

TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT
NOVEMBER 2000

ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE REINSPECTION
MARCH 2002

Southport College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- ◆ work-based training for all people over 16
- ◆ provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- ◆ the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- ◆ adult and community learning
- ◆ learning and job preparation programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus
- ◆ education and training in prisons, at the invitation of her majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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 Southport College 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).

Southport College provides satisfactory training in hairdressing. At the time of the original inspection, the hospitality training programme was less than satisfactory. At reinspection, training in hospitality is still less than satisfactory. Learners on hairdressing training programmes produce good practical work. There are good resources for training in hairdressing and hospitality in the college and in the workplace. There is insufficient use of workplace evidence by assessors. Key skills evidence for learners on hospitality training programmes is not adequately assessed. At the original inspection, equal opportunities, trainee support, management of training and quality assurance were less than satisfactory. At reinspection, these generic areas are still less than satisfactory. There is effective equal opportunities training for staff, but the monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace is inadequate. The initial assessment of learners' key skills and the progress review process is inadequate. There is poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. There is insufficient use of management data and staff do not fully understand their roles and responsibilities. There is inadequate quality assurance of work-based learning and there has been late action to rectify weaknesses.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Hospitality	4
Hair & beauty	3

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Hospitality	4

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good resources for on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ wide range of training opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ comprehensive review of equal opportunities policy and procedures
- ◆ particularly good individual guidance for learners
- ◆ effective monitoring of off-the-job training

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient assessment in the workplace
- ◆ no key skills assessment for hospitality learners
- ◆ inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ inadequate initial assessment of basic skills
- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ inadequate quality assurance of work-based learning
- ◆ late action planning to rectify weaknesses

INTRODUCTION

1. Southport College is a further education college situated close to the centre of the seaside town of Southport, Merseyside. At the original inspection, the college had 303 full-time equivalent staff, 171 of whom are teaching staff. At reinspection, there are 308.5 full-time equivalent staff, 175.5 of whom are teaching staff. The college was formed in 1983 from the merger of Southport Technical College and the local arts school. At the original inspection, the college provided further and higher education to around 14,000 students each year. Approximately 2,000 students were on full-time courses. At reinspection, the college has increased its numbers to 16,927 students, 1,777 of whom are on full-time courses. The college attracts students from all age groups, although at the original inspection approximately 75 per cent were aged 25 years or over. At reinspection, the proportion of students aged over 25 has increased to 77.4 per cent. Courses are offered in all of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) programme areas. The levels taught range from basic skills to degree courses franchised from local universities.

2. There is a sixth form college three miles away from Southport College and other further education colleges in the surrounding towns of Bootle, Skelmersdale, Leyland and Preston. There are secondary schools with sixth forms in Southport, Ormskirk, Formby and Maghull. The local education authority of Sefton supports two special schools with students over 16 years of age. There are also a number of private schools and private training providers in the local area.

3. At the time of the original inspection, the college had a contract with Merseyside Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) to provide advanced modern apprenticeships, foundation modern apprenticeships and other work-based learning programmes for young people and adults. Southport College now has a contract with Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide modern apprenticeship training for young people. At the original inspection, there were 30 learners comprising 16 advanced modern apprentices and 14 foundation modern apprentices. At reinspection there are 28 learners, comprising six advanced modern apprentices and 22 foundation modern apprentices. Southport College also provides apprenticeships in motor vehicle maintenance and travel services. At the time of the original inspection, 18 learners were working towards NVQs in hair and beauty and nine learners were working towards NVQs in hospitality. The remaining three learners were working in accountancy and administration. At reinspection, 13 learners are working towards NVQs in hair and beauty and nine learners are working towards NVQs in hospitality. There are five learners working towards NVQs in motor vehicle and one learner working towards an NVQ in travel services. Because of the small number of learners at the original inspection, the occupational area of business administration did not have a separate inspection. LSC-funded off-the-job training is integrated with the mainstream part-time day-release classes provided by the vocational departments at the college. A vice-principal holds overall responsibility for the LSC-funded training.

