employers' staff hold assessors' awards, the college does not use them to assess trainees in the workplace. Although the college's assessors carry out work-based assessment, there is little other use of evidence from the workplace. Some trainees ask their employers to help them develop specific skills to aid their progress towards the NVQ. However, the college and employers do not share information about training given at college and at the salons, and therefore, these are insufficiently linked. Staff at the college have little contact with trainees during the college's holidays.

Health, care & public services

Grade 3

34. Yeovil College has three advanced modern apprentices in care of the elderly. There are 29 trainees in childcare: 14 advanced modern apprentices, 13 foundation modern apprentices and two young people on programmes of other work-based learning. All these trainees are women. Trainees are referred to the college by the careers service or enrol directly from school. A programme which was offered by the TEC, which identifies trainees who are capable, with additional support, of achieving a level 2 NVQ, is the source of referral for most trainees on programmes of other work-based training. All the trainees are employed or have work placements. Their workplaces include nursing homes, residential homes, nurseries, primary schools and an independent preparatory school. Trainees attend Yeovil College for training on one day each week. Their training covers first aid, food hygiene and manual handling. The college's assessors carry out work-based assessments. In 1997-98, nine of the 19 trainees who left had achieved an NVQ. In 1998-99, 11 of the 27 trainees who left had achieved an NVQ. In 1999-2000, five of the 11 trainees who left had achieved an NVQ. In 2000-01, only one trainee has left without achieving an NVQ.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ limited implementation of key skills in NVQ programme
- ◆ weak assessment practices
- ◆ poor use of evidence for assessment
- ◆ missed opportunities to integrate on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ low achievement rates

35. Since the original inspection, Yeovil College has introduced weekly sessions on key skills. However, the training in key skills remains ineffective. The college has improved its practices in assessment since the original inspection and is now

using more work-based evidence. The involvement of employers in training continues to be weak, which prevents integration of training at college and training in the workplace. In childcare, trainees continue to make slow progress towards achieving their qualifications. The most recent self-assessment report identified five strengths and two weaknesses. Three of the strengths were the same as those identified at the original inspection and the other two strengths were closely connected to them. Inspectors agreed with two of the strengths and identified a new strength, relating to assessment and internal verification. Inspectors agreed with both weaknesses but considered one more appropriate to trainee support. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide variety of good work placements
- ◆ thorough assessment and internal verification
- ◆ good training at college

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ slow rates of progress in childcare
- ◆ weak involvement of employers in training
- ◆ ineffective training in key skills

36. Trainees' employers and work-placement providers give them many opportunities to acquire the skills required for their NVQs. For example, two trainees in childcare have assisted a teacher of literacy and numeracy at key stage 1. Occupationally qualified staff closely supervise trainees and provide useful advice. Some employers' staff have training and assessors' qualifications. They provide effective one-to-one training and good witness testimony. Some trainees have a structured programme of training in the workplace, involving external specialists in various areas. Trainees in childcare have a wide range of work placements, which offer training in the care and education of babies and children of up to eight years. Some work-placement providers operate after-school and holiday play schemes, which give trainees experience of working with children of different ages and with different needs. Work placements in childcare are well resourced. They contain a variety of books covering the theoretical aspects of the NVQ and offering guidance on activities for children of all ages. Trainees attend staff meetings. They learn about the requirements of the preschool curriculum and recognise the importance of good planning. Many trainees attend staff training given by specialists in play, for example training in play with sand and water.

37. Following the original inspection, and an external verifier's report which reinforced the points made by inspectors, Yeovil College reviewed its practice in assessment and internal verification. It has produced clear, step-by-step instructions for staff involved in assessment and internal verification. In addition, the college has produced an assessors' guide. Assessors have received clear instructions on using the new documents. The assessors plan assessments and

cross-reference the records of their observations to elements of the NVQ units and to the NVQ standards. Each assessor has a dedicated internal verifier to give support and guidance and to assure the quality of the assessor's work. There are regular internal verifiers' meetings to discuss common issues and to ensure a consistent approach. The team of six internal verifiers has devised thorough plans for sampling assessors' work, covering all trainees, all units of the NVQs and all methods of assessment. Internal verification has taken place more frequently in the past few months. The internal verifiers have observed all the assessors, except for one who has recently been appointed, and given them useful feedback. The senior internal verifier has dealt promptly and professionally with an incidence of poor performance.

