

TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT
OCTOBER 2000

ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE REINSPECTION
JANUARY 2002

North London Garage Group Training Association



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 **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.

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 North London Garage Group Training Association was carried out by the Training Standards Council's inspectors. The inspection resulted in less than satisfactory grades being awarded for equal opportunities 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 equal opportunities 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).

North London Garage Group Training Association provides satisfactory training in engineering. Off-the-job training is planned carefully and well structured. Resources for off-the-job training are good. Some employers enable learners to undertake a wide range of tasks in the workplace. Training and assessment in some workplaces, however, are not planned systematically. Over one third of modern apprentices leave their programme early without gaining any qualifications. At the original inspection, there was insufficient monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace, and learners had little understanding of equal opportunity issues. There was no specific action to recruit learners from under-represented groups and no training for staff in equal opportunities. Data are now used effectively to promote motor vehicle training programmes to under-represented groups. New learners receive information and guidance about equal opportunities during their induction but this is not reinforced during their training programmes. There is adequate monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace. Staff now have a good understanding of issues related to equal opportunities but have not received training on these. Arrangements for the quality assurance of training and assessment are now satisfactory. They cover training provided by subcontractors. Training sessions are observed. Subcontractors have service agreements. Staff, however, still make insufficient use of data when carrying out quality assurance. The self-assessment process is now more thorough but it has not been made an integral part of the quality assurance system.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Engineering	3

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Quality assurance	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ extensive range of training opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ success of level 1 learners in progressing to employment and further training
- ◆ efficient system for matching learners to job vacancies
- ◆ effective use of equal opportunities data
- ◆ good management procedures
- ◆ good quality assurance of training and assessment

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor retention rates on the modern apprenticeship programme
- ◆ failure to set learners clear targets during progress reviews
- ◆ no post-induction training for learners in equal opportunities
- ◆ insufficient use of data in quality assurance
- ◆ lack of integration of self-assessment with the quality assurance system

INTRODUCTION

1. The North London Garage Group Training Association (NLGGTA) was originally formed in 1970 by a group of owners of local garages in association with an industrial training board. In 1983, involvement with the training board ceased and since then, the association has employed its own staff. The group management committee meets at least once a year and consists of representatives from each of the 50 member companies. The association maintains contact with more than 300 employers in the motor vehicle trade across north London. The executive management committee of six members, five of whom are elected from the group's membership, meets three times each year. The association has 17 staff of whom nine work full-time.

2. NLGGTA is based on an industrial trading estate in Brimsdown, Enfield. Its main block comprises a suite of management and administration offices and four classrooms. Workshops for training leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in lift truck operation and motor vehicle servicing are located in a large warehouse 100 metres from the main office block. Movement between the two buildings involves crossing a busy area used by large vehicles accessing an industrial waste site. Learners moving between the two buildings are escorted by staff and are asked to wear high-visibility jackets. NLGGTA also subcontracts training to four further education colleges in London and one in the West Midlands.

3. At the time of the original inspection, NLGGTA provided work-based learning for 196 learners through contracts with the former North London Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and FOCUS TEC. It also provided basic training in fork truck operation for clients in the Learning Gateway of New Deal. At the time of the reinspection, NLGGTA was providing work-based learning for 165 learners through a contract with London North Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and 24 learners through a contract with London Central LSC. Of these, 129 were advanced modern apprentices, 40 were foundation modern apprentices and 20 were on NVQ training programmes. There were no New Deal clients at the time of the reinspection.