4. The college also provides New Deal training programmes funded by the Employment Service. At the original inspection, there were three New Deal clients. Two were working towards NVQs in motor vehicle engineering and one was working on gas services installation and maintenance. At reinspection, there is one New Deal client, working towards an NVQ in hospitality.

5. Southport has a population of approximately 94,000. The town lies within the metropolitan borough of Sefton, which has a population of approximately 385,000. Although relatively affluent, it has some areas of social deprivation. The college receives funding to assist in the economic regeneration of the area. Enrolments at the college reflect the lack of heavy industry locally and the predominance of service industries, particularly those relating to leisure, tourism and the caring occupations. The largest employment sectors are public administration, education and health. Southport College is one of the largest employers in the area.

6. The proportion of the local population of Sefton and West Lancashire from minority ethnic groups is approximately 1 per cent, compared with the national average of 6.2 per cent. In October 2000, the unemployment rate in Sefton was 5.8 per cent compared with the national figure of 3.4 per cent. At reinspection, the unemployment rate in Sefton in September 2001 was 5 per cent, compared with the national average of 2.9 per cent. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above in Sefton was 48.4 per cent, 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 in Sefton was 50 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

7. The self-assessment process is carried out as part of the college's quality assurance arrangements. The process is co-ordinated by the quality assurance services manager. It involves contributions from individual staff, records of observation of teachers' performance, results of learner surveys and the reviews of team performance against targets. During the February half-term, all college teams spend two days working on their self-assessment report. At the original inspection, the findings of the self-assessment process were checked through an internal inspection process. In the spring of 1999, the quality assurance services manager and the training programmes manager attended a workshop on self-assessment for work-based learning. College staff involved in work-based learning were made aware of the Training Standards Council's inspection requirements. In May 2000, the college produced a single self-assessment report to cover both FEFC- and TEC-funded training. The report complies with the requirements of the FEFC inspection process. It includes a section on equal opportunities. There is inadequate focus on work-based learning in the original self-assessment report. Shortly before the original inspection, the college produced additional self-assessment reports for work-based learning in the two occupational areas being inspected. The self-assessment grades for the two occupational areas were the same as those in the original report. As part of the annual self-assessment, the college produced another self-assessment report in February 2001. For reinspection, the college wrote a report on its progress in fulfilling the post-inspection action plan. A draft work-based learning self-assessment report was written in February 2002. All members of the work-based learning team met to agree the content of the self-assessment report.

8. The original inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors, who spent a total of 16 days at Southport College in November 2000. Inspectors interviewed 21 learners and made visits to 12 of the 24 workplaces used by the college. They met 11 workplace managers or supervisors and interviewed 23 college staff. The inspection team looked at 21 learners' files and eight portfolios. Other paperwork reviewed included contracts, external verifiers' reports, health and safety and equal opportunities policies, minutes of meetings, promotional literature, assessment materials, induction packs, management procedures and quality assurance evidence. Inspectors observed one review in the workplace, and observed and graded eight training sessions.

9. At reinspection a team of four inspectors spent a total of 16 days at Southport College in March 2002. They interviewed 12 learners and visited seven of the 23 workplaces used by the college. They met six workplace managers or workplace supervisors and interviewed 13 college staff. Inspectors examined 19 learners' files and four portfolios of evidence and other paperwork including assessor and internal and external verification reports, minutes of meetings, promotional materials, achievement data, employers' files, monitoring records and other policies, procedures and paperwork. Inspectors observed and graded two training

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sessions. They also studied the current self-assessment report produced in February 2002.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at the original inspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Hospitality		4	0			4
Hair & beauty		1	3			4
Total	0	5	3	0	0	8

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at reinspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Hospitality		2				2
Total	0	2	0	0	0	2

