

INSPECTION REPORT

Manchester Training

18 February 2002



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and in New Deal options. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

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 **learn**direct 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.

Inadequate provision

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

- one third or more of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas and New Deal options are judged less than satisfactory, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

Manchester Training is located in Middleton. It provides training for businesses throughout Greater Manchester. It offers work-based learning for young people in the areas of business administration, vehicle maintenance and repair, vehicle body and paint operations, customer service, retailing, distribution and warehouse operations, vehicle parts, and specialised plant and machinery operations. Manchester Training's learners are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs), and foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, training for most learners in vehicle maintenance and repair, vehicle body and paint operations, vehicle parts and specialised plant and machinery operations is satisfactory. The provision for customer service, retailing, distribution and warehouse operations is also satisfactory. Training in business administration is unsatisfactory. Leadership and management, equal opportunities and quality assurance arrangements are all unsatisfactory.

GRADES

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	4

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Business administration, management & professional	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Retailing, customer service & transportation	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

MANCHESTER TRAINING

KEY STRENGTHS

- strong leadership and strategic planning
- good individual support for learners

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ineffective initial assessment of employed learners
- slow progress in the achievement of frameworks
- inadequate process for evaluating the quality of learning
- weak management of the learning process
- poor understanding of apprenticeship frameworks by some employers

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better resources for teaching background knowledge
- more effective gathering of feedback from employers

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of eight inspectors spent a total of 31 days at Manchester Training in February 2002. Inspectors interviewed 88 learners, visited 36 employers' premises and interviewed 37 employers and workplace supervisors. Forty-one interviews were held with staff from Manchester Training, including the executive director, managers, trainers and support staff. Inspectors observed nine progress reviews and assessments, and observed and graded seven learning sessions. They examined a range of documents, including portfolios of evidence, learners' records, Manchester Training's plans, policies and procedures, promotional literature, awarding body reports, and the contract with the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Inspectors studied the self-assessment report produced in September 2001 and the action plans from previous self-assessment reports.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	4
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Total	0	0	2	5	0	0	0	7

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. Manchester Training has provided training since 1969. It currently employs 34 staff and has 252 learners. There are 50 advanced modern apprentices, 136 foundation modern apprentices and 66 learners working towards NVQs. Young people are recruited from schools or employers or through the careers service. For work-based learning there are 11 assessors and trainers, four internal verifiers, three sales staff, two recruitment and two commercial staff and an executive director. The company also provides commercial training. The inspection did not cover Manchester Training's commercial training and work-based learning for adults through Jobcentre Plus. Manchester Training makes effective use of partnerships with other organisations to promote training. The company has recently been restructured. Modern apprenticeships and NVQ training are funded through a contract with the Greater Manchester LSC. Before April 2001, Manchester Training had contracts with four training and enterprise councils (TECs).

3. Over two-thirds of the workforce in Greater Manchester work in the service sector. Unemployment in Greater Manchester in September 2001 was 3.4 per cent, compared with the national rate of 2.9 per cent. In September 2001, the proportion of school leavers in Manchester achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 44 per cent, below the national average of 47.9 per cent. The proportion of the population of Greater Manchester who are from minority ethnic groups is 5.9 per cent, compared with the national rate of 6.2 per cent, according to the 1991 census.

Work-based learning for young people

4. Work-based learning in the vehicle and specialised plant and machinery operations, customer service, retailing and distribution and warehouse operations is satisfactory. Learners work in a range of good-quality work placements, and training advisers and employers provide learners with good support. Internal verification is good. The monitoring of learners' progress is good. In business administration, training is unsatisfactory. Learners are well supported, but the initial assessment of employed learners is unsatisfactory. The induction of learners is brief. Learners make slow progress and many leave without completing their qualification framework. Training in key skills is an integral part of the business administration vocational training.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

5. Manchester Training is a private training company managed by a board of directors. The executive director is chairman of the board and has day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the company. The senior management team consists of the executive director, contract manager, quality assurance manager, commercial manager, and three line managers. Each line manager is responsible for one of the three occupational areas. Line managers report directly to the executive director. Their responsibilities include monitoring employers and training programmes, recruitment and selection, staff training and development, and line management of the occupational team. Manchester Training employs 34 staff, 11 assessors and trainers, and four internal verifiers. There are three sales staff, two commercial and two recruitment staff recruiting new businesses into training, and recruiting learners from schools and Connexions. The company has an equality of opportunity co-ordinator who is responsible for the application of the equal opportunities policy. Manchester Training has been accredited with the ISO 9001 international quality assurance standard since 1994. Manchester Training produced its first self-assessment report in 1999. Since then, there have been two further reports. The most recent report was completed in September 2001. There have been considerable changes in the structure of the company since the Training Standards Council (TSC) inspection in 1999.