4. The London North LSC area includes the boroughs of Enfield, Haringey and Barnet and in these, 214,000 people are employed across 17,000 businesses. There are 790,000 residents in the three boroughs, representing 11 per cent of the population of London. In the London Central LSC area, there is a workforce of 467,000 but relatively few people are employed in the motor vehicle repair trade. At the time of the original inspection, unemployment rates for Enfield, Haringey and Barnet were 5.4 per cent, 11.4 per cent and 2.9 per cent, respectively, compared with the national average of 3.4 per cent. In September 2001, the unemployment rates in Enfield, Haringey and Barnet were 4.4 per cent, 8.8 per cent, and 3.1 per cent respectively, compared with the national average of 2.9 per

cent. The proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups in London is 20.2 per cent, compared with the national average of 6.2 per cent. The proportion of people in Haringey from minority ethnic groups is higher at 29 per cent, and in the boroughs of Enfield and Barnet it is 14.1 and 18.4 per cent, respectively. At the time of the original inspection, the proportion of school leavers in the North London boroughs achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, was 47 per cent, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent. In 2001, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more GCSEs in the three boroughs of Barnet, Enfield and Haringey was 56 per cent, 47 per cent, and 31 per cent, respectively, compared with the national average of 50 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. NLGGTA completed its first self-assessment report in September 1998 and revised it in February 1999, with assistance from the former North London TEC. The second self-assessment report was produced in August 2000, before the original inspection. Two senior members of staff compiled the report. Most of the NLGGTA staff were consulted during the self-assessment process. Views of employers and learners were sought through informal discussions and questionnaires. The self-assessment report failed to identify clearly weaknesses in each of the four generic aspects. At the start of the inspection, NLGGTA produced a revised statement of the strengths and weaknesses in the occupational and generic areas. An action plan was produced following the original inspection, which included a new process for producing its self-assessment report. The chief executive wrote the third self-assessment report in October 2001, with support from London North and London Central Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs).

6. The original inspection was carried out by four inspectors, who spent a total of 16 days with NLGGTA in October 2000. They interviewed 49 learners, two New Deal clients and four staff employed by contractors. They also conducted 19 interviews with NLGGTA's staff. Inspectors made 16 visits to workplaces and met 14 workplace managers and supervisors. They looked at 31 learners' files, 22 portfolios of evidence, contracts, external verifiers' reports, health and safety and on equal opportunities policies, written procedures for, and evidence gained through, quality assurance, minutes of meetings, and promotional materials. Inspectors observed four reviews of learners' progress. They observed five training sessions and gave a grade 3 to four and a grade 4 to one.

7. The reinspection of NLGGTA was carried out by two inspectors over a total of eight days in January 2002. They visited six work placements and three subcontracted colleges. They interviewed 11 NLGGTA staff, five staff from subcontracted colleges and 30 learners. They reviewed 10 individual learning plans and six portfolios. They looked at paperwork, records and the reports of internal and external verifiers.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Engineering

Grade 3

8. There are 196 motor vehicle trainees on NLGGTA's programmes. Of these, 140 are advanced modern apprentices and 39 are foundation modern apprentices. The remaining 17 trainees are on other work-based training programmes for young people. Most of the trainees are working towards NVQs in light or heavy vehicle repair servicing and body repair at levels 2 and 3. Trainees are employed or are on placement with employers ranging from large franchised dealerships to small, privately owned garages. Fifty-six per cent of trainees attend off-the-job training at

the NLGGTA's training centre. Most of the remaining trainees receive off-the-job training provided by one of two subcontracted colleges of further education. Six trainees attend a college in the Midlands for specialist work on heavy vehicle maintenance. Twelve unemployed trainees are on a 16-week programme leading to an NVQ in vehicle service replacement at level 1. The unemployed trainees attend NLGGTA's training centre for three days each week for theory sessions, portfolio-building and practical training in the centre's vehicle workshop. The remaining two days are spent with an employer on work experience. Trainees working towards qualifications in vehicle body repair, vehicle refinishing and service replacement have the opportunity to achieve additional qualifications in welding and vehicle valeting. NLGGTA has six training officers and one assessor who assess trainees in the workplace and at the training centre. Inspectors considered some of the strengths stated in the self-assessment report to be no more than normal practice. They awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ extensive range of training opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ good resources for off-the-job training
- ◆ effective key skills assignment