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Hospitality

Grade 4

10. At the time of the original inspection, there were nine learners on hospitality training programmes. Three were advanced modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 3 in craft food preparation and restaurant supervision. The remaining six learners were foundation modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 2 in food preparation. At reinspection, there are nine learners on hospitality training programmes. Seven learners are foundation modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 2 in food preparation and cooking and two learners are advanced modern apprentices working towards NVQs at level 3 in food preparation and cooking. There is also one client on the New Deal full-time education and training option, working towards an NVQ at level 2 in food preparation and cooking. All of the current learners started their training programmes after September 2001. All learners are employed locally in restaurants, hotels and public houses. Enrolment generally takes place at the start of the college year, although learners can join later in the year. Learners attend college for one day each week during college term times. Key skills workshops are held during college holidays. At induction, learners are given a training programme of work for the year. The college has a training kitchen and a production kitchen, which is used by work-based learners. At the time of the original inspection, all training and assessment was taught in the college, normally starting in the second year of the training programme. At reinspection, some assessment now takes place in the workplace. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses and identified a further weakness on achievement rates. Some strengths were found to be no more than normal practice. At the original inspection, inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ no key skills assessment
- ◆ insufficient assessment in the workplace
- ◆ poor achievement rates

11. Since the original inspection the college has written action plans to rectify weaknesses. Many of these actions were introduced in the six months leading up to reinspection and progress has been very slow. The college has recently appointed a work-based assessor. There is now some assessment in the workplace but there are insufficient assessments to support learners' progress. There is no key skills assessment. Achievement rates are poor.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ extensive and well-equipped training facilities
- ◆ good off-the-job training

- ◆ good employer support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor key skills training and assessment
- ◆ poor assessment practice
- ◆ poor achievement rates

12. The college's resources in the hospitality sector have been refurbished. There is a 70-seater restaurant and production kitchen. The restaurant is open to the public for five days and three evenings each week and the weekly plans for learners' work include time spent in these areas. Learners produce a range of dishes using fresh produce, work to realistic deadlines, and are required to produce food to a commercial standard. Demonstrations and teaching take place in practice kitchens, which reflect a realistic working environment. Both kitchens are very well resourced with modern machinery, stoves, fridges, freezers and utensils.

13. Off-the-job training is well planned. The menus used are planned to ensure that learners cover all aspects of their NVQ. Menus are decided in advance for each college term, so the learners know what they will be doing each week. Tutors clearly demonstrate how to make each of the dishes. Learners have to complete dishes stage by stage. Expert assistance is available to learners at all times. Before moving onto the next stage, the tutor ensures that learners understand what they have done and why. Background knowledge sessions are taught well, with good use of appropriate background information. For example, learners making Bakewell tarts were told historical stories relating to the product. Contributions from learners are actively sought and encouraged during sessions.

14. Employers are keen to be an integral part of the training programme and provide good support for learners. Employers adapt menus and dishes to suit learners' assessment and off-the-job training. Learners frequently practise skills learned at college in the workplace.

15. At the time of the original inspection, key skills training and assessment were not a part of the training programmes. At reinspection, there has only been recent training in the communication key skill. No key skills assessment has been carried out. There is no key skills training and assessment in the workplace. Learners do not collect sufficient key skills evidence through their everyday work. Individual learning plans do not include the key skills of working with others and improving their own learning and performance, which are required for the modern apprenticeship framework. Key skills training and assessment is not integrated with the vocational training and assessment. College staff do not fully understand the key skills requirements for the NVQ framework. Learners and employers have an inadequate understanding of key skills training and assessment.

16. There are poor assessment practices. At the original inspection, most assessment took place in the college during the off-the-job training sessions. Some assessment now takes place in the workplace. There are insufficient workplace assessments. Inefficient use is made of learners' own accounts of their activities in

the workplace, or of witness testimonies. One learner has a workplace supervisor who is a qualified assessor, but the college has not encouraged this workplace supervisor to assess the learner at work. Learners' assessments and feedback records are stored at the college. They are not always included in learners' portfolios of evidence. Portfolios generally contain only photographs and learner's personal accounts of work they have carried out in the workplace. Learners have a poor understanding of how much of their NVQ they have completed. Portfolios are poorly organised and incomplete and the standard of work is also poor.

