

TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT
NOVEMBER 2000

ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE REINSPECTION
JANUARY 2002

Isle of Wight School
of
Food and Wine



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 the Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine was carried out by the Training Standards Council's inspectors. The inspection resulted in less than satisfactory grades being awarded for hospitality, equal opportunities, trainee support, management of training and quality assurance. 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 hospitality, equal opportunities, trainee support, management of training and quality assurance 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).

At the original inspection, the Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine's training in hospitality was unsatisfactory. It has improved and is now of a satisfactory standard. The Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine provides good off-the-job training and frequent, well-planned assessment in the workplace. Competent and experienced training advisers give good support to learners. Retention rates have improved, but learners make slow progress towards achievement of the modern apprenticeship framework. Equal opportunities, trainee support and the management of training are now satisfactory. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and learners have a good understanding of equal opportunities issues. However, there is still insufficient monitoring of employers' equal opportunities practices. Learners benefit from a wide-ranging induction and have a good understanding of the training and assessment process. There is no initial assessment of basic skills and staff are not qualified to provide basic skills support. The number of staff has increased since the original inspection and their training and development are good. Quality assurance is still unsatisfactory. Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate and there is no monitoring of the quality of the training provided. Feedback from learners and employers is now used to improve the quality of training.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Hospitality	4

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	4
Trainee support	4
Management of training	4
Quality assurance	5

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Hospitality	3

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ good promotion of equality of opportunity
- ◆ clear understanding of equal opportunities issues by learners
- ◆ thorough and well-planned progress reviews
- ◆ good support for employers
- ◆ effective use of feedback to improve training

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ low achievement rates
- ◆ insufficient monitoring of employers' equal opportunities practices
- ◆ no initial assessment of basic skills
- ◆ inadequate management information system
- ◆ inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ no monitoring of the quality of training

INTRODUCTION

1. The Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine (the School) was established as a government-funded training provider in April 1999. Before this, the organisation specialised in short, commercial training courses in hospitality for local clients. The School still offers commercial training programmes. The School has a contract with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to offer work-based learning for young people. The School is part of an organisation called the Five Star Group (the Group), which also operates an outside event catering company and a hospitality recruitment company. The Group is run by a husband and wife team, who also act as directors of all three parts of the Group. The Group has its head office in Newport town centre, on the Isle of Wight. It moved to these premises in September 2000. The School has built a small restaurant and kitchen here for off-the-job training. The premises also include administration offices and small meeting rooms, which are rented out to local companies when they are not being used for training. In addition to this, the group has purpose-built kitchen facilities on the outskirts of the town. These are used by the catering company as a food production unit, and also as off-the-job training facilities for the School. Since the original inspection, the Group has acquired a new business, a catering operation within a local hotel, which is also used for work-based learning. At the time of the original inspection, the School employed one full-time member of staff, one part-time trainer/assessor and two administrative assistants. The School has expanded since the original inspection. It now employs three full-time staff and one part-time training adviser. One of the directors also provides off-the-job training. Another director is employed on a freelance basis as a tutor and assessor.

2. There were 17 learners on work-based learning programmes at the time of the original inspection. Of these, six were foundation modern apprentices, seven were advanced modern apprentices and four were New Deal clients on the hospitality employment option offered by the Isle of Wight Unit of Delivery. At the time of reinspection, there are 31 learners, of which, 20 are foundation modern apprentices and 11 are advanced modern apprentices. There are no New Deal clients. Most of the current learners are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in food preparation and cooking, and food and drink service. The School offers training in a wide variety of areas. These include food preparation and cooking, food service, bar service, quick service, housekeeping and reception. All learners are employed on the Isle of Wight in hotels, restaurants, a local yacht club and a golf club.