STRENGTHS

- strong leadership and strategic vision
- effective management of change
- good staff development

WEAKNESSES

- weak management of the learning process
- insufficient target-setting
- poor promotion of equal opportunities
- inadequate process for evaluating the quality of learning

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more focused induction for learners
- better reinforcement of induction of learners
- greater involvement of staff in development planning
- more appropriate quality assurance system
- more sharing of good practice

6. The leadership of Manchester Training is strong. The executive director has a clear

MANCHESTER TRAINING

strategic vision for the company which is communicated effectively to staff. Staff are well motivated and enthusiastic. The company has introduced innovative learning methods for some learners, including the use of the Internet and the recent introduction of a learndirect point of delivery (pod).

7. The changes in the company since the last inspection have been effectively managed. Staff have been kept well informed. Many processes and policies have been revised. Many new initiatives have been introduced which have a positive impact on learners' experience. Key skills training is an integral part of the vocational training. More learners are now completing all the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework. Learners are visited frequently and the review process is focused. There is a standard initial assessment for school leavers and learners referred by the careers service. Line managers have a monthly performance review with the executive director to assess the progress of all learners. However, line managers have little input in the development plan and are not fully involved in business-planning.

8. Staff development is good. Manchester Training invests both time and money in the training, development and support of its staff. The training needs of the company have been identified and prioritised. A planned programme of in-house training is being introduced. The quality assurance statement has targets for staff qualifications including achievement of trainers' and assessors' awards. All staff involved in training have qualifications in key skills. Staff induction is thorough. Individual learning needs are identified through the staff appraisal system. A personal development portfolio is being piloted with senior managers. Staff are supportive of one another and colleagues mentor less experienced staff members. However, mentoring is not formalised or planned. There is some sharing of good practice.

9. Management of the training process is weak. There is no clear policy for the initial assessment of employed learners. There is no process for the identification of learners' basic skills needs or additional learning needs. The induction process for all learners is brief. There is no planned reinforcement of learners' understanding and awareness of key issues. On- and off-the-job training is poorly co-ordinated. Off-the-job training, which includes key skills and additional sessions such as telephone techniques, is not adequately planned as a whole. One third of the training advisers have recognised training qualifications. In one learning area, assessors have little occupational experience. None of the observed training sessions was unsatisfactory. Key skills training is an integral part of the vocational training, but evidence is not cross-referenced against the occupational competences. There is no overall lead verifier to ensure co-ordination of the internal verification process. There is no overall strategy to improve rates of retention and achievement.

10. Managers meet weekly to monitor business performance and learners' progress. They monitor data on gender and ethnicity. Analyses of data are superficial. There is no analysis of trends over time. Managers are not always fully aware of the significance of the data. Data are not used routinely to contribute to management decisions. The company has identified the poor retention rates and some of the poor achievement

rates. Targets have been set for retention. However, managers are not fully aware of the targets for their areas of learning or the importance of using targets to measure improvement.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 4

11. Manchester Training does not promote equal opportunities sufficiently. The company has a clear equal opportunities statement. This statement is discussed with learners at their induction, and learners are made aware of their rights and responsibilities. However, the company does not specifically promote its training to under-represented groups. Some promotional and marketing materials currently in use do not mention Manchester Training's commitment to equal opportunities. There are no positive images of women or people from minority ethnic groups in these materials or on display in the training centre. Some staff have a poor understanding of equal opportunities issues, although there are plans to produce training materials for both staff and learners. There are no policies to cover bullying, harassment or substance misuse. There are no procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy and there is insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace. Data are analysed to identify trends related to gender and ethnicity, but Manchester Training has not yet taken any action. The training centre is accessible for learners with mobility difficulties. There is a complaints procedure. There have been a number of complaints from learners during the past year, all of which have been dealt with appropriately.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

12. Manchester Training has a comprehensive quality assurance manual. However, there is little reference to how training should be monitored, analysed and evaluated to ensure its quality. The quality assurance system is under review, but the company has not identified that its quality assurance procedures do not adequately cover the learning process and do not reflect the company's current needs. There are no observations of learning sessions or learners' inductions. Learners' progress reviews and assessments are observed as part of the internal verification process. Staff and managers are responsive to the needs of learners and employers. The views of learners are collected using questionnaires, however, there has been a poor response to these questionnaires. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Recently, interviews have been carried out with employers. However, to date, few interviews have been carried out, and the results have not been analysed. Learners and employers do not receive feedback on the results of questionnaires and interviews. Changes have recently been made to the internal verification system. However, the system has not been introduced across all occupational areas and it is too early to judge its impact. Meetings have recently been introduced, at which internal verifiers and assessors can share good practice.