17. Achievement rates are poor, a weakness acknowledged in the draft self-assessment report. Learners on hospitality training programmes make slow progress. Many learners leave without achieving their qualification. No learner has completed their modern apprenticeship framework in the past three years. Achievement rates for the NVQ at level 2 in 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-01 were 50 per cent, 17 per cent, and 0 per cent, respectively. Two of the three learners who started the advanced modern apprenticeship in 1998-99 have achieved their NVQ at level 3

Hair & beauty

Grade 3

18. Southport College has 18 trainees on hairdressing programmes. There are seven foundation modern apprentices and 11 advanced modern apprentices. Twelve of the trainees are on programmes leading to NVQs at level 2 and six trainees are working towards NVQs at level 3. Trainees are employed in a variety of salons located within a five-mile radius of Southport. Most of the trainees are recruited directly by their employers who then refer them for training at the college. Trainees attend the college one day a week during term time for theory sessions, key skills development and assessment, practical training and assessment, individual tutorials and portfolio building. Trainees are targeted to take two years for the level 2 NVQ and a further year for the level 3 NVQ. Most assessment takes place off the job. The hairdressing programme leader visits the trainees at their workplaces twice a year and undertakes reviews of trainees' progress in the college. All staff involved in the off-the-job training are appropriately qualified and are vocationally experienced. Two are undertaking key skills qualifications. The self-assessment report included 14 strengths and four weaknesses. Several of the strengths were considered by inspectors to represent no more than normal practice. Some are more relevant to the generic areas. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses and identified another weakness. The grade awarded is lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ very good resources for on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ high standard of practical work by trainees
- ◆ well-structured off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ missed opportunities for work-based assessment
- ◆ lack of integration of key skills assessment with the NVQ units
- ◆ low retention rates for level 2 trainees

19. The college has recently refurbished its hairdressing and beauty section. Resources are of a very high standard. There are two salons, both of which are modern and well equipped to current industry standards. Trainees use a range of professional hairdressing products. The range of clients seen and treatments offered in the college salons is extensive and provides opportunities for trainees to cover many aspects of the NVQ. Tutors pay close attention to health and safety and impress upon trainees the importance of rigorous practice in this area, for example with regard to the appropriate use of personal protective equipment such as aprons and rubber gloves for chemical treatments. Theory is taught in well-equipped classrooms.

20. Trainees are employed in a range of local salons, from modern high street to small family businesses. Trainees are currently employed across 15 workplaces, five of which have staff with appropriate assessor qualifications and three of them have staff with training qualifications. The salons are well equipped and a good variety of up-to-date hairdressing products is used. Most trainees receive on-the-job training. They attend regular, formal staff training sessions, during which they practise their skills on models brought into the salon.

21. Off-the-job training is well structured, with clear schemes of work for all programmes, and detailed plans for individual sessions. Trainers make good use of visual aids. Trainees working towards the level 3 NVQ evaluate some of their training sessions by completing a brief questionnaire. Data from the questionnaires are analysed and discussed by tutors. Trainees' progress through their qualification is systematically recorded. Trainers maintain an individual diary for each trainee, in which the trainees' progress is monitored. Trainees are encouraged to progress at a rate consistent with their ability. For example, one particularly able trainee has completed twice as many units as others starting their programme at the same time.

22. Trainers have very high expectations of trainees, and trainees' work, conduct and personal presentation are of a very good standard. Trainees are smartly and professionally dressed, both on and off the job. Trainees demonstrate competence and confidence in carrying out a wide variety of hair treatments, including modern styling, cutting and using waving and colouring techniques. Portfolios of work are well organised, with an appropriate range of evidence. Some portfolios demonstrate good use of information technology. Level 3 trainees make particularly good use of photographic evidence. Every April, the college hosts an internal competition for hairdressing trainees. The winners receive trophies and other prizes donated by a leading national product company. Trainees' successes are also celebrated at an annual awards ceremony, which is held at a local hotel. This is attended by employers, parents and friends, and is reported on in the local press.

23. Most practical assessments take place off the job. Trainees are assessed while working on clients at the college's salons. These assessments are well planned. Trainees are briefed thoroughly before their work is assessed and are given detailed verbal feedback afterwards. Insufficient use is made of work-based evidence. During visits to employers' salons, the college tutor assesses any NVQ evidence relating to reception work and the sale of products. Witness testimonies from the workplace are used as part of the assessment for some level 3 NVQ units. However, other opportunities to observe trainees' performance in the workplace, and to exploit naturally occurring evidence, are missed.