3. The Isle of Wight has a population of approximately 125,000 people. Employment is mainly in the areas of wholesale and retail distribution, hotels and catering, public services and administration, and health and social work. Businesses are mainly small and medium-sized enterprises, with most businesses employing fewer than 25 people. Most job vacancies are in the retailing and hotel and catering sectors. The Isle of Wight's unemployment rate is subject to dramatic

seasonal fluctuations, reflecting its dependence on the tourism industry. In November 2000, the unemployment rate was 4.7 per cent, compared with the national average of 3.4 per cent, and 1.8 per cent for the southeast of England. In September 2001, the unemployment rate was 3.7 per cent, compared with the national average of 2.9 per cent and 1.5 per cent for the southeast of England.

4. Minority ethnic groups on the Isle of Wight make up less than 1 per cent of the working population. This is below the national average of 6.2 per cent. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 44.8 per cent on the Isle of Wight, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more GCSEs at grade C or above was 44.4 per cent on the Isle of Wight, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. Over 80 per cent of school leavers continue in full-time education at school or college.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. The School completed its first self-assessment in July 2000. One of the managing directors prepared the self-assessment report, with the assistance of staff and the Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). The report contained good background information about the local economy, but lacked detail in the occupational and generic areas. The self-assessment process has not had an impact on the quality assurance and management arrangements in the organisation. However, the organisation has made considerable changes since the report was produced, including the addition of another full-time member of staff. An action plan was produced and was used as the basis for improving the strengths and resolving the weaknesses which were identified at the original inspection. A second self-assessment report was produced in November 2001, in preparation for the reinspection. All staff were involved in the preparation of the report, carrying out research and analysis of data from employer and learner surveys, and contributing to identifying strengths, weaknesses and grades. The production of the report was co-ordinated by the senior training adviser. The School assessed its training programmes in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* and did not give a separate grade for trainee support. Strengths and weaknesses were identified for each of the key questions in the *Common Inspection Framework*. The same strengths and weaknesses were duplicated in the different sections of the self-assessment report.

6. At the time of the original inspection, a team of three inspectors spent a total of nine days at the School in November 2000. Interviews were held with 10 learners and one New Deal client, eight employers or workplace supervisors, the external verifier, and all staff. Seven work-placement sites were visited, as well as the off-the-job training provider. Inspectors examined learners' portfolios of evidence and records of progress. Other documents inspected included internal and external verification documents, TEC contracts and audit reports, recently produced quality assurance documents and procedures, and publicity and marketing material. One off-the-job training session was observed and was awarded a grade 2.

7. At the time of the reinspection, a team of three inspectors, spent a total of 12 days at the School in January 2002. They interviewed 15 learners, and held 10 interviews with members of staff. They visited 12 workplaces and interviewed 12 employers or workplace supervisors. Inspectors examined portfolios of evidence, learners' files, local LSC contracts, minutes of meetings, management information, and policies and procedures. Three training sessions were observed, of which two were graded, each being awarded a grade 2.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Hospitality

Grade 3

8. The School has 31 learners working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in food preparation and cooking, bar service, food and drink service, quick service, hospitality services, and supervisory qualifications. There are 11 advanced modern apprentices and 20 foundation modern apprentices. All learners are employed within the industry in a variety of establishments. These include hotels, restaurants, licensed premises, and leisure centres and adventure holiday centres. Learners can also work towards additional qualifications in health and safety. Some learners receive all their training in the organisations in which they are placed. Other learners attend off-the-job training sessions at the School's training centre. There are five members of staff involved in the training and assessment of learners. At the time of the reinspection, there were no work-based assessors. The School had tried to recruit work-based assessors from the staff in learners' places of work. At the time of the reinspection, staff had been enrolled onto a work-based assessors' training programme, but the programme had not begun.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ poor planning of training
- ◆ no integration of key skills with vocational training
- ◆ ineffective target setting

