City College Brighton and Hove formerly Brighton College of Technology Training Agency

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 City College Brighton and Hove was carried out by the Training Standards Council's inspectors. The inspection resulted in less than satisfactory grades being awarded for construction and management of training. 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 construction and management of training 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).

City College Brighton and Hove, formerly Brighton College of Technology, provides good training in computer engineering and satisfactory training in hospitality, where there is good employer involvement, and in foundation for work. At the time of the original inspection construction training was unsatisfactory although the training in carpentry and joinery was good. The good training and assessment practice in carpentry and joinery is now shared effectively with the other construction training. Learners have access to the full range of college facilities. There is now satisfactory assessment in the workplace. Some learners face delays starting their training because of the fixed start dates of the college's academic year. Equal opportunities is widely promoted although access to the college is poor for learners with mobility difficulties. The college has recently won funding to rectify this. The college has a sound planning system, which includes the planning of work-based learning. At the time of the original inspection, the college did not adequately integrate the on- and off-the-job training and there was not enough co-ordination between the college's work-based learning unit and the curriculum areas. All training is now integrated and data are used effectively as a basis for management decisions. Quality assurance does not fully cover the work-based learning but there are many good examples of continuous improvement.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	4
Engineering	2
Hospitality	3
Foundation for work	3

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Construction	2

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Management of training	3

KEY STRENGTHS

♦ excellent carpentry and joinery training

♦ high achievement of computing qualifications

♦ good partnerships with employers in hospitality

♦ wide promotion of equal opportunities

♦ learners make good use of college facilities

♦ many examples of continuous improvement

KEY WEAKNESSES

♦ some learners' slow progress

♦ low achievement of jobs

♦ inadequate work placements in foundation

♦ underdeveloped quality assurance system for work-based learning

♦ poor retention and achievement rates

INTRODUCTION

1. City College Brighton and Hove (the college) is a general further education college on the south coast of England. It serves the towns of Brighton and Hove, which together have a population of 250,000 people. It has been providing educational courses for over 100 years and offers training from foundation level to higher national diplomas. At the time of the original inspection, the college had seven sites, which have now been reduced to six. Some accommodation was poor but the college has just implemented a major new building strategy. This will give the college a single, more accessible campus. At the time of the original inspection there were 1,624 full-time and 15,000 part-time students. There are now 1,555 full-time and 14,144 part-time students. The college held a contract for nine years with Sussex Enterprise, the local training and enterprise council, for work-based training. The contract is now with the Sussex Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college had 100 learners at the time of the original inspection, of whom two learners were in agriculture, 15 in construction, 37 in engineering, 18 in hospitality, two in hair and beauty, three in media and design and 23 in foundation for work. Fourteen learners were modern apprentices, nine were national trainees, 34 were youth trainees and 43 were adult trainees. Inspection focused on the four areas with the most learners. The college also provides the full-time education and training option for the Brighton and Hove New Deal Unit of Delivery. There were 57 clients on 11 vocational courses. There are now 27 learners, of whom 12 are foundation modern apprentices, four are advanced modern apprentices and 11 are on national vocational qualification (NVQ) training. These are in the areas of learning of land-based provision, construction, engineering, hospitality and foundation for work. The are also 21 adults doing work-based learning and two New Deal clients on the full-time training and education option.

2. The Sussex economy is healthy and is particularly strong in advanced technology, manufacturing, hotels and visitor attractions. The college has benefited from the economic growth in recent years and the need to recruit skilled staff. The college works within the 'Education Action Zone' for east Brighton, intended to raise the standard of education in this socially deprived area. Brighton and Hove have figures higher than the national average for residents claiming income support and housing benefit. People from minority ethnic groups account for less than 4 per cent of the population. At the time of the original inspection 6.5 per cent of the adult population was unemployed and nearly 20 per cent of unemployed young people had been out of work for more than 26 weeks. In June 2001, unemployment in Brighton and Hove had fallen to 3.9 per cent, although this was still above the national average of 3 per cent. Of the unemployed people in Brighton and Hove, 13.9 per cent were aged between 18 and 24 in June 2001. Seventy-two per cent of firms employ fewer than five people and account for just over 13 per cent of local employment. A survey conducted in January 2000 by the local training and enterprise council (TEC) identified skills shortages in the information technology, management, customer care, languages, advanced

engineering and electronics areas, particularly at level 3 and above.