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no clear assessment schedule
- ◆ narrow range of evidence in some trainees' portfolios
- ◆ low retention rate on advanced modern apprenticeship programme

9. Most work placements have excellent facilities and good equipment and trainees benefit from a wide variety of learning opportunities. Trainees are allocated to a skilled member of staff who teaches them new skills. Some employers have developed a programme which allows trainees to rotate jobs on a regular basis and work with different members of staff to widen their experience. In larger work placements, trainees are given the opportunity to attend manufacturers' specialist training courses. If trainees are unable to develop all the requisite NVQ competencies in their particular workplace, NLGGTA's training officers arrange for them to transfer to another workplace where they are able to undertake a wider range of tasks.

10. Off-the-job training resources at NLGGTA's training centre include desktop electronic diagnosis equipment for anti-lock braking, fuel injection and electronic ignition systems. Faults can be programmed into the equipment for trainees to identify. Training classrooms are equipped with television and video facilities. These run the interactive video system which covers all areas of the knowledge requirements for the NVQ in light vehicle engineering at levels 1, 2 and 3. Lecturers make good use of the video system training sessions. Trainees are able to use the programme themselves to extend their learning. NLGGTA also has a

purpose-built information technology classroom where other software may be used. Trainees have access to a health and safety reference programme to help them complete their assignment on auditing work-based safety practices, which also helps to develop trainees' key skills in communication and information technology. The two local subcontracted colleges of further education provide good off-the-job training resources for vehicle body repair and vehicle refinishing trainees. The trainees use paint mixing systems and chassis alignment equipment of industry standard. Trainees have access to spray bake ovens and individual spraying booths. Trainees gather evidence of their acquisition of NVQ competencies in a realistic working environment. A range of welding equipment is available, giving trainees the opportunity to achieve additional welding qualifications at level 2. One college had a good range of modern vehicles. During the training sessions observed by inspectors, however, these vehicles were not used and the trainees were working on much older vehicles.

11. The ratio of qualified staff to trainees is high. NLGGTA staff who manage and assess the engineering training are well qualified and have had many years of working in the industry. Subcontracted colleges also have suitably qualified and well-experienced staff. Most of NLGGTA's trainers have achieved a teaching certificate or attended a course on instructional techniques. Some of NLGGTA's training officers have achieved the key skills practitioners' award as part of their staff training programme.

12. Trainees are assessed in the workplace by qualified assessors. The trainees are assessed carrying out their everyday tasks. Assessment, however, is not planned systematically and trainees are not always aware that they are being assessed. Assessors' feedback to trainees is not recorded well. Trainees are not always given enough information on how they can improve their performance. The evidence in some trainees' portfolios is narrow in its scope. There is a disproportionate amount of testimony from witnesses of trainees' performance. Insufficient use is made of media such as audio and video tapes and photographs.

POOR PRACTICE

There are inadequate physical resources for LVM at one subcontractor. Following the scheme of work, trainees are required to carry out individual practical tasks prior to assessment. Inspectors observed a workshop training session when five trainees were working on one vehicle at the same time. Trainees would take it in turns to carry out part of the task until complete.

13. Staff at NLGGTA have identified ways in which the modern apprentices can identify evidence of their acquisition of key skills and requisite knowledge of theory, through their occupational tasks. Assessors from NLGGTA gather evidence of trainees' acquisition of key skills in the workplace. The subcontractors' assessors, however, do not gather evidence of trainees' key skills from trainees' performance in everyday activities. The trainees who attend one of the two local colleges on day release demonstrate their key skills under simulated work-based conditions. Off-the-job training is well structured and planned. During their induction, trainees are provided with a weekly programme of training activities.

14. There were 281 trainees who started an advanced modern apprenticeship between 1997 and 1999. Of these, 109, or 39 per cent, left the programme without achieving further qualifications. Of the 56 apprentices who started three years ago, in 1997, 27 have fulfilled all the objectives in their training plans and seven

apprentices are still on the programme. In 1998, 48 trainees joined the advanced modern apprenticeship programme. Twenty trainees have gained an NVQ at level 2 and key skills certification and are now working towards NVQs at level 3.