9. The School has made good progress in resolving the weaknesses identified at the original inspection. Additional staff have been recruited and all staff now have defined roles and responsibilities. The planning and co-ordination of training are now satisfactory. Individual learning plans are fully discussed at the start of training, with both employers and learners. They are used to plan and record the training that will be covered in the workplace and in the training centre. The initial assessment of learners' key skills is carried out at the start of their training. Training in key skills is an integral part of vocational training and there is good cross-referencing of evidence to demonstrate competence. Progress reviews now identify appropriate short-term targets for learners. Individual learning plans identify units to be achieved and learners agree both the order and target achievement date for each unit. Poor rates of achievement remain a weakness. Inspectors identified a new strength and awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ good procedures for work-based assessment

WEAKNESSES

◆ low rates of achievement

10. The School has good, well-resourced, off-the-job training facilities at both the town centre and out-of-town premises. All staff are well qualified, with up-to-date occupational qualifications and industrial experience. A well-equipped training kitchen enables learners to achieve the skills which they cannot gain in the workplace, and to complete the NVQ units identified in their individual learning plans. For example, working at the food production unit involves learners in large-scale catering functions which they would not be able to experience in their normal workplace. Training sessions are arranged to meet the needs of the learner and the employer. Learners attend at times suited to their work commitments, and the School arranges more frequent sessions outside the peak tourist season. Learners receive plenty of support, and tuition is often given on a one-to-one basis. Learners are involved in the planning, costing and organisation of menus, as well as producing them. Cross-referencing of key skills evidence is carried out during training sessions. The School's town centre premises include a restaurant and kitchen, which learners use to improve their skills in food preparation and service. At this site, learners are also trained in background knowledge and portfolio-building. There is a good range of learning materials and information technology (IT) equipment. By attending the training centres, learners have frequent and regular contact with training staff.

11. There are good procedures for work-based assessment. The assessment process is fully understood by learners and employers. Training advisers arrange assessments with learners and employers during the progress reviews. Thorough planning identifies the units and elements to be assessed, and how assessment will be carried out. The assessment process is clearly explained to learners and they have a good understanding of the role of the assessor and the internal verifier. Assessors visit learners at least once a month, and often more frequently, to carry out assessments in the workplace. Learners are competent in their everyday work. Assessments are carried out by training advisers, and a comprehensive evaluation, both verbal and written, is given to the learner. Learners also evaluate their own achievements against the performance criteria. Results of assessments are recorded clearly and comprehensively in learners' portfolios of evidence. The portfolios contain a good mix of observation reports, witness testimonies and examples of work. Evidence is well referenced to the NVQ units. Currently, there are no work-based assessors, but the School has offered assessors' training to workplace supervisors, which is due to start in February 2002.

GOOD PRACTICE

At one establishment, where training was being carried out by the school, the dishes produced were served and customers were asked to complete an evaluation sheet. This gave the learners good and immediate feedback on the acceptability of the product, and contributed towards portfolio evidence.

12. The School has recruited 62 learners since training programmes started in 1999. Of these, 21 per cent have left early without any qualifications, 30 per cent have left having achieved units towards their qualification, and 49 per cent remain in training. There has been a significant improvement in the retention rate, which has increased from 27 per cent in 2000-01 to 70 per cent in 2001-02. At the time of reinspection, no learner has completed a full modern apprenticeship framework. Of the early leavers, 15 per cent left training when their employer experienced

management difficulties, and they were unable to continue with their training. Because of a delay in the appointment of an external verifier for key skills training, the external verification of learners' portfolios has been inadequate.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

13. The School has an equal opportunities policy, which refers to, and meets the requirements of, current legislation. Learners are given a copy of the policy during induction. A procedure has been established for introducing the policy and this is explained during the induction process for both staff and learners. There are also procedures for handling grievances and appeals. A training adviser is responsible for ensuring the introduction of equality of opportunity and its effective promotion within all aspects of training. Staff are made aware that, in their role as training advisers, they are responsible for ensuring that equality of opportunity is promoted and monitored. Of the current 31 learners in training, 22 are men and nine are women. There are two learners from minority ethnic groups, which equates to approximately 6 per cent of learners. This compares favourably with the 1 per cent of the local population who are from minority ethnic groups.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ inadequate monitoring of employers' equal opportunities arrangements
- ◆ poor promotion of equal opportunities
- ◆ no analysis or evaluation of equal opportunities data