24. The teaching and assessment of key skills takes place during off-the-job training. Level 3 and second-year level 2 trainees have two hours per week. First-year trainees have one hour per week. Key skills are taught unit by unit. The numeracy unit is not covered until the end of the college's third year of training. Neither the teaching nor the assessment of key skills are integrated with the NVQ. Many opportunities to use key skills evidence from the workplace are missed. No attempt is made to use workplace supervisors to teach or assess key skills.

25. Retention and achievement rates on the level 3 programme are satisfactory. Of the 19 trainees who started between 1997 and 1999, three trainees left the programme with no further qualifications. Sixteen trainees (84 per cent) have achieved the level 3 NVQ. Five of these trainees have also completed the key skills requirements of the advanced modern apprenticeship framework. However, retention rates on the level 2 programme are low, and achievement is slow. Between 1997 and 1999, a total of 27 trainees started on level 2 NVQ programmes. Thirteen (48 per cent) of these trainees left the programme with no qualifications. Of the 17 trainees who started between 1997 and 1998, eight trainees have achieved the level 2 NVQ.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 4

26. Southport College has an equal opportunities policy which covers access, discrimination, harassment, ethnicity, gender and disability. The policy does not specifically refer to work-based learning. The college section with direct responsibility for the management of work-based learning uses the college's equal opportunities policy. This meets the requirements of the LSC. College staff, learners and employers have a copy of the policy. The equal opportunities policy is explained to learners during their induction. The college updates its disability statement annually and this is given to all staff, students and learners. A senior manager in the college is responsible for equal opportunities across the college, and chairs the college's equal opportunities committee. The committee meets three or four times a term. Although there have been some student representatives on the committee, there have been no learners from minority ethnic groups on work-based learning programmes in the past four years. There are no learners on work-based learning programmes who have declared they have a disability. At the original

inspection, inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. They identified another weakness of inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the original self-assessment report.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ ineffective strategies to recruit under-represented groups

27. There is inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace. Despite the college encouraging employers to give details of their own equal opportunities policy or to adopt the college policy, there is insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace. No employers attended an employers' equal opportunities workshop, which was held in January 2002. Although there are now more men on the hairdressing training programme, the gender mix has not improved on other training programmes. The strategies implemented to improve participation of under-represented groups in the training programmes and influence employers' recruitment policies are ineffective.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ comprehensive review of equal opportunities policy and procedures
- ◆ effective staff training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ ineffective strategies to recruit learners from under-represented groups

28. At the original inspection, a thorough review of the equal opportunities policy, and procedures had been carried out in response to formal and informal feedback from new staff at induction. New staff could not clearly identify their role and responsibilities in the college's equal opportunities policy. The equal opportunities committee researched and investigated other organisations' policies. The policy now clearly identifies the role of each staff member in ensuring equality of opportunity and ensuring equal access to the training, assessment, support services and resources. There are effective policies and procedures to protect staff and learners against discrimination and harassment at the college. The equal opportunities policy is reviewed annually. All staff in the college are given a copy of the revised policy statement and implementation guidelines.

29. Most staff have received recent and effective equal opportunities training. Staff directly involved with work-based learners were trained by an external consultant. There are good learning materials to help learners understand equal opportunities during their induction. Trainers have reproduced the college equal opportunities policy statement into an easy to understand format. Most learners

have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities issues and complaints procedure.

30. There is insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace. Employers sign to confirm that they support the colleges' commitment to equal opportunities, but this is not monitored. College staff have worked with employers to help them understand equal opportunities. Although equal opportunities is sometimes discussed during progress reviews, employers have a poor understanding of equal opportunities and their learners' rights in the workplace. The college has sent information to employers, which includes the content of its recent equal opportunities workshop. It is too early to establish the effectiveness of this information for employers.

31. The college's management is aware of a gender imbalance on the hospitality and motor vehicle maintenance training programmes and of the poor representation throughout the provision of learners from minority ethnic groups and learners with disabilities. There are no women on the catering and motor vehicle training programmes. However, two women have recently applied to join the catering modern apprenticeship. At the original inspection, a research project was commissioned to establish why the college is unsuccessful in recruiting men under 25 with additional learning and social needs. The findings of the research were shared with Sefton learning partnership. The college's strategies to deal with this under-representation have been ineffective. The college does not have recruitment targets for under-represented groups, other than those set by the LSC. The college has not identified how it will achieve these LSC targets.