15. There were 153 trainees who started a foundation modern apprenticeship between 1998 and 1999. Of these, 41 trainees have left the programme without achieving further qualifications. In 1998, 114 trainees joined the foundation modern apprenticeship programme. Fifty-one trainees have completed the foundation modern apprenticeship. Since 1998, 20 trainees have started other youth training programmes. Ten trainees have subsequently become advanced modern apprentices, six have left with no qualifications and the remainder are still in training.

16. Between 1997 and 1999, 105 trainees joined the 16-week programme for unemployed young people, leading to an NVQ at level 1. Sixty-eight trainees have achieved all the targets in their individual training plans.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

17. The chief executive has overall responsibility for the promotion of equal opportunities in the organisation. NLGGTA's equal opportunity policy was reviewed and updated last year. Following a restructuring of the senior management team last year, a senior member of staff is now responsible for monitoring and promoting equal opportunities. Equal opportunities is a standing agenda item at monthly staff meetings. Of the 17 members of staff, eight work part-time, four are women and two are from minority ethnic groups. Of the 189 learners, two are young women and 56 are from minority ethnic groups.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ no specific initiatives to promote training to under-represented groups
- ◆ lack of understanding of equal opportunities issues by learners
- ◆ insufficient staff training related to equal opportunities
- ◆ insufficient monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace

18. Following the original inspection, NLGGTA launched initiatives to promote training to groups under-represented on programmes. More young women and people from minority ethnic groups have been recruited for motor vehicle training. Learners and staff now have a better understanding of equal opportunities. Staff, however, have not been given any training related to equal opportunities. Inspectors agreed with the weaknesses and all but one of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report. They awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective use of comprehensive equal opportunities data
- ◆ good complaints process

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no additional training for learners in equal opportunities following induction
- ◆ insufficient staff training related to equal opportunities

GOOD PRACTICE

NLGGTA's newsletter, which is distributed to all local motor vehicle employers, included an interesting article on the need to recruit young women into the trade. It asked for help in looking at ways to increase participation of young women in motor vehicle engineering at a time of increasing skills shortages.

19. For the past eight years, NLGGTA has collected a wide range of data on its learners, applicants and those leaving its training programmes. Data includes information about the gender, ethnicity, and disabilities of applicants and learners, and the localities where learners live. These data are analysed by the equal opportunities manager and are discussed at monthly staff meetings. Using these data, NLGGTA staff have carried out research into why some groups are under-represented among its learners and have promoted motor vehicle training to them. They have forged links with minority ethnic and community groups to encourage more people from under-represented groups to apply for training. Appropriate local LSC leaflets in a wide range of minority ethnic languages are available to help young people and their parents. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups has risen from 8.7 per cent last year to 35 per cent this year.

20. At the time of the original inspection, there were no female learners. NLGGTA and some employers have tried hard to attract young women to programmes and they have used female employees and learners as role models in their marketing of motor vehicle engineering to young women. The proportion of young women on training programmes has remained low, however, at just over 2 per cent. NLGGTA has produced well-designed marketing literature and posters, which include images of women and learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. Advertisements state that NLGGTA is an equal opportunities employer and that it particularly welcomes applications from women.

21. Managers and careers companies have discussed why there is little or no recruitment of learners from some localities. NLGGTA staff have visited schools and careers events in particular areas, to promote recruitment to motor vehicle engineering.

22. NLGGTA staff now check the equal opportunities policies of work-placement providers and employers and monitor the promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace. All employers are given an attractively designed information pack, which includes notes, and a model policy on equal opportunities. All learners are told about the organisation's complaints procedure at induction and it is displayed on NLGGTA notice boards. Learners are reminded about the procedure at their quarterly progress reviews. They are given a well-written statement on what constitutes bullying and harassment. This also pledges the organisation to take any complaint about bullying or harassment seriously, whether at work or during training. Learners are encouraged to talk to staff about their concerns. All

complaints are logged, and resolved quickly. Learners are always informed of the outcome. NLGGTA no longer places learners with some employers because of their inappropriate treatment of learners.