14. Since the original inspection, the School has made a concerted effort to promote equal opportunities. A member of staff is now responsible for introducing and monitoring equal opportunities issues and for raising awareness among all learners and staff. Staff and learners now have a better understanding and awareness of equal opportunities. All employers are provided with a good practice guide to race, sex and disability. The School has started to collect and analyse data on learners' gender and ethnicity, but this is in its early stages. The monitoring of employers' equal opportunities arrangements remains a weakness.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good promotion of equality of opportunity
- ◆ clear understanding of equal opportunities by learners

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient use of equal opportunities data
- ◆ insufficient monitoring of employers' equal opportunities practices

15. The School actively promotes equality of opportunity. Equal opportunities is

an agenda item at team meetings, at which both learners' issues and staff development are discussed. A member of staff is responsible for collecting information and working with staff and employers to create an action plan to deal with weaknesses. She is responsible for all equality of opportunity issues and for ensuring that staff are made aware of their roles and responsibilities relating to equality of opportunity. The School has introduced in-house equal opportunities training for all training advisers.

16. Training advisers record equal opportunities issues raised by learners on monitoring and progress review sheets. The School provides support for learners who have raised equality of opportunity issues during their training by advising and representing them at meetings with their employers. Employers sign a training agreement which includes compliance with equality of opportunity policies. Employers have been invited to attend meetings to ensure their understanding of equality issues, but the School has received little response from them. All employers have received information on equality of opportunity from the School. Marketing materials used to promote the School contain a statement on equality of opportunity within the organisation.

17. The School has good links with local schools, and is involved in a training programme which offers work experience to disaffected pupils. This is proving successful and young people involved in the training programme have progressed to further training and to employment.

GOOD PRACTICE

The school has links with an organisation on the Isle of Wight which is able to provide learners with mopeds for a period of up to three months. This allows learners to travel from areas which are poorly served by public transport. Providing learners can meet certain criteria, support for driving lessons can also be provided.

18. All learners have a good understanding of equal opportunities issues and recall the equal opportunities information given during induction. Induction covers bullying and harassment in the workplace, and grievance and appeals procedures. Learners understand the different forms of harassment and discrimination, and are clear about the action they can take if necessary. All learners receive copies of the relevant procedures. The School regularly evaluates the induction process, and learners' understanding of equal opportunities forms part of this evaluation. Frequent reviews are carried out in the workplace, during which training advisers check learners' understanding of equal opportunities and encourage them to discuss equal opportunities issues that may affect them in the work environment.

19. On the basis of information collected during recruitment, the School produces a clear and accurate analysis of learners in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability. These data have been used to help develop the self-assessment report. However, they are not being used routinely as a basis for promoting training to under-represented groups or for planning and target-setting.

20. The School does not routinely monitor employers' equal opportunities practices. Although there is an initial assessment of an employer's suitability to provide work placements, including checks to see that the employer has an equal opportunities policy, there is no consistent approach for the provision of such a policy if one does not exist. Equal opportunities issues are monitored through discussions with learners during progress reviews, but there is no systematic

approach to evaluating employers' practices.

Trainee support

Grade 3

21. All learners are employed in catering establishments on the Isle of Wight. They are usually recruited to training programmes through the School's contacts in the hospitality industry. Learners have an initial interview before joining a training programme and their preferred learning styles and competence in key skills are assessed. There is, however, no initial basic skills assessment. The School offers informal additional basic skills support for learners who require it. An information booklet covers health and safety, the grievance and appeals procedures, and information about qualifications and training. Learners' progress reviews are carried out at least every four weeks. Training advisers review learners' progress and offer pastoral support. Learners are given an induction when they join a training programme which is carried out primarily at the training centre. It can, however, be provided in the workplace. Learners are given written details of their training programme, equal opportunities issues, health and safety, and the appeals procedure.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ no initial assessment for most trainees
- ◆ no accreditation of trainees' prior learning
- ◆ poor use of documents relating to trainee support