Trainee support

Grade 4

32. All learners are in employment before they join the college's work-based learning programmes after they have found employment. Induction to the training programme is given on the first day in college and on the first visit to the workplace. It lasts for four hours and covers course content, evidence collection, equal opportunities and additional support. At reinspection, learners also receive a handbook, which contains information from induction for future reference. Learners receive a further induction to the workplace from their employer or workplace supervisor. At reinspection, learners' basic skills are also assessed. Learners also carry out diagnostic assessment to identify the level of key skills they are going to work towards. A college assessor reviews learners' progress in the workplace every 12 weeks. There is good support from employers. At the original inspection, the self-assessment report included 10 strengths, many of which related to the support systems for full-time students. Inspectors agreed that some of these strengths applied to learners but they did not agree with the three weaknesses and identified other weaknesses specifically related to learners. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the original self-assessment report.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ no initial assessment of trainees' basic skills
- ◆ inadequate initial assessment of trainees' key skills
- ◆ inadequate review process

33. Following the original inspection, the college has introduced an initial basic skills assessment and, more recently an initial key skills assessment. Basic skills needs are now identified at the beginning of learners' training programmes and relevant support is provided at the college by learning support workers. The key skills initial assessment has only been recently introduced and is not sufficiently effective. The review process has been recently developed, but it is too early to judge effectiveness. Most of the current learners have had only one progress review under the revised system and the review process is still a weakness.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good individual guidance for learners
- ◆ wide range of specialist support services

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate initial assessment of learners' key skills
- ◆ inadequate review process
- ◆ ineffective use of individual learning plans

34. Learners receive a clear and thorough induction to their training programme. Before starting the programme, an assessor visits the learner and employer in the workplace, and gives them information about the NVQ and how the training will be organised. An effective working relationship between the tutor or assessor and learner is established early in the training programme. Learners receive good individual support throughout their training programmes. They have individual informal sessions with their tutor during the off-the-job training sessions. Constructive advice is given to learners on all aspects of their training, throughout the training programme.

35. There is a wide range of specialist support services for learners. At induction, learners are given a college year diary, which lists all the services available and guidelines on how to access them. These services include careers guidance, financial advice, help to find accommodation, childcare support, and advice on additional funding and counselling. Specialist staff visit learners in the classroom to answer their queries. Additional support, including learning support, is provided for all learners during their off-the-job training. The college has a well-equipped library with a wide range of books and videos for the occupational areas. There is a well-equipped learning resource centre at the college. Learners have access to the Internet, learning materials on CD-ROM and photocopying and printing facilities.

36. There is inadequate initial assessment of key skills, a weakness acknowledged

in the draft self-assessment report. In September 2002, the college introduced the initial assessment of key skills for all new entrants. The initial assessment is focused on the examination requirements of the key skills rather than the overall key skills qualification. On the hospitality training programme, only four of the nine learners have had a diagnostic assessment, and this has only been for the key skill in communication. This initial assessment was carried out late in the training programme. The key skills tutor is not always aware of the results of learners' key skills initial assessment. Learners' prior achievement of key skills is not systematically taken into account. The college has been slow to request learners' GCSE certificates to exempt them from key skills tests. Some learners are carrying out training for key skills which they have already achieved.

37. Progress reviews are carried out in the workplace every 12 weeks by a college assessor, usually on an individual basis with the learner. In addition to the progress reviews, occupational tutors also carry out reviews with learners. These reviews are used to prepare action plans. Although employers attend progress review meetings, they are insufficiently aware of their role during and following the review. Current and accurate data on learners' progress is not used effectively. It is mainly used to comply with contractual requirements. The review process has not identified any problems in equal opportunities, health and safety and learners' experiences in the workplace. The results of progress reviews are poorly recorded, except in the hairdressing training programme. There is insufficient detail about agreed actions. Many agreed actions do not have target dates. Learners' progress in completing previous actions is not systematically checked. Learners have a poor understanding of their progress.