23. At their induction, all learners receive information on equal opportunities. They have a sound understanding of equal opportunity issues. They are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Training officers discuss equal opportunity issues with learners at their quarterly reviews. Learners also respond to a six-monthly questionnaire, which includes questions on their understanding of equal opportunities. Learners do not receive any training on equal opportunities after their induction. They are not kept informed of key developments and new legislation in this area.

24. Few staff have had training on equal opportunities. Some have received information about equal opportunities and relevant legislation when attending external courses. They discuss what they have learnt with colleagues at monthly staff meetings. Action has been taken to make staff more aware of the importance of equal opportunities. An equal opportunities file is kept at the reception desk for staff to refer to. This is updated regularly and staff have easy access to it. There is, however, no systematic means of updating staff regularly on equal opportunities issues, including new legislation. The proportion of staff from minority groups is 12 per cent and this is about the same as the proportion of people from these groups in the local population. One quarter of the staff are female.

Trainee support

Grade 3

25. NLGGTA recruits most of its trainees through the careers service. It has links and maintains regular contact with 11 offices in the north and northwest London areas. NLGGTA gives all applicants an occupational and basic skills test together with an interview. NLGGTA expects applicants to have at least a grade D in their GCSEs, although this is not a rigid requirement. Successful applicants attend a half-day induction to their NVQ programme. Trainees attend off-the-job training as part of their programme and this takes place at the Brimsdown centre or a local college. Reviews of trainees' progress are carried out by NLGGTA's training staff. The self-assessment report identified two strengths and one weakness. Inspectors agreed with the identified strengths and found some other weaknesses. They awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ efficient system for matching trainees to employers' vacancies
- ◆ thorough and systematic initial assessment and interview process
- ◆ good help and support for trainees on the level 1 programme
- ◆ good progression for level 1 trainees to employment or further training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no follow-up to brief induction programme
- ◆ little updating of individual training plans
- ◆ failure to set trainees targets during progress reviews

26. NLGGTA has regular contact with a wide range of careers offices in the north and northwest boroughs of London. These areas include, for example, Edgware, Walthamstow, Camden, Wembley, Finchley, Enfield and Barnet. Advertisements are also placed in the local press for recruitment purposes. Some trainees are referred to NLGGTA by the Employment Service. NLGGTA encourages local garages to send details of job vacancies to the training centre. NLGGTA's staff then arrange for trainees to have work placements at garages where there are job vacancies. NLGGTA is currently able to draw on a wide range of placements with 97 employers. At the time of inspection, 37 of these employers had job vacancies.

27. All applicants are invited to take part in an initial assessment of their mechanical aptitude and basic skills. Following assessment, applicants have an interview with a member of staff to discuss the assessment results and decide which training programme is most suitable for them. Those applicants whose assessment results indicate they are capable of achieving an NVQ at level 2 or 3 are offered foundation or advanced modern apprenticeships. Applicants whose assessment results are not as good are offered a place on the 16-week NVQ programme at level 1. Level 1 trainees spend three days a week at the centre for both theory and practical training and 2 days in a work placement. Applicants whose assessment results indicate that they need help with their literacy and numeracy skills are referred to the careers office for additional assessment and, where appropriate, basic skills training. Applicants whose assessment results indicate that their attainment is no higher than level 1, receive a special training endorsement.

28. NLGGTA's staff recognise and take into account the extent to which trainees have acquired key skills through work for previous qualifications. However, trainees do not have clear targets set for them, relating to key skills, in their individual training plans.