22. Since the original inspection, the School has improved its initial assessment of learners and the standard of the documents that relate to trainee support. These are now satisfactory. The assessment of basic skills needs remains a weakness. Prior skills and knowledge are taken into account when producing individual learning plans. The self-assessment report was written in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* and did not grade trainee support separately.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ particularly good support for learners
- ◆ thorough and well-planned progress reviews
- ◆ effective induction for learners

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no initial assessment of basic skills
- ◆ ineffective use of individual learning plans

23. Training advisers and managers are highly responsive to the individual needs of learners. Training advisers play a key role in providing support for learners and employers. They are effective in guiding supervisors on the requirements of

awarding bodies and the means by which skills may be acquired. They encourage employers to provide a broad range of experience for learners and assist in arranging temporary work placements with other companies to enable learners to extend their skills. The School uses a wide range of work placements to suit the needs of individual learners. For example, because some establishments close in low season, learners in these establishments go to other work placements to enable them to continue with their training and to gain wider skills experience. Training advisers arrange assessments out of office hours and at weekends to fit in with learners' shift patterns. Good use is made of the optional NVQ units within the overall target qualification, to ensure that learners' training programmes meet their needs and interests. However, if the units do not form part of learners' day-to-day work, the School arranges for learners to attend off-the-job training on a one-to-one basis to cover these units. Learners report that they can approach or telephone a member of staff at any time. School staff and employers respond promptly and positively to learners' problems. Staff encourage learners and provide practical support and guidance. The facilities and resources at the School are available to all learners as, and when, they require them.

24. Learners' progress reviews are thorough, frequent and well planned. The progress review process has been improved since the original inspection. They are carried out monthly, and more often in some cases, particularly for new learners. Revised paperwork is used to ensure that a wide range of aspects of the learner's programme is discussed. The new progress review form prompts more in-depth planning and is used effectively to identify and record action points, and to set short-term targets to be achieved by the next progress review. Supervisors and employers are involved in the progress reviews and contribute to the evaluation of progress and the planning of tasks, off-the-job training and assessments. Equality of opportunity and health and safety issues are fully explored during the progress reviews, and any issues that arise are dealt with promptly. Everyone involved in the progress review process receives a copy of the progress review report. The whole process allows the learner and employer to participate fully in setting the direction and pace of the training.

25. All learners have an initial assessment with a training adviser at the beginning of their training programme. The learner answers a series of questions and completes a profile that is used to judge the preferred work and learning styles of the learner. Learners also complete an initial assessment to identify the level of support needed to achieve the appropriate level of key skills. At the beginning of the training programme, staff discuss the needs of each learner from the results of the initial assessment. There is, however, no initial assessment of basic skills and there is no effective way of identifying the learners' competence in literacy or numeracy. Staff are not qualified to carry out basic skills testing or to provide basic skills support or training. Staff do, however, provide informal support when it is required.

26. Learners receive a wide-ranging induction to their training programme. The topics covered include health and safety, grievance and appeals procedures,

harassment in the workplace, equal opportunities, and the individual roles of the School's staff. Learners receive a comprehensive training guide. They also receive information about the structure and requirements of their NVQ training programme, and about the assessment and verification process. Learners have a good recall of the induction process and report that it provides an informative and helpful introduction to the School and the training. Learners generally have a good comprehension of the requirements of their training programme and understand the training and assessment process, and the support arrangements. Learners use key aspects of the induction programme as evidence towards the NVQ and key skills award. For example, learners use information gathered during the induction day as evidence of their understanding of health and safety. Learners unable to attend the induction day receive the same information in the workplace on a one-to-one basis.