38. Individual learning plans are inadequately filled in by college assessors. Learners can be delayed in starting their training programme. All individual learning plans give the same target date for each unit of the NVQ and key skills, which is one year from the start date for foundation modern apprentices. There is no allowance for learners' individual needs, initial assessment results or prior workplace experience or achievements. Individual learning plans do not set out all the qualifications required for the modern apprenticeship framework. Some do not include accurate key skills levels required for the modern apprenticeship. Individual learning plans are not updated. Individual learning plans do not record how NVQ units are going to be assessed. On-the-job training and employers' details are recorded inadequately on individual learning plans. Some tutors, including key skills and basic skills tutors, are not aware of the content of learners' individual learning plans, including aspects of the training programme they teach and assess.

Management of training

Grade 4

39. At the original inspection, TEC-funded work-based learning comprised 0.2 per cent of total college enrolments. At reinspection, the proportion for LSC-funded work-based learning is 0.1 per cent of total college enrolments. The management of work-based learning is closely integrated with the rest of the organisational

structure of the college. There is no separate training department and learners are fully integrated as students of specific occupational areas. The college has recently had a management restructure. There is a training programmes manager, who reports to the director of programmes, and whose responsibilities include liaison with the LSC and college faculties. Since the original inspection, each training programme area has appointed a designated assessor, who assesses and reviews learners in the workplace. All staff have an annual appraisal which is linked to organisational performance targets and staff development priorities. The college gained the Investors in People award in 1999 and was reaccredited in 2000. This is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. At the original inspection, the self-assessment report identified a number of strengths and weaknesses that inspectors found to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors found further weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the original self-assessment report.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ insufficient use of management information data
- ◆ insufficient involvement by most employers

40. Since the original inspection, the college has made slow progress in introducing the action plan. Work-based assessors were appointed in September 2001. While this has improved some of the employers' involvement in the training programmes, there is still poor co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training. The college is devising an in-house management information system, specifically for work-based learning programmes. Use of management information data is still a weakness.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good internal communication
- ◆ effective staff appraisal

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ insufficient use of management information data
- ◆ unclear roles and responsibilities

41. The college's managers have an open management style, which promotes effective internal communication. Meetings are arranged to an agreed schedule and are recorded. Members of the college's senior management team routinely attend faculty meetings to hear staff's views and to contribute to the sharing of information. There are quarterly, work-based learning meetings involving the training programmes manager, tutors and assessors. The training programmes manager and the director of programmes have informal weekly meetings to discuss problems and issues. College staff also receive the college newsletter, which includes a bulletin of activities and events. The newsletter is particularly effective

in acknowledging staff's contribution to college life.

42. The current staff appraisal system was introduced in 1998, and applies to all full-time and part-time staff. All staff have an annual appraisal with their line manager. The appraisal is used to review individual performance over the past 12 months and evaluates their performances against set targets. Performance targets and staff development needs are agreed for the next 12 months, and progress is monitored after six months. The appraisal process effectively identifies individual staff development needs, taking into account the college's strategic plan. Good use is made of individual staff's strengths and interests. Although part-time staff are not appraised formally, their training needs are identified through a systematic survey each November.

43. There is poor co-ordination of the on- and off-the-job training. Training sessions in the college are structured to meet the needs of the whole group. Insufficient account is taken of individual learners' experience in the workplace. Employers are given inadequate information about learners' progress off the job. They receive a copy of the training programme but do not receive information about learners' individual training sessions. College staff do not give employers enough information about their responsibilities to learners' NVQ training. Many employers have an inadequate understanding of key skills training and assessment.

44. The college does not systematically record or analyse management information on work-based learners. Managers are not fully aware of the performance trends of individual learners, or groups of learners. Information about learners' achievement is not readily available. The college's management information systems sometimes gives inaccurate figures for the current number of learners on training programmes. Information on learners' progress is not adequately used by managers to monitor staff's performance or to make strategic decisions about work-based learning programmes. Although targets are set for achievement and retention rates, no targets are set for the achievement of key skills or modern apprenticeship frameworks. The college makes insufficient use of data to evaluate learners' achievement by occupational area. It is difficult for staff or managers to specify weaknesses in occupational areas, to draw up plans for improvement, or to measure improvement using objective criteria.