29. Applicants who are successful are able to discuss their specific work preferences at interview. They are able to choose from a variety of work placements. These can involve them in a range of tasks, including working with cars or trucks as a mechanic, repairing car bodywork, and working in the parts department of a garage. If possible, a suitable work placement is identified for successful candidates at their interview. Arrangements are then made, as soon as possible and sometimes on the same day, for them to be interviewed by the employer offering the placement. NLGGTA's staff try to find a work placement as near as possible to the trainee's home. Trainees on the level 1 programme receive financial assistance with their travel costs.

30. Trainees taking part in the level 1 programme make good progress. Trainees

on this programme come from a variety of backgrounds and many have not done well at school. Trainees said that although they were disappointed that their performance in their initial assessment was not good enough to enable them to work towards an NVQ at level 2, they realised that the level 1 programme was more appropriate for them. Trainees on the level 1 programme receive good help and support. They have monthly reviews of their progress and frequent and regular contact with staff at the training centre, who do all they can to help the trainees overcome any barriers which impede their progress. In the past three years, 65 per cent of trainees on the programme have achieved their NVQ at level 1 and most have progressed to level 2 programmes.

31. All trainees take part in an induction programme at the Brimsdown centre and at their work placement. Trainees receive an induction pack, which includes a health and safety guide, a TEC charter for participants and a trainees' handbook. The trainees' handbook includes the content of the induction programme, which usually lasts one day, and includes a brief description of the company, safety policies, standard documents and details of their training programme. Trainees had good recall of what they were told about health and safety during induction. Issues relating to equal opportunities are not covered in sufficient depth during induction. Many trainees do not understand the modern apprenticeship framework and some are unable to give the correct title of the NVQ towards which they are working. The induction programme at the training centre sometimes lasts for only half a day and there is little follow-up to induction topics to aid trainees' understanding of them.

32. Following induction, individual training plans are compiled for all trainees. Many of these are detailed and comprehensive and specify, for example, all the NVQ units the trainees have to complete and details of training in the workplace. Some, however, omit important details, such as the name of the college where the off-the-job training takes place. The individual training plans are not always referred to during trainees' progress reviews, or updated afterwards.

33. Trainees receive regular reviews of their progress both on and off the job. Level 1 trainees have progress reviews every month, and trainees on programmes funded by North London TEC and FOCUS TEC have reviews every eight weeks and every three months respectively. NLGGTA's staff visit trainees in the workplace to carry out progress reviews more frequently, when necessary. NLGGTA staff seek comments from employers and workplace supervisors on trainees' progress before carrying out the reviews. Employers and workplace supervisors, however, do not take part in the progress reviews and are not given any record of them. The reviews are mainly of a pastoral nature and trainees are not set demanding targets related to the achievement of the NVQ and the acquisition of key skills. During their progress reviews, trainees do not engage in action planning to improve their performance. Action planning for achieving the NVQ takes place, however, during a separate assessment session off the job. Both trainees and workplace supervisors are unclear about the difference between the roles of the staff who carry out the progress reviews and the roles of the assessors.

Management of training

Grade 3

34. The chief executive and centre manager head the senior management team. There is a team of six full-time training officers and assessors. Four full-time and one part-time staff are responsible for training at NLGGTA's training centre. Support staff include a part-time technician in the workshop, a recruitment officer, two administrators and the company secretary in the offices. NLGGTA has a detailed procedures and work instruction manual. NLGGTA subcontracts training to three colleges, of which two are local and one is a specialist college in the Midlands. NLGGTA has 110 trainees attending its training centre, 45 trainees and 35 trainees respectively attend each of the two local colleges and six trainees attend the specialist college. The numbers of trainees joining the motor vehicle programmes in each of the past three years were 135 in 1997-98, 139 in 1998-99 and 158 in 1999-2000. The NLGGTA holds the Investors in People Standard and was successfully reassessed for this in 1999. Staff meet regularly. Staff receive an annual appraisal, and the comments they make during this are fed back to management. Employers are informed of new developments through a regular newsletter. They are invited to offer feedback by any means including e-mail and through liaison with the training officers who visit trainees in their workplace. In its second and most recent self-assessment report, NLGGTA did not identify weaknesses in the management of training. They issued a revised statement of strengths and weaknesses at the start of the inspection. Inspectors agreed with one of the strengths but considered other strengths and the weaknesses to be more relevant to other areas. Inspectors found additional weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ clear and comprehensive set of operational procedures
- ◆ effective management of staff
- ◆ good links with employers at management level