3. In 1999, the proportion of school leavers in Brighton and Hove achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 42.1 per cent, below the national average of 47.9 per cent. In 2000, this rose to 43.7 per cent compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent. Of 16-year-old school leavers in 2000, 74 per cent stayed on in full-time education and training, 5 per cent went into employment, 15.5 per cent registered as unemployed and the remaining 4.5 per cent went into work-based learning.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. The college produced its self-assessment report in December 1999 and updated it in February 2000. A self-assessment report was also produced for the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), whose inspection took place at the same time as the Training Standards Council's inspection. Self-assessment is part of the college's quality assurance procedures. The director for curriculum and quality and the training agency manager produced the self-assessment report. The work-based training report was similar to the FEFC report and included some of the same strengths and weaknesses. Some of the strengths were not evaluative enough. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given by the college for engineering, hospitality, foundation for work, trainee support and quality assurance. Construction, equal opportunities and management of training were awarded lower grades. Construction and management of training were less than satisfactory. The college produced a post-inspection action plan after the original inspection, covering the strengths and weaknesses identified. A new self-assessment report was produced for the reinspection. Inspectors awarded the same grade as in the self-assessment report for management of training but awarded a higher grade for construction.

5. For the original inspection, six inspectors spent a total of 24 days at the college in March 2001. They interviewed 63 learners, 24 employees and 53 college staff. They visited 26 work placements and observed seven training sessions. Inspectors reviewed learners' files, portfolios of evidence, management information, curriculum and assessment material, internal and external verifier records and policies and procedures.

6. The reinspection was carried out by two inspectors for six days in August 2001. They interviewed 10 learners, six employers and 19 college staff. They visited seven work placements. Inspectors reviewed computer records and documents including databases, the college's strategic plan, staff development plans, learner's files and individual learning plans, external verifier reports and course manager's files.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at the original inspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Construction	1	0	0	0	0	1
Engineering	0	1	1	0	0	2
Foundation for work	1	1	1	0	0	3
Total	**2**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**6**

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction   Grade 2

7. There are 13 learners on construction training programmes, 12 of whom are modern apprentices. They are working towards NVQs at level 2 and 3 in electrical installation, carpentry and joinery, plumbing and painting and decorating. There are three advanced modern apprentices in electrical installations, the remainder are foundation modern apprentices of whom eight are carpenters and joiners, one is a plumbing apprentice and one is a learner following an NVQ at level 2 in painting and decorating. Learners attend college for one day a week for the off-the-job training during term time. Carpentry and joinery learners are assessed both in the college and in the workplace. They are involved in conversion and refurbishment work in a range of domestic premises. Electrical installations learners are doing domestic installations, designing control systems and maintenance work and painting and decorating learners are refurbishing houses and flats. All work is completed to industry standards.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were;

♦ missed opportunities for work-based assessment
♦ NVQ at level 2 offered but not accredited
♦ poor facilities for painting and decorating
♦ good practice not shared between crafts

8. In its action plan after the original inspection the college identified how to improve the quality of training and assessment. These weaknesses have all been put right. At the time of the original inspection, electrical installation learners did not receive work-based assessment and their work did not cover the requirements of the NVQ they were supposed to be working towards. They now receive work-based assessment and their NVQ work is now accredited. Resources in painting and decorating have been improved and are now satisfactory. Regular team meetings now take place across all areas to enable teams to discuss and share good practice. Inspectors awarded a higher grade for this occupational area than in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

♦ good range of workplace training opportunities
♦ excellent training and assessment in carpentry and joinery
♦ effective links with employers

WEAKNESSES

♦ lack of flexibility in starting training programmes
♦ slow progress towards qualifications in painting and decorating

♦ poor training materials in painting and decorating

9. Most learners have good on-the-job training in a range of work placements. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. Of the 10 learners that had started as foundation modern apprentices from 1999 to March 2001 only one has left early without any qualifications, three have completed the framework and six are still in training. Employers provide a wide variety of opportunities for learners to develop their skills. Employers are given information about the NVQs and they are encouraged by tutors at learners' progress reviews to discuss training and assessment opportunities. Employers have good awareness of NVQs and the role of work-based assessment. One electrical installation learner's training was limited by the range of work available at their work placement. The college found the learner an alternative company to provide a wider range of training and assessment opportunities. Two electrical installations assessors have been appointed to visit and assess learners in their workplaces. Learners in these work placements are now making good progress towards achieving their NVQs.

10. Carpentry and joinery training and assessment are excellent. Workshop facilities are of a high standard and include a good variety of equipment and have areas set up for learners to practise different methods. The work produced by learners both on and off the job is good and learners' portfolios of evidence are of a high standard. This enables assessors to assess learners as they learn new skills. The internal verification procedure in carpentry and joinery is thorough. During the last three years learners have achieved awards from the awarding body for outstanding achievement and the Sussex apprentice of the year competition. The college's carpentry and joinery training has been recognised by the awarding body as a centre of excellence. During the last six months, assessors from the college have visited learners in the workplace and work-based assessment has been improved. Tutors now carry out learners' progress reviews and use the review to identify assessment opportunities. They also take photographs of the work learners are doing and encourage learners and employers to identify assessment opportunities in the workplace. Learners are given a copy of the photograph, to which they have to add a description of the work being done. The tutor keeps a second copy with a description. A further strength of the review process is that the learners' individual learning plans are updated at each meeting. This process works effectively. This helps to improve the links between on- and off-the job-training. Key skills training is well integrated with the learners' assignment and project work and it is also dealt with in the progress review process. The college encourages learners and employers to identify how learners are meeting their key skills requirements in their everyday work. Learners' progress in key skills is now adequately monitored. Assessment is well planned and systematic. Records are comprehensive and well maintained. Learners understand the NVQ standards and know how they are progressing.