38. Plans for the training given at college set out the topics to be covered by trainees over the coming year. This training covers topics required for NVQ units, for example, nutrition and diet for the elderly, the frail and for those with diabetes. In childcare, the training includes topics relating to supporting children's social, emotional and physical development. The training is well structured, linking practical activities to theory. There are good lesson plans and the lessons cover the knowledge required for the NVQ. The care suite at the college has up-to-date hoists, beds and practical equipment. There is good first-aid and childcare equipment and staff use their own children as models. In a survey of trainees across the college, all the trainees in childcare judged their training to be well organised.

39. Most trainees in childcare are making slow progress through their programme. Some trainees have had several assessors and have had gaps in assessment when assessors were ill or had left the college. For some trainees, there is infrequent assessment in the workplace. The assessors who assess understanding of theory are not co-ordinating their work with the assessment of practical skills. There were several examples of trainees submitting units three or four times before they met the required standards. Some assessors take up to four weeks to return work to trainees. One trainee had submitted a unit in early November 2000 and the unit had still not been signed off by the time of the reinspection. There is a lack of regular one-to-one meetings between assessors and trainees to review trainees' progress and to set achievable targets. Trainees on one programme in childcare, who are working towards an NVQ at level 3, have not completed any units after eight months on the programme, despite being capable in the workplace.

40. Although the college has recently produced a handbook for employers, employers are not fully involved in the training. Most do not fully understand the content of the NVQs and the apprenticeship frameworks and are not aware of the content of the training given at college. There are no effective systems to integrate the training given at work with the training given at college. Although employers receive termly reports from the college, they do not discuss these with college staff. The college is not making full use of employers' expertise. Some employers' staff are qualified assessors but they are not used to carry out work-based assessments.

41. Trainees now have training in key skills every week, but the training lacks structure and does not cover all the key skills units. Trainees who had poor skills in literacy at the start of their programmes have made little progress after 21 months at the college. The emphasis of the training in key skills is on completing assignments rather than on developing key skills and achieving the key skills award. Most assessment of key skills is based on assignments. Although trainees perform many tasks at work which demonstrate their competence in key skills, there is little work-based assessment. Most employers have little knowledge of key skills. Some trainees do not start to work towards key skills until late in their programmes. Internal verification does not take place until after all the key skills units have been completed. This slows trainees' progress and their achievement of the apprenticeship frameworks.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

42. Yeovil College has written equal opportunities policies covering both staff and learners. The equal opportunities policies and accompanying codes of practice are available to staff and learners through the college's intranet and in the college's study centre. In addition, the college gives trainees a handbook which includes information on equal opportunities. There is an action plan for implementing equal opportunities, which clearly assigns responsibilities. The college's strategic plan prioritises widening participation, lifelong learning and combating social exclusion. The college's charter outlines equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities, and procedures relating to learning support, complaints and appeals. New staff receive a copy of the policies, which include rights to parental leave. There is an inclusive learning committee, membership of which includes the principal. An equal opportunities working group, chaired by the vice-principal, reports to the inclusive learning committee. The equal opportunities working group carries out yearly reviews of the college's policies and procedures relating to equal opportunities. The profile of the college's staff reflects the local community, of which less than 1 per cent is from minority ethnic groups. The college collects and adequately monitors data relating to equal opportunities. The balance of men and women on the work-based learning programmes reflects traditional stereotypes. The college has attempted to remedy this by redesigning its prospectuses to contain more images of men and women in non-traditional roles. In addition, the college participates in a project to encourage women into science and engineering.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ no monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ poor understanding by employers and trainees of equal opportunities
- ◆ key staff not trained in equal opportunities

43. By the time of the reinspection, the college had introduced monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace and had provided training in equal opportunities for staff involved in work-based training. Although trainees' understanding of equal opportunities has improved, employers' understanding remains weak. The updated self-assessment report produced for the reinspection identified three strengths and two weaknesses. Inspectors did not agree with one weakness, concerning an imbalance of men and women on programmes. They agreed with the other weakness and all the strengths, and the grade given in the self-assessment report.