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ lack of understanding of NVQs and key skills by workplace supervisors
- ◆ inadequate co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training by subcontractors

35. NLGGTA has a comprehensive set of clear operational procedures and work instructions. Each individual procedure and instruction is explained by a flow chart. This clearly sets out the stages of the procedure, the action to be carried out and who has responsibility for its implementation. The operations manual is placed in the main office for reference purposes. New staff joining the organisation are introduced to the operational procedures and working instructions progressively, as they become more familiar with the organisation's work. Amendments to the procedures and instructions are in accordance with ISO 9002 quality assurance

procedures. All staff contribute to the updating of the operations manual through the auditing procedures as well as during staff and team meetings.

36. The senior management team produces annual business plans, which set goals and targets for the next five years. Progress in implementing the plans is reviewed quarterly during senior management team meetings. NLGGTA is committed to staff development and training. An audit of the skills of all staff has been carried out. From this, the objectives for staff development are identified and related to the business goals and targets set out in the business plan. All staff receive an annual appraisal. During this, training is identified which staff need to help the organisation implement its business plan successfully. Staff are also invited to offer feedback to their managers during their appraisal. Two training officers have had their job roles and responsibilities changed to ensure that training and assessment at the training centre are subject to effective quality assurance. One training officer is now responsible for co-ordinating the in-house assessment and internal verification processes in relation to NVQs and key skills. The other training officer is responsible for trainee support provided in-house, and for overseeing the development of trainees' portfolios.

37. There is an induction process for new members of staff. One new member of staff described this as detailed and valuable. Senior management, administrators and training staff are all involved in the induction process. During the induction period, a training plan is drawn up for the new member of staff. New members of staff are initially shadowed by an experienced member of staff who acts as a mentor.

38. NLGGTA has a membership of over 50 employers and commitment from over 130 motor vehicle companies to help and support trainees in the workplace. NLGGTA is a founder member of the national collective of training groups, which is now incorporated into a larger national training collective. Business links with motor vehicle employers in the north London area have been developed over 30 years. Each employer receives a quarterly newsletter, and is invited to offer feedback. NLGGTA is now offering information through its website. The feedback employers provide shows that they are very pleased with the training NLGGTA provides in the north London area. Some employers, who do not have their own induction programme for trainees, receive help and advice from NLGGTA's staff on how to provide one. NLGGTA provides these employers with sample induction programmes.

39. Some employers move the trainees round their workshop to ensure they have a wide range of experience and are able to develop a variety of skills. Trainees have the opportunity to attend external courses on motor manufacturers' products or on specialist body repair. NLGGTA does not, however, ensure that workplace supervisors are fully aware of their responsibility to help and support trainees. Training to help trainees achieve their NVQ and develop key skills is not planned systematically. Some workplace supervisors had little understanding of the NVQ in motor vehicle engineering or of the specifications for key skills. In most

instances, training is incidental rather than structured.

40. NLGGTA subcontracts the training and assessment for 44 per cent of its trainees to colleges. The colleges have failed to ensure the off-the-job training is always relevant to trainees' work in the workplace. The staff from local colleges do not assess trainees through direct observation of their work in the workplace. The two local colleges, however, have made arrangements to carry out work-based assessments in the current academic year. The structure of the academic year and college terms can have an adverse effect on the rate of trainees' progress. For example, modern apprentices working towards an NVQ at level 3 had failed to complete the coaching unit by the end of the last academic year. NLGGTA's staff had raised this issue with the college but it remained unresolved by the time of the inspection, four months later.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