11. Training in electrical installation at the time of the original inspection, was delivered well but focused on the traditional craft qualification rather than the

NVQ. The college is now accredited to provide training for the NVQ at level 3. The appointment of an assessor has enabled assessment to take place at learners' workplaces. This is being carried out in the same way as in the carpentry and joinery section. Key skills training has been developed since the original inspection and is now well established. Work-based learners have on-site assessment documents to use for their key skills qualifications.

12. The college has developed effective links with employers since the original inspection. This has been done by sharing the good practice identified in the carpentry and joinery training. College staff co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training well. Employers recognise the importance they have received from tutors and the review and assessment visits have given them a greater understanding of the NVQ process. As a consequence, the training opportunities available are good and help learners with their NVQ training.

13. Recruitment to construction training courses is not flexible enough. The recruitment period remains linked to the traditional college academic year. Prospective learners are only able to join courses at certain times of the year.

14. There is slow progress towards achievement of NVQs in painting and decorating. The one learner still in training has not achieved any NVQ units after two years. The retention rate for training in painting and decorating is poor. Although the training areas have been refurbished and improved, many of the training materials are outdated. The college has access to up-to-date construction national consortium materials, but they are not currently being used in this training area. Learners have no access to the library as it is in the main college buildings on another site.

GOOD PRACTICE
In the carpentry and joinery section learners' achievement of the first unit of their NVQ is celebrated by the blowing of a hooter.

GOOD PRACTICE
Work-based assessment opportunities are developed through the review process, which is carried out by tutors. Learners and employers are encouraged to identify assessment opportunities including any key skills these are recorded. Assessment is then arranged and recorded using a format, which is supported by photographic evidence of the process. Tutor and learner discuss the outcomes and the learners training plan is updated.

Engineering   Grade 2

15. There are 35 adult trainees in engineering and two youth trainees in motor vehicle engineering. The motor vehicle training was not inspected because of the small number of trainees. Adult trainees are recruited by referral from the Employment Service and in response to local newspaper advertisements. There is a selection procedure consisting of an interview and a formal test. Once trainees have been accepted onto the course they are given an open learning pack to complete before the course starts. Trainees work towards a higher national certificate (HNC) in either computer engineering (hardware) or computer software engineering. The training lasts 12 months and starts in January. Training is carried out in college premises. During the summer trainees have a 10-week work-placement. College staff visit trainees during this period. Trainees are assessed using periodic assignments and an end-of-course project. The last two weeks of the course are spent on job-search activities. Inspectors identified additional strengths to those identified in the self-assessment report and awarded a grade equal to that

given by the college.

STRENGTHS

♦ Effectively planned and taught training

♦ Good open learning material

♦ High achievement of qualifications

WEAKNESSES

♦ Inadequate resources

♦ low achievement of jobs

GOOD PRACTICE
Some course material is available through the college's intranet. Students can download all or part of the material when and if required from remote terminals. This innovative practice makes teaching material accessible at any time from any location.

POOR PRACTICE
The engineering computing room is used for both practical and theoretical training. This means equipment cannot be left out when training is switched to theoretical work and trainees have to set up equipment before they are able to resume their practical activities.

16. The training programmes for both courses are well planned. Trainees receive a schedule for the whole year which shows the units to be achieved, the 10-week work placement and the weekly programme. This information is also available on the training room wall and on the college intranet site. All trainees have access to the college intranet. Trainees and the training agency identify work placements. Trainees apply to placement employers as if they were applying for permanent employment. Curriculum staff help trainees prepare curricula vitae and give advice on techniques for interview. Staff also promote full-time jobs for trainees by pointing out job advertisements and working with trainees on their applications. Staff are well qualified and provide effective teaching. Trainees are enthusiastic and motivated by this training. Lessons are well organised and trainees are involved at all stages of lessons. This applies from software engineering, where trainees develop computer programmes individually on screen, to practical sessions in computer engineering, where trainees identify and rectify computer faults. Practical facilities are available up to 8.30 p.m. each day and tutors make themselves available for help and advice outside normal teaching hours. Where possible trainees use their work placement experience as a basis for their practical project. This project is assessed as part of the course. Trainees' progress is reviewed each term and a report produced for the training agency manager.