GOOD PRACTICE

The college has developed an open-learning programme in hospitality and catering to encourage participation by trainees who are unable to attend college on a day-release basis. The trainees are assessed at college by the college's staff.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ innovative developments to widen participation
- ◆ good protection for trainees against discrimination and harassment at college
- ◆ good training in equal opportunities for staff

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak understanding of equal opportunities by some employers

44. Several initiatives are underway to remove barriers to learning which are encountered by people living in the area served by the college. One project aims to raise the profile of women in engineering by using work-based trainees to help with marketing at schools' careers events. Women on programmes in engineering have women mentors from the engineering industry who provide support, encouragement and advice. Women who work as trainers in engineering provide positive role models in college and one of the large employers has a trainer in engineering who is a woman. Another initiative is a free, drop-in workshop in computing skills in Yeovil to encourage participation of under-represented groups. The college has obtained European funding to support women wishing to retrain and return to work. The college is making it easier for people from rural areas to follow its programmes by providing transport, distance-learning courses and outreach centres. There is good access for learners with physical disabilities to most areas of the college. At the time of the original inspection, one section of the area used for training in business administration, on a first floor, was inaccessible to people using wheelchairs. The college plans had installed this lift by the time of the reinspection.

45. Policies and procedures exist to protect staff and trainees against discrimination and harassment. The procedures clearly define unacceptable behaviour and explain how to use the procedures for complaints and grievances. They were used in a case of alleged racial harassment after a fight in the college's grounds. A few employers also have such policies. The college responds promptly to complaints. The complaints procedure specifies that complaints must be acknowledged within five days, an investigation carried out within 15 days and a reply sent. The most recent complaint was answered in just five days. A quality assurance committee monitors complaints, including those concerned with equal opportunities. Action plans are drawn up to resolve problems as necessary. Work-

placement agreements with employers and service level agreements now state the college's requirements relating to equal opportunities. The college monitors equal opportunities in the workplace at each progress review and makes a record of these discussions. The trainees' handbook now contains a section which covers equal opportunities fully. In September 2000, trainees who had started their programmes in previous years received an extract from the handbook covering equal opportunities. Trainees' awareness of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Some trainees have a very good understanding of equal opportunities and have influenced some small employers.

46. Since the original inspection, the college has introduced good training in equal opportunities for staff. The training co-ordinators, who carry out reviews in the workplace of trainees' progress, have all attended a day's training, which provided comprehensive information on equal opportunities. The training co-ordinators meet at least once each month and discuss equal opportunities regularly. One training co-ordinator has attended training organised by the TEC and has shared his learning with the other co-ordinators. Reviews of quality now cover issues relating to equal opportunities. One review identified a low awareness of equal opportunities among employers. The college followed this review with an action plan, which included the introduction of additional checks by training co-ordinators and the sharing of policies. All staff at the college, including part-time staff, have opportunities to attend training. A recent event for staff covered social inclusion. The college has planned further days of training, which will cover topics including equal opportunities and gender. The college evaluates its training.

47. Some employers still have a weak understanding of equal opportunities. The college has recently written to employers to emphasise the importance of equal opportunities, enclosing a clearly worded brochure. However, several employers do not have equal opportunities policies and are failing to protect trainees from discrimination.