13. All staff were involved in the self-assessment process. Many of the judgements in the report were not based on evidence. Many of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report were no more than normal practice. The report accurately identified weaknesses. An action plan has been produced to remedy weaknesses and build on good practice. The views of staff were not sought in the production of the action plan and the company was slow to share the plan with them. A number of the grades awarded by inspectors were lower than those identified in the self-assessment report.

Good Practice

Initial assessment includes a practical vocational test of the guided changing of a wheel. This test has a grading scheme and was developed with the aid of a staff member who has limited mobility. The manner in which this was accomplished, and the time taken by the staff member, was used as a reference for setting up the grading.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	66	3

14. Manchester Training provides training in vehicle maintenance and repair, and vehicle body and paint operations. Most employers are small or medium-sized enterprises, although a few are large motor vehicle dealerships. Currently, there are 33 advanced modern apprentices and 20 foundation modern apprentices in training. There are 13 learners working towards NVQs. Most learners are employed. Training is managed by a line manager, who is assisted by three training advisers. One training adviser works part time, one works full time, and another is self-employed. All are widely experienced in this occupational area, have a mix of appropriate skills, and hold assessors' qualifications. Three of the four team members have teaching qualifications. Most learners are recruited from school. Initial assessment includes a basic skills test, practical assessment and an interview by recruitment staff. Individual learning plans are agreed during induction. Learners are trained and assessed in the workplace, but there are no work-based assessors. Off-the-job training takes place at the training centre and consists of training in background knowledge and key skills and help with portfolio-building.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97		1995-96		1994-95	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	11		23		7		8		5		7					
Retained	0		1		1		1	12	2	40	4	57				
Successfully completed	0		1		0		0	0	0	0	1	14				
Still in learning	9		15		1		3	38	2	40	3	43				

MANCHESTER TRAINING

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97		1995-96		1994-95	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	5		17		31		30		1							
Retained	0		0		2		6	20	0	0						
Successfully completed	0		0		0		0	0	0	0						
Still in learning	4		9		6		1	3	0	0						

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97		1995-96		1994-95	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2		4		1		39		86							
Retained	0		0		1	100	3	8	8	9						
Successfully completed	0		0		1	100	3	8	9	10						
Still in learning	2		4		0	0	2	5	5	6						

STRENGTHS

- comprehensive and individual support from training advisers
- effective support from employers for training in the workplace
- clearly defined monitoring of progress
- full involvement of learners in developing portfolios

WEAKNESSES

- poor rates of achievement
- poor management of training
- ineffective induction of learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better understanding of qualification frameworks by employers
- wider use of workshop resources to reinforce background knowledge
- more effective feedback from employers

15. Training advisers provide comprehensive and individual support to learners. Workplace visits are frequent and often take place more than once a month. Visits help to motivate learners and build up their self-confidence. Training advisers encourage their learners to contact them when assessment opportunities arise. Individual tuition is provided, during evenings and weekends, in response to learners' needs. If a work placement provides insufficient opportunities for a learner to gather evidence, or working conditions become unsuitable, training advisers arrange for the learner to move to a new work placement. The frequency of visits and the flexibility of support were identified as strengths in the self-assessment report.

16. Learners are effectively supported in their training in the workplace by employers. Learners have ample opportunities to gather evidence from suitable work activities. Where activities to generate specific evidence are not available in the workplace, the employer liaises with the training adviser to arrange for the learner to use resources at the training centre.

17. The system for monitoring learners' progress has recently been revised. The system is effective and easily understood by learners, employers and trainers. It includes an evidence summary chart, visit and progress review forms and a summary which clearly identifies evidence that still has to be collected. All actions and requirements are clearly recorded and cross-referenced. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of the system in improving learners' rates of achievement.