17. When trainees are accepted onto the programme they receive an open learning booklet. Most trainees have not studied for some considerable time. The open learning material helps trainees to revise their study skills and prepares them for the course. The booklet and an associated test are used during the initial stages of training. Two professional training manuals covering theoretical knowledge have been produced for computer engineering students. The material has also been placed on the college intranet. Students can access this facility from home or other remote locations.

18. The two training rooms are not conducive to good learning. The software laboratory has poor ventilation. The computer engineering room is used as a

classroom for theoretical training in addition to being used as a practical training room. Computers under test and repair are piled in corners of this room when trainees have theoretical training and brought out when the training is practical. Some benches face the wall and students have to turn round to see the white-board. Trainees have difficulties in taking notes in such circumstances. Transparencies cannot be projected onto the screen because the room has been rearranged since the screen was installed. During practical sessions the room is exceptionally crowded when trainees work on computers. Trainees have difficulties seeing what is on the computer screen when the tutor is illustrating particular points. It has been recognised for some time that an on-screen video projector for both training rooms would be beneficial for trainees' learning. One was delivered during the inspection. In computer engineering there is a shortage of up-to-date computers and component parts to industrial standard. Normal practice is for two trainees to work on one computer.

19. The trainees' achievement of jobs is low. Over the four-year period between 1996 and 1999 (inclusive) a total of 103 trainees started training. Of the 71 of those who completed their training, 61 gained a higher national certificate qualification and 29 (28 per cent) gained jobs. In computer engineering, a total of 87 trainees started their course over the same period. Of these, 65 completed their programme and 54 of these gained their higher national qualification. Over the comparable period 45 (52 per cent) gained permanent employment within six months of completing the course. Information technology is, however, a high employment area in Brighton. All trainees from both courses had been unemployed for at least six months before starting the course. Most have not been employed for considerably longer. One trainee had been unemployed for five years.

Hospitality   **Grade 3**

20. There are 18 trainees in hospitality. Eleven are modern apprentices, five are national trainees and two are on other youth training programmes. Twenty-seven trainees have been recruited in the last two years. Nine trainees have left the programme before completing their training plans. Trainees are recruited from the careers service or referred from employers. Twelve of the trainees are part of the Brighton and Hove Hospitality Partnership (BHHP), a specific initiative involving local employers. Most trainees attend college one day each week for practical kitchen and theory sessions. Assessment and verification are carried out in the college. Assessments are supported by witness statements from the employers. Two work-based supervisors are working towards their assessor awards. Inspectors did not agree with the strengths identified in the self-assessment report and regarded some as no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified additional strengths and awarded the same grade as that given in the report.

STRENGTHS

♦ good range of work placements

♦ innovative partnership for training

♦ good key skills training

WEAKNESSES

♦ slow progress by some trainees

♦ inadequate resources for training

♦ inadequate support for work-based assessors

♦ some unrealistic NVQ targets set

21. There is a good variety of work placements. Trainees gain a range of experience in kitchens, front of house, housekeeping and restaurants including experience in four- and five-star hotels. Trainees also work towards company-specific qualifications including food hygiene, health and safety and customer service.

22. The BHHP initiative is a good example of employers working together. Numbers involved in the project are small but hoteliers have overcome the traditional barriers of competition with each other to plan and implement a well structured training programme, which provides competent and qualified staff. Trainees receive nearly all of their training on the job but come into college for key skills training. A college assessor and the training agency manager visit trainees in the workplace. Trainees are selected by a joint college/employer panel. Training is planned, lasts three years and leads towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in hospitality. Trainees spend six months in each department within a hotel; those who successfully complete the training are offered jobs with the BHHP. The seven trainees not on the BHHP initiative are working towards an NVQ at level 2. Individual training plans are completed and used in the reviews. These are carried out by the hospitality assessor and the training agency manager.

23. Key skills training is carried out by the training agency's key skills assessor. She has visited most trainees in the workplace and identified areas for collecting evidence. She also advises work-based assessors on opportunities for key skills assessment. Trainees attend college one day a month for key skills training with an emphasis on information technology training.

24. Some trainees make slow progress towards the NVQ. During the last two years only four trainees on the BHHP project have successfully achieved an NVQ at level 2. Recruitment for the BHPP is limited to eight trainees per year. Thirty per cent of trainees withdraw from training, which is typical for this industry. Trainees have given long hours, anti-social hours and wages as some of the reasons for leaving the programme. Some trainees do not regularly attend the college for training but college staff and employers are working together to

increase attendance. College staff tell the employers when trainees do not attend or are late and employers then talk to trainees about this. Employers remind trainees of the date of the training day in advance.