Trainee support

Grade 3

48. Yeovil College recruits its trainees by referral from the careers service or directly from employers. The college markets its training through literature and by attending local careers events. The college interviews trainees and places them with suitable employers. Many local employers regularly employ trainees. All trainees follow a standard induction to the college. The college carries out an initial assessment of all trainees' basic and key skills and arranges additional help with basic and key skills for trainees who need it. The training co-ordinators in each occupational area review trainees' progress. All the support which is available to the college's students, is generally also available to trainees on programmes of work-based training. Counselling, financial advice and careers advice and guidance are available on the college's main campus.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ no systematic initial assessment of key skills
- ◆ inconsistent approaches to identifying additional support
- ◆ weak reviews of trainees' progress
- ◆ poor use of training plans to monitor trainees' progress

49. Since the original inspection, Yeovil College has considerably improved its support for trainees. The updated self-assessment report prepared shortly before the reinspection showed that the college had remedied the weakness identified at the original inspection relating to initial assessment of key skills and had made good progress towards remedying the other weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified in the updated self-assessment report and awarded the same grade.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ systematic and rigorous arrangements for recruitment
- ◆ comprehensive induction to training at college
- ◆ thorough initial assessments together with arrangements for appropriate support

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of rigour in some reviews of trainees' progress
- ◆ ineffective communication about trainees' progress

50. There are good arrangements for recruiting trainees. The college has produced a separate prospectus to promote work-based training, which is informative and attractively designed. Advanced modern apprentices give useful presentations to potential trainees, outlining their experience of work-based training. Potential trainees benefit from taster courses each spring, which give them experience of the various vocational areas. The college interviews trainees and places them with suitable employers. Parents of school leavers are involved in these interviews. The college maintains a list of suitable employers which regularly employ trainees. New trainees benefit from shadowing advanced modern apprentices at work and from having advanced modern apprentices as mentors. The quality of work placements is good. The college checks new work placements to ensure that they provide suitable opportunities for training and assessment and comply with requirements relating to health and safety.

51. The induction to the college is comprehensive. Trainees in all occupational areas have a standard induction. They receive relevant information about the facilities and services available at the college. Trainees also receive information about their specific programmes. Induction is also carried out at each stage of the training programme. The trainees and their employers complete a standard

checklist devised by the LSC relating to trainees' induction to the workplace. The training co-ordinators carry out induction to the workplace for trainees in some occupational areas.

52. It is a contractual requirement of the LLSC that all trainees undergo an initial assessment of their skills. The overall management and co-ordination of all aspects of initial assessment have significantly improved since the time of the original inspection. All trainees undergo an assessment to identify any requirements for help with literacy, numeracy and computing skills. The college feeds back the outcome of the initial assessments to trainees. The college has effective arrangements for referring trainees to other agencies for additional support. A drop-in service offering help with basic skills is available on the college's main campus for two hours each day. The college's trainers provide help with key skills during one-to-one sessions and, on a drop-in basis, through the college's learning-resources centre, which is open all week. Trainees who need to improve their skills in numeracy can attend the college's summer school in mathematics. Trainees also benefit from projects designed to improve their key skills of communication and information technology, such as the college's travel project.

53. The college has improved its arrangements for identifying the needs for learning support of trainees with specific learning needs or disabilities. These needs are identified by the trainees themselves, by the careers service or at interview by the college's staff. Each trainee completes an application form, on which they identify their needs for learning support. The training co-ordinator regularly reviews the progress of individual trainees who need additional learning support.

54. The college systematically assesses and records trainees' key skills at the start of their programmes. The college has a training centre for key skills, which is open both during the day and in the evening. Trainees can drop in to the training centre for help with gathering evidence and assembling their portfolios. The college now offers systematic training in key skills. Some of the reports on trainees' progress at college include a section on their progress in key skills. However, in some occupational areas, trainees do not start work on key skills until late in their programmes. Some trainees are unsure how to collect evidence of key skills and how key skills relate to their programme as a whole.