18. Learners take full responsibility for compiling their portfolios of evidence. The standard of most portfolios is good. In many cases, learners organise evidence-gathering and assessments. Learners actively search through job cards and contact assessors by telephone to arrange assessments, or plan assessments during their off-the-job training. During portfolio-building sessions, learners seek guidance from their tutors to help produce a clear and comprehensive evidence base.

19. Rates of achievement are poor. Of the 12 advanced modern apprentices who could have completed the framework over the past six years, only one has done so. Five are still in training. None of the 31 foundation modern apprentices, who could have completed the framework in the past five years, has done so. Only one is still in training. Of the 125 learners who began NVQ training in 1997-98 and 1998-99, only 12 have achieved the qualification. Seven are still in training. More recent starters are making good progress.

MANCHESTER TRAINING

20. Training is poorly managed. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. Learners may join the training programme at any time. Initial assessment is satisfactory and includes basic skills and practical assessments. Induction is short and ineffective. Induction materials are of a poor standard. Induction for late starters is not as comprehensive as that for the main learning group, and is inadequate. In some cases, essential health and safety training is given in the form of handouts, while the main learning group takes part in lessons. Off-the-job training is planned. However, planning is not shared with employers or used to contribute to, and co-ordinate with, training in the workplace. Internal verification of assessment is satisfactory. There is no observation of training and poor consultation with employers on the effectiveness of training.

21. There is some slow progress towards the completion of frameworks and achievement of qualifications. No learners have achieved all the targets on their individual learning plans within the agreed time. Some learners are still in training after their planned completion date. Framework completion has been delayed for 25 per cent of these learners as training in key skills was introduced towards the end of the training programme. For a few learners, key skills training did not begin until 12 months after they had completed the NVQ at level 3. Key skills training for more recent learners is integrated with their vocational training.

Good Practice

One learner with a drugs problem was given counselling and extra help to fast-track his NVQ at level 2. This built up his confidence and he has since completed an NVQ at level 3 and is still in the same employment.

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	31	4

22. Manchester Training provides advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships, and NVQ training programmes in business administration. At the time of the inspection, there were 29 foundation modern apprentices and two learners working towards NVQs at level 3. There were no advanced modern apprentices. Manchester Training recruits learners either through the careers service or directly from employment. Learners work in a wide variety of companies. Learners recruited through the careers service are given an initial assessment. Seventy-five per cent of learners are women. Training in key skills is an integral part of vocational training. Most assessment for both the NVQ and key skills training is carried out in the workplace. The self-assessment report identified some of the key weaknesses, but inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the report.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			1				1									
Retained			0	0			1	100								
Successfully completed			0	0			1	100								
Still in learning			0	0			0	0								

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	7		24		24		16									
Retained	0		2		9		1	6								
Successfully completed	0		0		1		0	0								
Still in learning	7		12		10		0	0								

MANCHESTER TRAINING

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts					2		22		22		1					
Retained					0		9	41	10	45	0	0				
Successfully completed					0		8	36	10	45	0	0				
Still in learning					0		1	5	1	5	0	0				

STRENGTHS

- good support for learners
- thorough progress review process
- good understanding of the NVQ by learners
- good integration of key skills with vocational training

WEAKNESSES

- poor rates of achievement on the foundation modern apprenticeship
- inconsistent initial assessment and identification of additional support
- poorly structured off-the-job training
- insufficient use of additional learning resources
- poor understanding of NVQs and foundation modern apprenticeships by some employers

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more detailed induction programme

23. Learners receive good support from the training adviser and from employers. The self-assessment report did not identify this as a strength. There are good working relationships between the training adviser and workplace supervisors. Training advisers and workplace supervisors assist learners in identifying and obtaining evidence from normal work activities, and plenty of opportunities for assessment are provided. Some learners who have been made redundant have been found alternative employment to enable them to continue their training programme. One learner who was made redundant after completing his NVQ at level 2 was placed in Manchester Training and

has recently completed his level 3 NVQ and achieved further qualifications. Learners are given additional support to meet identified needs, for example with spelling and handwriting. Learners and supervisors meet with the training adviser to identify the most suitable additional units for the foundation modern apprenticeship framework. All learners are interviewed and receive an induction from a training adviser. Induction checklists are filled out in full, but only require very brief comments from the learner.