25. There are some inadequate resources to support the college-based training and assessment. Some equipment is in need of replacement to reflect industry standards. Some trainees do not have sufficient knives, uniforms and textbooks. The kitchen facilities are clean and are maintained in good order.

26. There is one college assessor to visit the trainees, assess them in the workplace and advise the staff who are working towards assessor qualifications. Four hours a week are allowed for these duties. It is insufficient to effectively support and monitor the workplace supervisors. Sometimes the assessor has only been able to see one trainee within the four hours because he also advises the supervisor, discusses any issues with managers and carries out an assessment. There is little sampling of work-based assessment to ensure the quality of assessment. Inspectors were unable to identify adequate verification records for the work-based trainees.

27. Some of the targets set for trainees are too demanding. The modern apprentices working towards an NVQ at level 3 do not have the supervisory opportunities to gain the award. Unless the trainees are promoted or seconded for long periods they do not have the opportunity to gain the necessary experience.

Foundation for work   **Grade 3**

28. There are 23 young people on the foundation for work programme. This is aimed at trainees with additional learning needs and 25 per cent have statements of special educational needs. Many trainees also have behavioural problems. Initially, trainees attend a full-time college-based programme and work towards wordpower and numberpower at entry level and an NVQ at level 1 in information technology. The programme also provides training in work-related skills such as jobsearch, interview skills, communications and personal development. In addition, all trainees undertake vocational tasters on one or two days a week; this can lead to an NVQ at level 1 in an occupational area. This is in addition to the NVQ in information technology. Trainees are currently working towards NVQs in catering, business administration, motor vehicle maintenance, and horticulture. Training is also available in construction. Additional support needs are identified through the college's screening process. Arrangements for support are then agreed with the trainee and provided by the college's learning support unit. The self-assessment report identified strengths and weaknesses, some of which were regarded by the inspectors as normal practice and some they did not agree with. The grade awarded by inspectors was the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

♦ effective skills development

♦ comprehensive and effective review of trainees' progress

♦ effectively set targets

WEAKNESSES

♦ some trainees following inappropriate NVQs

♦ inadequately structured progression for trainees

♦ insufficient work placements

29. All trainees follow an individual timetable which is designed to develop their basic, job-related and occupational skills. Sessions are well planned and taught and use a range of resources and activities to maintain trainees' interest. Training rooms are well equipped. Tutors ensure that activities are available at different levels so that trainees can work at their own pace. Many of the teaching resources have been prepared by staff specifically to meet the needs of this group. Staff are appropriately qualified and some of the vocational tutors also have expertise in basic skills and learning support. They use aspects of the occupational training to develop trainees' literacy and numeracy skills. Group sizes are small and some sessions use a team teaching approach to increase the level of individual attention. The work produced by trainees shows clear evidence of the development of their skills. Attendance is good and trainees understand that regular attendance is an important part of gaining a job.

30. Trainees' progress is monitored effectively by means of a tutorial every fortnight and a progress review meeting every 12 weeks. The training agency manager conducts progress reviews with the course co-ordinator and the trainee. Discussions are conducted on a one-to-one basis and as a group. Trainees build a strong working relationship with their personal tutor and are confident about discussing personal and confidential matters in the tutorial. The college's curriculum area of 'Entry Level' and 'Learning Development' is responsible for the tutorials and for the personal development aspects of the programme. The course co-ordinator from this area has recently been allocated time to liaise with tutors in the vocational areas to discuss trainees' progress. This co-ordination is working well and trainees have a clear understanding of their progress on the different parts of their programme. Occupational tutors provide written reports every term and these are used in the formal progress reviews.

31. Trainees have short-term targets for all aspects of their development, such as managing their anger and improving their eye contact with others. Tutors regularly remind trainees of the targets during training sessions. Successful achievement of targets is celebrated during tutorials and weekly staff meetings. College certificates are also used to recognise personal progress. Trainees see the target-setting as an adult approach to managing their own development. They are clear about the

benefits of achieving their targets and are highly motivated to achieve.

32. All trainees are encouraged to gain one or two NVQs at level 1. In some cases, this has led to trainees undertaking NVQs not linked to their career aim. In a few cases, training is not available in the trainees' chosen areas. All trainees undertake the NVQ at level 1 in information technology. However, the full NVQ is not appropriate for all trainees. There has been some disruptive behaviour in information technology sessions. There have also been problems in obtaining work-based evidence for the NVQ; an alternative accreditation route such as the key skills unit in information technology is not offered.

33. Trainees work towards qualifications for two years. This is not appropriate for some trainees. Many trainees see progression into a job or mainstream training as their primary goal. In the year 1999 to 2000, only 35 per cent of trainees completed their plan. The college has only just started to record the destination of trainees in foundation for work. Achievement rates have increased over the last three years. Of the 17 leavers in the year 1999 to 2000, 53 per cent achieved wordpower and numberpower qualifications at entry level. This is an increase of 14 per cent on the previous year. In the same group of leavers, 35 per cent also achieved an NVQ at level 1. This is an increase of 18 per cent on the previous year but is still below the average NVQ achievement rate for the region.