55. Staff at the college review trainees' progress at least as frequently as required by the LLSC. Since the original inspection, the college has improved its procedures for reviewing trainees' progress and the forms it uses for recording progress reviews. Overall, the quality of trainees' progress reviews has improved. Progress reviews are used to record trainees' achievement of elements of NVQ units and to set targets. Trainees are now receiving better feedback on the progress they need to make to achieve their qualifications and better guidance on collecting work-based evidence towards their NVQs. Employers take an active part in progress reviews. The college gives both trainees and their employers copies of the records of progress reviews. Employers now have a clearer understanding of

trainees' progress towards their NVQs. Most individual learning plans are regularly updated and used to structure training. In most areas, trainees are set short- and medium-term targets for training and assessment. This has led to some trainees making faster progress towards their qualifications. However, some reviews of trainees' progress are still weak. Some progress reviews are insufficiently thorough. Some trainees are not set clear short-term targets. There is inadequate communication between some trainees, assessors and training co-ordinators. Some trainees are unsure what stage of the programme they have reached and what they need to do next.

Management of training

Grade 3

56. Work-based training within the college is managed from the business development unit. It is headed by one of the assistant principals who sits on the senior management team and reports directly to the principal. The business development manager has responsibility for the management of the training co-ordinators. They are located within subject areas within each of the occupational areas which offer government-funded training schemes. The business development manager monitors the actions of the training co-ordinators and reports back to their line managers with any concerns. The training co-ordinators carry out reviews of all the trainees within their areas and organise placements and NVQ schemes relevant to the employer. College staff within each area manages assessment, except in the case of a major employer where the college subcontracts this function. Many policies and procedures apply to the whole college and extend to all staff, students and trainees. A particular procedure, which is applied by the business development manager, covers specifically the arrangements for work-based training. The college gained the Investors in People standard in December 1999. Inspectors agreed with most of the significant strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report and awarded the same grade as that given in the report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ relevant and effective staff development programme
- ◆ responsive to local employers' needs
- ◆ good understanding and support of college's values and policies by staff
- ◆ good internal communications

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak target-setting for courses
- ◆ ineffective use of management information
- ◆ unsystematic management of assessment

57. Staff receive rigorous annual appraisals from their line manager and actively contribute to the process. There is an interim review. Staff development is

designed to meet the strategic and operational needs of the college and is responsive to personal goals if they are relevant. During the appraisal staff development needs are discussed and referred to the staff development officer. Staff benefit from a significant investment in their development. The training offered is highly relevant to their employment and often directly benefits trainees. Recent training for training co-ordinators has included health and safety, key skills, accreditation of prior learning, internal verifier awards and assessment. There is a staff development plan which tracks achievements and identifies training still to be completed.

58. There is a range of links with the local community which give a strategic steer to the college. At principal level a meeting is held twice a year with four major employers in the area to discuss employment trends. The meeting includes a range of staff from the college. For engineering, the major area for work based training, there is an advisory committee comprising college members and representatives from 12 employers in the area. Care also benefits from a similar committee. This leads to an effective needs analysis for the college which is cascaded down to curriculum areas in order to identify where new courses need to be introduced or existing ones modified.

59. The college has a range of published procedures which are readily available and form the basis of the college's operations. The policies are working documents and staff refer to them regularly. Staff understand and acknowledge their value and relevance to the work of the college. The college has developed a particular set of procedures for work-based training. These are plainly worded and form the basis of the training.

60. There are effective internal communications. At least once a month the training co-ordinators for work-based training across the college meet, and the business development manager chairs the meeting. Minutes and actions points are recorded, good practice is shared and the meeting is an effective forum for problems to be discussed. This process has led to good progress being made in the management of training. There is one training co-ordinator for each area who is located in close proximity to the staff who carry out the training. Communications within the curriculum areas are good. In engineering and care the training co-ordinator to trainee ratio is high, with ratios of 1:160 and 1:56 respectively. In engineering external communications are particularly good. Employers can readily contact staff at the college and feel that their needs are dealt with at both a strategic and practical level. Many employers comment that the college is meeting the needs of their business and that the courses are appropriate. The college actively develops its public relations and attracts significant interest in the local press. There are no service level agreements between the business development manager and the curriculum areas with the result that there is no monitoring of performance standards against targets.

61. Although the college has impressive arrangements which enable it to identify strategic direction and analyse the market, these only result in general targets for

course numbers. No detailed or specific targets are set relating to recruitment to a particular course so as to meet the carefully analysed requirements of local employers.