24. The review process is thorough. Reviews and assessments are carried out in the workplace. Action points from previous visits are checked, and a clear action plan is agreed by learners and workplace supervisors. The learner's portfolio of evidence is examined at every visit, and guidance is given on appropriate evidence and referencing. Most employers welcome this process. Learners receive a well-structured exit review with the training adviser and the workplace supervisor. Most records of workplace assessments are sufficiently detailed, although a few merely indicate that planned actions have been carried out. Internal verification is well planned and thorough. Actions identified by the external verifier are carried out. Feedback from learners and employers is obtained at the progress reviews but is not routinely used to contribute to improvements in the learners' experience.

25. Learners have a good understanding of the requirements of the NVQ and identify and collect relevant evidence from their place of work. Portfolios are generally well presented and learners are encouraged to cross-reference their evidence. Most learners are well motivated and are aware of what their targets are and how well they are making progress towards achieving them. Learners on the foundation modern apprenticeship are less sure of the requirements of their qualification.

26. The development and assessment of key skills are an integral part of the occupational training. Learners identify and collect evidence for key skills. The training adviser provides tasks or worksheets to supplement workplace activities. A small number of good-quality assignments has been produced to link specific skills and NVQ units. Learners' achievements are identified and some of these may be accredited. Some learners attend a key skills workshop at the training centre. Staff did not identify how learners could develop key skills through all aspects of their work.

27. Rates of achievement on the foundation modern apprenticeship are poor. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Of the 64 foundation modern apprentices who could have completed their framework in the past three years, only one has been successful. One further portfolio has recently been completed and internally verified, and is awaiting confirmation of achievement. Thirty-nine per cent of those currently in training have had their training programmes extended. Retention rates on the framework have improved from 42 per cent of starters in 1999-2000 to 50 per cent in 2000-01. So far, no learners have left early in the current year. The rate of achievement of learners on NVQ programmes is 38 per cent overall.

28. Initial assessment is not consistently applied to all learners. Those recruited through the careers service are given a standard assessment test, while those who are already in

MANCHESTER TRAINING

employment are not routinely tested. The system for identifying additional support needs for those in employment is unsatisfactory. One learner did not receive support until the employer also identified the problem. The training adviser provides additional support, but is not occupationally qualified to do so.

29. Off-the-job training is poorly structured. There is no planned schedule of training sessions or lesson plans. These are arranged on demand or as learners' needs are identified. The training adviser has no teaching qualifications, although some coaching and guidance has been given on an informal basis. Learners welcome the opportunity to attend off-the-job training at the training centre.

30. There is a narrow range of background knowledge resources for learners with additional learning needs. The self-assessment report identifies this as an area for improvement. There are no standard resources for business administration. Basic worksheets and exercises are produced as the need arises. Some resources are out of date and contain inaccuracies. Recently introduced key skills resources are good, but there is no clear policy on their use. The company has purchased a number of additional computers for the ICT laboratory.

31. As identified in the self-assessment report, employers have a poor understanding of the structure of the NVQ and the foundation modern apprenticeship. Employers do not have copies of the standards required of them, to which they can refer. A senior training manager has visited a small number of employers to explain the new business administration standards.

Retailing, customer service & transportation**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	155	3

32. Manchester Training offers several qualifications in this area of learning. These include NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in customer service, retailing, distribution and warehouse operations and vehicle parts, and specialised plant and machinery operations at level 2. There are 155 learners. There are two NVQ learners, and 11 advanced and 12 foundation modern apprentices in customer service. Eighteen learners are working towards foundation modern apprenticeships in retailing. Four NVQ learners, and five advanced and 52 foundation modern apprentices are on distribution and warehouse operations training programmes. Forty-five NVQ learners are training in specialised plant and machinery operations and one advanced and five foundation modern apprentices are training in vehicle parts distribution and supply. Most learners are employed before they start training, and some are referred by the local careers service. Learners are employed in a wide variety of companies, including printing and mailing companies, call centres, motor vehicle dealership and fashion stores. Learners can attend the training centre for additional support, if required. Assessment and key skills training are carried out in the workplace.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		15		15		4									
Retained	0		3		4		2	50								
Successfully completed	0		0		0		1	25								
Still in learning	4		8		4		1	25								

MANCHESTER TRAINING

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	29		94		122		57									
Retained	0		10		37		13	23								
Successfully completed	0		3		16		11	19								
Still in learning	25		46		15		1	2								

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	38		67		103		129		185							
Retained	0		37		73	71	51	40	97	52						
Successfully completed	0		36		72	70	50	39	93	50						
Still in learning	36		13		1	1	1	1	0	0						

STRENGTHS

- highly effective individual support
- some good-quality work placements
- good internal verification