34. Only two trainees are in commercial work placements and two are placed with non-profit making organisations. A further six are in work placements within the college. These provide a sheltered environment, which is helpful in some cases. For some trainees it is the only work experience they gain on the programme. Some trainees in their second year on the programme have not had an external work placement. Most NVQ training and assessment takes place in the college and there is little use of work-based evidence. Although trainees do achieve their NVQs in the college environment many have little real work experience to increase their employability.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities   Grade 3

35. The college has a stated commitment to equality of opportunity for students and trainees. Each trainee and client receives a copy of the college's charter. The college has an established equal opportunities policy, which is reviewed periodically by an equal opportunities group. The group monitors equal opportunities across the college and makes recommendations as necessary. There is a formal complaints procedure for staff and students. The deputy principal monitors complaints. Trainees are regarded as part of the student body and treated as students. The self-assessment report identified six strengths, the inspectors agreed with two of them. Inspectors agreed with both of the weaknesses but

identified that failure to address gender imbalances in some courses was an additional weakness. The grade awarded by the inspectors is lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

♦ well-promoted equal opportunities policy

♦ cross-college forum reviews equality of opportunity

WEAKNESSES

♦ poor access for trainees with mobility difficulties

♦ no monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace

♦ no targeting of under-represented groups

GOOD PRACTICE
An engineering and construction initiative for year-10 to year-12 schoolgirls has been carried out. It involved site visits and investigations coupled with college follow-up simulation work. This is good practice because it is an attempt to encourage applicants to address gender imbalances in perceived male-dominated industries.

36. The college's commitment to equal opportunities is set out in its mission statement, and in the student's charter which is issued to all trainees. It is widely promoted to students and trainees in the student's handbook and on college notice boards. The training agency offers interviews to all potential trainees and offers training from foundation level to level 3 NVQs and higher national certificates. Complaints are recorded on a database and monitored by the deputy principal.

37. A cross-college committee reviews the equal opportunities policy and recommends changes where appropriate. The committee is chaired by the human resource director and membership consists of all curriculum directors and assistant directors, student representatives and representatives of the college's support services. Unfortunately the manager of the training agency does not sit on this committee. The committee meets at least once each term to review the policy and practice and recommend improvements. This forum has been instrumental in recommending monitoring of applicants for staff jobs and was also responsible for a staff survey in 1999 regarding equality of opportunity.

38. The college is a multi-site organisation with a variety of different types of accommodation. It is old and many of the sites have poor access for people with mobility problems. One building is Victorian and has a large number of internal steps between landings and half landings. For people with mobility difficulties this prevents access to engineering courses, which are held in this building. Potential trainees are encouraged to apply for similar courses which are held in more accessible buildings within the college campus, or are referred to another local college with greater access. The college identified its access problem in its self-assessment report. It has just been awarded funding from the FEFC to make the college a one-site campus, accessible at all levels. The building work will start this year and is due for completion in 2002.

39. Many employers are not aware of the college's equal opportunities policy.

Many said that they supposed the college has a policy but they did not know what it contained. Part of the contractual agreement between the college and employers is designed to ensure that employers are aware of the college's policy. The college does not monitor the understanding or implementation of equal opportunities by employers. Trainees are given a copy of the policy at their induction. The college does not routinely monitor their understanding of the policy. Most trainees interviewed have a good awareness of the grievance and complaints procedure.

40. There are no women on the engineering or construction programmes. The one woman trainee from this year's engineering programme left the course early. Photographs used to promote engineering and construction courses in the college's full-time prospectus reinforce stereotypical gender images. The pictures show no women. Course brochures and newspaper advertisements for engineering do not mention that the college is an equal opportunities employer; they do not target women. There are few women applicants for this training.

Trainee support   Grade 3

41. Trainees are recruited to the college by three main routes. Foundation trainees are referred by the local careers service, national trainees are recruited from school visits and job fairs and modern apprentices are referred by employers. All trainees go through a standard basic skills selection test and an interview by the training agency manager. There is a training agency induction which can last up to three days depending on individual trainees' need. Trainees are given the students' handbook and a separate induction handbook, which outlines their rights and responsibilities. Following induction, trainees are referred to the curriculum areas for separate assessment tests and an occupational induction. Progress reviews take place every 12 weeks and are conducted by the training agency manager. Many of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report were no more than standard practice. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given by the college.