62. The management information system currently used for work-based training does not clearly identify key data and is not completely familiar to staff. Staff have little confidence in it. Some curriculum areas have their own systems to record trainees' details and these data are not readily accessible to the business development manager. Achievement, retention and other data are difficult to produce in many cases.

63. The assessment of NVQs, unlike the review and co-ordination of trainees, is managed individually within the separate curriculum areas, and the business development manager has no responsibility for it. Across the college there are variations in assessment practices. Common standards have not been established and infrequent assessment is contributing to the trainees' slow progress. Assessors do not meet to share good practice.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

64. Yeovil College revised and re-issued its comprehensive quality framework in December 1999. The purpose of the framework is to improve quality by establishing standards and monitoring performance. Quality systems are to be reviewed each year to ensure continuous improvement. The business development unit, which has responsibility for TEC-funded trainees, devised quality procedures for the work-based training programmes. As these policies and procedures have only recently been introduced, the college has had little time to evaluate fully their impact on the quality of training. The overall monitoring of quality assurance is the responsibility of the academic board's quality committee. The implementation of the quality procedures within the college is devolved to the quality manager. The designated manager for TEC-funded trainees is located within the business development unit. Inspectors agreed with some strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report and identified others. The grade awarded was the same as that given by the college in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good evaluation of and response to employers' opinions
- ◆ effective programme reviews

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ an absence of targets
- ◆ no systematic use of data
- ◆ inconsistent internal verification procedures

65. The training co-ordinators work closely with their curriculum area manager and the business development manager. Fortnightly meetings are held between the business development manager and the co-ordinators. These are well recorded and action points are noted. The recent focus of attention of this group has been on the development of training programmes and their continuous improvement. Recent developments have been the production of the employers' handbook and trainees' questionnaires.

66. The college has introduced surveys of employers' views on the quality of training programmes. A 40 per cent return was achieved to these questionnaires. Responses clearly identified areas of concern. These included the need for more information for employers and a higher level of contact between employers and college staff to support training in the workplace. Actions, as a result of the surveys, have been identified with target dates for their achievement. Surveys of trainees' views on the quality of the programmes have also been introduced. The results are relayed to the staff in the curriculum areas. A college prospectus has been written specifically for the training programmes, as has an employers' handbook.

67. The quality assurance process incorporates the reviews programmes which are carried out at times throughout the training programmes by the curriculum areas. These reviews highlight aspects of programmes which need to be revised and define specific outcomes which have to be achieved by the curriculum areas.

68. The quality manager contributes to staff development and produces a report for to the quality committee. The college's observations of off-the-job training are clearly recorded, evaluated and contribute to programme development. The report produced for each curriculum area on observations was self-critical and identified development needs as well as commenting on the training environment.

69. Targets for the retention of trainees and their achievements have not been set. Trends cannot be monitored or analysed. The destinations of trainees are recorded, but there is little use of data in the evaluation of programmes

70. The quality manager is responsible for the internal verification procedures. Verification includes yearly observations of assessors but to date these have not been rigorously applied. Internal verification procedures are inconsistently applied across the college. New verification procedures have been introduced within care after a recent external verifier's visit. The vice-principal reviews external verifier reports and notifies the appropriate curriculum area of any action which needs to be taken.

71. The self-assessment report was the first to apply specifically to TEC-funded trainees within the college. It contained strengths and weaknesses as perceived by them. The procedures for compiling the report were clear and were agreed between the quality manager and curriculum areas. Staff were involved in the writing of the self-assessment reports and attended development days as part of the process.

Curriculum areas produce assessment reports which identify their strengths and weaknesses and include an action plan for their improvement. Inspectors found that some strengths were no more than normal practice. Additional strengths and weaknesses were identified. The grades which the college gave in the report were confirmed for engineering, hospitality, hairdressing, management of training and quality assurance. Inspectors awarded a higher grade than the college gave in the report for business and awarded a lower grade than that given by the college for care, equal opportunities and trainee support.