27. Individual learning plans are not used effectively by training advisers. The School has produced its own individual learning plan to be used in conjunction with the required LSC document. However, at progress reviews, some training advisers use only the LSC learning plan and others use only the School's learning plan. There are three copies of each of the learning plans. One is in the learner's portfolio of evidence and the other two are in the learner's file. This causes confusion. There are inconsistencies in the way the learning plans are updated. There are many examples of missing signatures, target dates not updated and no target dates for some units and qualifications, including key skills awards. The individual learning plan does not provide learners with an overview of their progress. Individual learning plans are not monitored consistently, so learners who are behind schedule are not always identified.

Management of training

Grade 3

28. The Group is comprised of a catering company which specialises in outside and event catering, a recruitment agency, and the Isle of Wight School of Food and Wine. The School has offices, a training kitchen, and training rooms in the Group's premises in the centre of Newport. The commercial kitchen of the catering company is also used as an off-the-job training centre. The School's staff include a working director, who has overall responsibility for its management and also provides off-the-job training. A senior training adviser is responsible for the day-to-day management of the School. She is supported by two full-time training advisers and a part-time training adviser. Another director is occasionally employed on a freelance basis as a tutor and assessor. Training advisers visit employers to give advice, to review learners' progress and to assess learners in the workplace. Off-the-job training is carried out at the training centre and the commercial kitchens, and on employers' premises. Two staff are qualified internal verifiers and three are qualified assessors. In 2001, the Group achieved the Investors in People award, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ poor co-ordination of on-and off-the-job training
- ◆ inadequate management information system
- ◆ unclear staff roles and responsibilities

29. The School has made good progress towards rectifying the weaknesses identified during the original inspection. The co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is now satisfactory. Staff have job descriptions which accurately describe their roles and responsibilities, and these are clear to staff and learners. The management information system remains a weakness. The self-assessment report prepared for reinspection has been produced in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* and identifies a single set of strengths and weaknesses for leadership and management. Although the report provides detailed information about the School, it is not sufficiently self-critical and is not accurate in its identification of strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors identified different strengths and weaknesses. The same grade was awarded as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good support for employers
- ◆ good induction, development and training of staff
- ◆ strong internal communications

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate management information system
- ◆ lack of clear performance targets

30. The School provides good support for employers. They are given a comprehensive set of guidelines on work-based learning. The guidelines are clearly written and outline the roles of the training provider and the employer in areas such as induction, assessment, progress reviews, and health and safety. There is also clear guidance on the frameworks for NVQ training and modern apprenticeships. Training advisers visit employers regularly to monitor learners' progress. They work closely with employers to resolve problems as they arise, and give advice on matching training programmes to learners' and employers' needs. The School is flexible in meeting the needs of employers, and offers training in the workplace or in the training kitchens, and at times to suit the needs of the industry. Assessments are conducted out of office hours and at weekends. The School encourages employers to work towards trainers' qualifications, at no cost to the employer.

31. New staff have a comprehensive and thorough induction. Staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities. The School has expanded recently and staff have been carefully prepared to take on more responsibility, through training, work-shadowing and mentoring. All staff have accurate, detailed job descriptions

and a progress review system has recently been introduced to structure staff appraisals and to identify staff development needs. In order to provide ongoing effective support for learners, individual staff development plans focus on increasing the occupational competence of staff and on improving the way in which they carry out their roles at work. For example, two members of staff are to carry out nationally accredited training in identifying weaknesses in basic skills and linking basic skills support to occupational training. During 2001, staff have participated in a wide range of training activities to develop their skills. All staff have completed additional training in health and safety, and two staff are working towards trainers' qualifications. The adviser responsible for equal opportunities has been trained in the promotion of equal opportunities, and this training has been shared with the rest of the team.