STRENGTHS

♦ trainees have access to college facilities

♦ wide-ranging support offered to trainees

♦ comprehensive induction process

WEAKNESSES

♦ prior learning not systematically tested on entry

♦ reviews lack rigour in some areas

♦ fixed entry dates delay training in some vocational areas

42. Trainees are treated as students and have access to the same college facilities. They make wide use of the library, computers and the Internet. There are two nurseries in the town subsidised by the college, with up to 25 places in total. Trainees are entitled to make use of these although no trainee presently does. Thirty-seven per cent of trainees used student support services during 1999, which included use of the professional counselling service, and access to finance and accommodation. There is also a student canteen with a lively atmosphere. Music sessions with a student group are sometimes held there during the lunch hour.

43. Induction is thorough and all trainees interviewed could remember the content. There is a group talk by the training agency manager, followed by an induction from the vocational tutor and, if the trainee is on placement, by the employer. Trainees are given a pack containing explanations of their rights and responsibilities, equal opportunities, health and safety issues and details of the employers' responsibilities for national trainees and modern apprentices. There is an explanation of an individual training plan, of initial and other assessments, of the internal and external verification process and of the trainees' charter. There is a checklist at the back of the handbook which allows trainees to monitor receipt of their induction information. This is often returned to the training agency manager and acts as a check on the induction process. The foundation for work trainees complete their checklist as a classroom exercise when they first begin.

44. There is a high level of practical support for trainees. The college has links with a local housing association and can offer up to 10 bed spaces for students. Some New Deal clients are using this accommodation. There are at least 14 trainees who have dyslexia or learning difficulties. The training agency is paying college staff for additional learning support sessions for them. At least three staff members in the college can use sign language, and they are used to provide additional tutoring sessions for the hard of hearing. For one trainee who has particular hearing problems, the training agency manager pays for an interpreter for one session a week. This helps the trainee to manage the theoretical aspects of the course. Hospitality trainees are given additional coaching from tutors during unsocial hours.

45. Prior learning is not systematically tested or assessed. In some vocational areas trainees repeat tasks they have already done. For example, in hospitality a number of trainees already have a GNVQ at level 2 in food preparation but are still required to repeat the corresponding unit in the NVQ by the employer. Trainees are bored by this repetition.

46. The training agency manager carries out reviews every 12 weeks. However, in some areas of construction, and in engineering, reviews lack focus. No real action plans are developed as a result of review and no short- or long-term targets. Apart from the hospitality sector, the manager has little occupational or technical knowledge and cannot discuss occupational progress in any detail. A new system under which the vocational tutor also goes into the work placement has recently been introduced. This has yet to be implemented in all areas. Presently, eight out

of 34 trainees do not have a review at their work placement with their vocational tutor.

47. In most vocational areas training starts in September in line with the academic year. In foundation for work, trainees are not allowed to join the course from April onwards and have to wait until after the summer break. In engineering, trainees can only join in January, although they are selected during the summer. Trainees are left for a number of months with a promised start date but without training. In some cases, they are enrolled and left without training. In hospitality, although theoretically trainees can join at any time, the timetable is structured and the weeks numbered so that different aspects of the programme are covered week by week, beginning with the basics. Trainees attempting to join the programme at a later date miss out on the initial training.

Management of training   Grade 3

48. Major restructuring has taken place in the college over the last 12 months. This has included the appointment of new senior staff and new programme managers for each subject area. The director of the college's agency, who is responsible for managing the work-based training, now reports to the director of business and community development. The college has produced a strategic plan along with an operational and development plan. The changes were due to be fully implemented in September 2001, shortly after the reinspection. The college's agency manages the contract and some of the recruitment of the learners. Work-based learning is an integral part of the college's activities and each curriculum area manages its related work-based learning.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

♦   on- and off-the-job training not integrated
♦   unsystematic co-ordination of training across curriculum areas
♦   ineffective use of data

49. All these weaknesses have been addressed by implementation of the action plan. The college has dealt with the lack of integration and poor co-ordination of training by introducing service level agreements and by off-the-job trainers visiting the workplaces. The college has also greatly improved its computer systems to ensure that data are used to inform managers. There is now a system where data produced for the agency links to the main college database. The system is ready to be implemented in September 2001. The self-assessment report was accurate in identifying strengths and weaknesses accurately and inspectors awarded the same grade as that in the self-assessment report. The management of work-based learning is now an integral part of the college's operations.

STRENGTHS

♦ successful implementation of action plans

♦ effective service level agreements

WEAKNESSES

♦ poor retention and achievement rates

♦ no systematic accreditation of prior learning for New Deal clients

50. A highly detailed and accurate action plan was produced following the original inspection. It clearly identified who was responsible for each action and how it was to be implemented. All the targets in the action plan have been met. The action plan is closely linked to the college's strategic plan. This is the first strategic plan that has been produced by the college for two years and clearly identifies the way forward. It gives work-based training equal priority with the college's other activities. The implementation of the action plan has allowed all staff and curriculum leaders to take full responsibility for what they do. The staff welcome this. There is now full integration of on- and off-the-job training. The college has better communications with employers, including through newsletters. Everyone involved now has a better understanding of the requirements of both on- and off-the-job training.