41. NLGGTA has met the requirements of ISO 9002, an international quality assurance standard, since May 1994. The chief executive is responsible for quality assurance in NLGGTA and is assisted by three staff auditors. The organisation has a quality assurance manual, operational procedures and working instructions. All procedures and working instructions are reviewed annually. The quality assurance system is currently being amended to meet the requirements of the new ISO 9001-2000, which is an international quality assurance standard. Learners' and employers' views are obtained through questionnaires, informal feedback and at learners' progress reviews. NLGGTA's quality assurance system meets the requirements of several awarding bodies and its effectiveness is monitored by local LSC staff.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ insufficient monitoring of staff performance
- ◆ inadequate monitoring of subcontractors
- ◆ lack of rigour in self-assessment
- ◆ inadequate quality assurance of training and assessment

42. Following the original inspection, NLGGTA produced an action plan and has made significant progress to resolve identified weaknesses. A member of staff now has responsibility for observing all instructors and trainers. Internal verifiers monitor assessments. They have a programme for observing assessments regularly. There are service level agreements with all colleges. NLGGTA has produced a thorough self-assessment report and an action plan. Self-assessment, however, is not yet an integral part of the quality assurance system. Performance data are not analysed effectively. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses cited in the self-assessment report but they found a weakness the organisation had not identified. They awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective internal monitoring
- ◆ effective quality assurance of training and assessment

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient use of data
- ◆ lack of integration of self-assessment with quality assurance system

43. NLGGTA's quality assurance system focuses on learners' experiences. The system is successful in leading to improvements in the performance of learners and staff. Procedures cover areas such as learners' attendance, punctuality, quarterly progress reviews, complaints, training and assessment. Trained internal auditors monitor use of the procedures regularly and all are checked at least once a year. Any problems identified are recorded and action is taken to correct them. Learners' attendance at training sessions is monitored carefully and has improved. The attendance rate of NLGGTA learners is now 86 per cent. Internal audits have proved effective. For example, an internal audit report identified that a trainer had not taken appropriate action to deal with one learner's lateness. Subsequently, the trainer dealt with the problem satisfactorily.

44. Quality assurance of training and assessment is carried out in a variety of ways. The teaching of staff in both theory and practical training sessions is observed at least twice a year. They are given verbal feedback on their performance, which is followed by a detailed written report. The report contains recommendations on how staff can improve their performance. Feedback is obtained from learners on the quality of all their training, including that provided by subcontractors. NLGGTA has service level agreements with all its colleges. Agreements specify what is expected of the college and state that college lecturers will be observed by NLGGTA staff.

45. Internal verifiers help and support the NLGGTA assessors. In addition to NLGGTA's own assessors, there are also 12 assessors on employers' premises and in work placements. All NLGGTA assessors are observed twice a year as they carry out assessments. New assessors are observed more frequently. All work-based assessors are given a pack, which contains a copy of the NVQ standards. The pack also contains a copy of NLGGTA's equal opportunities policy, the procedure for appealing against assessment decisions, and various documents relating to assessment. Assessors receive training on new NVQ standards when these are introduced. They have to demonstrate that they understand these new standards before carrying out assessments relating to them.

46. When carrying out quality assurance, managers do not make effective use of data on the progress and performance of learners. They do not analyse information about the quality of training gathered through feedback from employers and learners' responses to six-monthly questionnaires. There are no targets for

individual learning programmes. Managers take action, however, on issues raised by learners in their responses to questionnaires. For example, learners complained of the absence of refreshment facilities in the training centre and appropriate vending machines have now been installed there.

47. NLGGTA has engaged in annual self-assessment for the past four years. NLGGTA produced a self-assessment report prior to the reinspection. Self-assessment is not an integral part of the quality assurance system. Managers produced the self-assessment report after gathering feedback from staff. Learners and employers were not consulted during the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report was accompanied by an action plan for building on strengths and rectifying weaknesses. The action plan is being implemented. Inspectors awarded the same grades as those given in the self-assessment report.