WEAKNESSES

- inconsistent initial assessment
- insufficient use of individual learning plans to record progress
- some poor understanding of NVQs and framework requirements by learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater use of learning resources in distribution and warehousing operations

33. Learners receive much individual support from training advisers and employers. Workplace visits are frequent and many take place outside normal working hours to

accommodate learners' shift work. Learners can request additional visits. Workplace visits are effective. They include opportunities for assessment and validation of portfolio evidence, and learners are given advice and guidance. Progress reviews involve both the learner and workplace supervisor. Where possible, learners have an exit interview. This helps to identify opportunities for progress and further training. Learners working towards distribution and warehouse operations qualifications have the opportunity to carry out lift truck training. A number of examples of excellent individual support were identified. In one instance, where a learner was experiencing difficulties at work, the trainer found a number of suitable alternative work placements. This learner is now settled and making progress.

34. There are some good-quality work placements in all occupational areas. Work placements offer good opportunities for learners to gather appropriate evidence. Learners are assisted in this by supportive employers and work colleagues. Some businesses offer additional qualifications, such as those in basic food hygiene and manual handling techniques. In one business, all learners working towards customer service NVQs at levels 2 and 3 receive good support from work colleagues and supervisors, who are working towards the same qualifications. Inspectors agreed with the judgement made in the self-assessment report that individual support in customer service and vehicle parts is a strength.

35. Internal verification is good. Sampling plans are thorough and cover all assessors and all NVQ units. Internal verifiers carry out more observations of assessors than required by the awarding body. All portfolios are sampled. Every assessment in the first portfolio from each assessor is verified. Evidence from subsequent portfolios is sampled. If concerns are raised, all evidence is re-examined by the verifier. Manchester Training has produced a comprehensive internal verifier/assessor monitoring form that incorporates learners' feedback. The form allows assessors to comment on any feedback received from the verifier.

36. Training in key skills is an integral part of vocational training. All training advisers have either achieved, or are working towards, the level 3 award in key skills. This has enabled trainers to ensure that key skills training is an integral part of vocational training, using realistic and work-related assignments. There are good rates of achievement. Resources are satisfactory. The company has introduced electronic resources for teaching background knowledge in distribution and warehouse operations. However, these resources are currently available to only five learners. Trainers use a range of assessment methods. The assessment of NVQs is satisfactory.

37. Rates of achievement and retention in distribution and warehouse operations, customer service and retailing have, in the past, been less than satisfactory. Rates of achievement are now satisfactory. Rates of achievement and retention in specialised plant and machinery operations are also satisfactory.

38. The initial assessment of learners is inconsistent. School leavers who are referred through the careers service receive a formal initial assessment of basic and key skills.

MANCHESTER TRAINING

Learners who are employed in companies before they begin training do not receive a formal initial assessment. Some interviews do not identify if learners have any additional learning needs. A number of learners complete a basic occupational skills test, whereas others do not. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report.

39. Individual learning plans are not used to record learners' progress. Most plans are not updated when learners achieve individual NVQ units. Target achievement dates are not always updated. Some learners do not have a copy of their learning plan. Some learners are unclear of their progress towards achieving their units. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report.

40. Some learners and employers in distribution and warehouse operations, and lift truck training programmes have a poor understanding of qualification and framework requirements. Some learners in distribution and warehouse operations, who had recently completed their training programme, were unaware they had achieved their foundation modern apprenticeship. Other learners could not recall the framework requirements or the structure of the NVQ. Learners working towards level 2 NVQs in distribution and warehouse operations and specialised plant and machinery operations are not responsible for gathering evidence for their portfolios. Evidence is taken away by training advisers, inserted into portfolios and referenced for learners in the training centre. These portfolios are held in the training centre and are only shown to the learner during the assessments and progress reviews. This was identified as a weakness in distribution and warehouse operations, but not in specialised plant and machinery operations.

Good Practice

The company has recognised the importance and benefit of distance learning, particularly for learners employed in warehouses. Electronic training materials have been produced for distribution and warehouse operations learners. Learners are provided with a computer, either in the workplace or at home, to access training materials and communicate with the trainer. Trainers use e-mail to regularly contact these learners and check on their progress.

Poor Practice

A distribution and warehouse operations certificate, achieved by a learner in March 2001, is still being held by Manchester Training. Learners in specialised plant and machinery operations, who pass the basic lift truck test early in the training programme, are awarded their certificates, but not presented to them until completion of the NVQ.