51. The college has produced a highly detailed service level agreement between the agency and all curriculum areas. The contract clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of the college, the curriculum centres and the agency. There has been a good staff development programme, particularly for middle and senior mangers, to put the agreements into practice. Teams responsible for work-based learning in each curriculum area have been formed and are now able to implement good practice in all their training.

52. There is poor retention and achievement across all training programmes except construction. Since 1998, out of a total of 40 modern apprentices, only three have completed their modern apprenticeship frameworks. These were all in construction. Of the 21 learners working towards an NVQ, only seven have achieved a full award. In the foundation for work training there have been 59 learners, only 18 of whom have achieved the goals on their individual learning plans. The college has recognised the retention problem across the college as a whole and in the last year has appointed a manager to monitor retention. There has since been an improvement of 10 per cent in retention. The college's target is to improve the retention rates by 2 per cent each year for the next three years. The college has retention and achievement data for its courses as a whole and does not have information about work-based learners specifically. The college has also appointed a member of staff to work in the community because it has found that one of the main reasons for early leaving is learners' personal and social problems.

53. The college provides the full-time training and education option for New Deal. There have been 52 clients on the option since April 2000. Of these only seven

have gained employment and completed the aims on their individual learning plans. One of the qualifications the college offers these clients is a higher national certificate in computing or software engineering. The college has no system for assessing and recording learners' prior learning. The college is failing to check properly that these learners are suitable for courses at this relatively high level.

Quality assurance   Grade 3

54. Brighton College has a three-year quality assurance plan, which is based on the corporate objectives, the FEFC requirements, Investors in People standards and the quality assurance management system of the TEC. The college has carried out self-assessment for the FEFC since 1996. The self-assessment of work-based training started in 1998. Quality assurance is managed through a variety of methods. The college analyses retention and achievement data which are measured against the national benchmarks from FEFC. The college's governing body monitors progress on self-assessment. The college produced two similar but separate self-assessment reports for the FEFC and TSC. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given by the college.

STRENGTHS

♦ comprehensive quality assurance policies

♦ many examples of continuous improvement

WEAKNESSES

♦ underdeveloped quality assurance system for work-based training

♦ no systematic evaluation of work-based training

55. The college has a wide range of policies and procedures both for students and staff. These policies are recorded and included in the staff handbook and the quality assurance manual. Lesson observations, annual course reviews, internal verification, student surveys and action plans form part of the college-wide self-assessment process. The principal and the college governors are ultimately responsible for fulfilling the quality assurance policy.

56. The training agency has made many improvements in the quality assurance of work-based training over the last two years. The current manager inherited severe problems of quality assurance, which resulted in payment for training having to be returned to the TEC. Recently, the agency manager has identified and taken action on the need for key skills assessment, started on-site assessment in hospitality for modern apprentices and painting and decorating trainees, produced a briefing pack for employers and developed written guidance for work-based assessors. The agency recently held an evening for employers to promote key skills. The evening

produced some positive feedback but was not well attended.

57. The quality assurance system for work-based training is underdeveloped. The extensive policies and procedures do not refer to work-based training and only cover it by implication. The college identified this weakness in its self-assessment report. It is not clear how the quality of work-based training is assured. The quality of the trainees' experience is dealt with in lesson observations and course review data but the quality assurance system does not specify the work-based element of the trainees' activity, which accounts for the majority of training in most occupational areas. The agency manager is reviewing the system and has drafted some procedures specific to work-based training. There has been little consultation with employers and college staff about these procedures.

58. The work-based training report was developed by the training agency manager in consultation with the director for curriculum and quality assurance and based on individual curriculum staff's feedback. It followed the report produced for the FEFC and identified key developments, strengths and weaknesses, corroborative statements, sources of evidence and action plans for each aspect. It also included a wide range of performance data for further education students and some data for adult work-based trainees. This has been the first attempt at evaluation of work-based training. Trainees have completed a questionnaire about the quality of their training and the agency manager has collated the results. Employers were sent a questionnaire in February. The results have still not been fully analysed and used to improve work-based training. The views of students in the college are surveyed three times a year.

59. There is a college-wide internal verification policy. In hospitality, inspectors identified inconsistencies in the sampling of assessors. In electrical installation the college is offering an NVQ for which it is not yet approved. The college monitors the achievement of trainees and reviews this with the TEC. The destination of trainees is identified when they leave work-based training but there is no longer-term monitoring which adds to the evaluation of the quality of work-based training so as to promote the success of trainees.