32. All staff are well informed about the School's objectives. Because it is a small organisation, all staff meet and communicate informally on a daily basis. Staff attend weekly team meetings and monthly staff meetings. Training issues, including learners' progress and assessment, are discussed at the weekly team meetings. All staff have access to the LSC contract, and the monthly meetings provide a forum for all staff to review progress. They are encouraged to offer ideas and express any concerns they may have. Minutes identify actions to be taken and those responsible for carrying them out. Staff are well supported by senior managers and there are good working relationships between the different elements of the Group. The School is able to draw on all aspects of the business to provide support to learners.

33. The School's management information system is inadequate. Data on all aspects of learners' rates of recruitment, achievement and progress are poor. Data are not systematically collated and analysed to determine patterns and trends. Some of the data available to guide decision-making are of a poor standard and are unreliable.

34. There are no targets set for improving rates of recruitment, retention and achievement. Rates of retention and achievement are not analysed across different qualifications or qualification levels. There is no year-on-year comparison of rates of retention and achievement to establish trends. Staff have a good understanding of the School's aims and objectives, but they do not have specific individual targets relating to rates of achievement. The Group's business plan does not include any targets for the School against which rates of recruitment, retention and achievement can be measured.

Quality assurance

Grade 4

35. The senior training adviser is responsible for quality assurance. The School has produced a quality assurance manual which contains the paperwork relating to the School's training. A copy of this manual has been given to all members of staff. There is no quality assurance policy. There is an equal opportunities policy

and a health and safety policy. Two members of staff are qualified internal verifiers. Quality assurance is reviewed and monitored at monthly staff meetings. The School regularly sends out questionnaires to employers and learners.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ failure of quality assurance system to cover all aspects of training
- ◆ poor self-assessment process
- ◆ poor internal verification
- ◆ no monitoring of quality of training

36. Since the original inspection, the School has taken action to improve internal verification practices and procedures. There is frequent observation of assessments and detailed feedback is given to assessors. Once problems are identified, actions are agreed to remedy them. There are procedures that meet all the requirements of internal verification and assessors are well supported. Quality assurance arrangements and the absence of any monitoring of the quality of training remain weaknesses. Self-assessment is no longer carried out solely by a senior manager. The School now consults its staff and involves them in making judgements about the quality of training. The School also used the views of learners and employers when compiling the most recent self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective use of feedback to improve training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ no monitoring of the quality of training

37. Feedback from learners and employers is sought regularly and is used to improve the quality of training. The school has made various changes as a result of questionnaires. As a result of feedback on the practice of communicating with employers and learners only by letter, the School now produces a regular calendar of training workshops and postcards containing information about workshops. The School has also introduced monthly telephone surveys for learners and employers, and this has increased the rate of response to evaluation surveys. Feedback from questionnaires has led to the introduction of a more comprehensive group induction. Evaluation of the induction indicates that it provides learners with a more effective introduction to the training programme. Learners can now choose between individual coaching and small group workshops for off-the-job training. Recommendations made in external verifier reports are introduced and have led to improvements in assessment practices and in internal verification.

38. Since the original inspection, the School has taken action to introduce systems to improve the quality of training. However, quality assurance arrangements remain inadequate. A quality assurance manual has been produced which

standardises and catalogues the paperwork to be used in most key training processes, and acts as a reference source. This has been helpful in ensuring that staff use a common set of forms and information when recruiting learners and employers, and when carrying out progress reviews. There is, however, no written information to explain to staff how the system is co-ordinated. There are also no detailed, written procedures which provide guidance on how key aspects of training such as initial assessment, induction and progress reviews should be carried out, or the standards required. Tasks such as the completion and updating of individual learning plans are not being carried out in a consistent manner. The system for controlling documents, and dating policies and paperwork, is not applied consistently. Internal audits of learners' files are conducted every three months, but are not always effective in highlighting failures to sign, date and update individual learning plans.

39. There is no monitoring of the quality of training provided in the School's training centres or in the workplace. There is no regular observation of training to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. The quality assurance manual does not provide written procedures on the planning and carrying out of observations of training, or the assessment criteria to be used by the observers.