45. At the original inspection, staff's roles and responsibilities were well defined, and employees were clear about their accountability. While this still applies to tutors and the training programmes manager, this is not true for assessors who are members of the work-based learning team. The generic job descriptions for college lecturers make no reference to activities carried out in the learners' workplace. There is a brief list of duties for college assessors in the workplace, but some of the team are unaware of this list. There are no guidelines to support assessors in completing their work, including quality assuring the workplace, conducting progress reviews, assessing in the workplace and health and safety checks. The work-based training team organisational chart has not been updated since the college management restructure and appointment of assessors.

Quality assurance

Grade 4

46. The college has developed quality assurance procedures over a number of years. The quality assurance system is linked to the college's strategic-planning process, and quality assurance procedures are reviewed annually. The review process is managed by a quality assurance services manager. The college has a quality assurance standards committee, which monitors and directs changes to quality assurance procedures and reports to the senior management team. The quality assurance arrangements meet the requirements of the local LSC and of awarding bodies. The training programmes manager has specific responsibility to oversee government-funded learning. A team of assessors have been appointed since the original inspection to assure the quality of each workplace. The original self-assessment report was compiled by the quality assurance services manager after consultation with staff in the college. At reinspection, the training programmes manager had written a separate draft self-assessment report for work-based learning, in consultation with the work-based learning team. At the original inspection, the self-assessment report for quality assurance included eight strengths and three weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with some strengths and weaknesses but identified other weaknesses relating to work-based learning. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the original self-assessment report.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ insufficient sharing of good practice
- ◆ inadequate systems for obtaining feedback from trainees and employers
- ◆ inadequate quality assurance of work-based training

47. The college was very late in introducing the post-inspection action plan. Only one of the weaknesses has been rectified. Good practice is shared at team meetings. At the original inspection, the views of learners, employers and workplace supervisors were not collected systematically. At reinspection, feedback is collected, but the system for collecting and using the feedback is ineffective. At the original inspection, the quality assurance manual contained a range of procedures, but none was aimed directly at the workplace. At reinspection, there are additional procedures specifically for work-based learning. These are ineffective and inadequate in assuring quality or monitoring work-based learning or employers.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-resourced quality assurance process
- ◆ effective evaluation of off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ ineffective systems for collecting and using feedback from learners and

employers

- ◆ inadequate quality assurance of work-based training
- ◆ late action-planning to rectify weaknesses

48. The quality assurance process is well resourced. The quality assurance services manager was appointed in 1997. Since then, this manager has reviewed and improved the college's quality assurance procedures. Since the original inspection, the systems for observation, self-assessment and monitoring of employers have evolved to meet restructuring in the college and recent initiatives including those from the LSC. Staff are allowed two days each year to take part in the self-assessment process.

49. There are good arrangements for monitoring off-the-job training. These have been developed with a useful set of prompts for observers. Staff maintain high standards. Effective use is made of direct observation of classroom and workshop training sessions. At reinspection, there were separate evaluations of work-based learning sessions, with 100 per cent of observed lessons being satisfactory and 80 per cent being good or better. Staff who have been observed receive detailed feedback. Action plans are drawn up, including support for staff development and through teaching and learning advisers, to deal with any identified weaknesses.

50. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory. The consistency of assessment practice is monitored through regular, cross-college meetings of internal verifiers. Effective action is taken to deal with problems raised through internal verification. By reinspection, there was some internal verification of assessor observations in the workplace. There are no sampling schedules for internal verification in the workplace.

51. The college now collects learners' views about their training programme through induction, questionnaires and focus groups. The induction questionnaire is long and contains many questions that are only relevant to full-time students. Data on the questionnaire do not focus on work-based issues or activities such as learner support, assessment and progress reviews. At the original inspection, the college had only recently begun to collect employer feedback. The employers' questionnaire is not sufficiently focused on improving the work-based training programmes. A second questionnaire is planned for May, to collect feedback from learners and employers about what happens in the workplace. This is too late for many of the learners who are on a one-year training programme. The results of the questionnaires and focus groups have only recently been evaluated. There is insufficient evidence of how results have been used to improve the learners' experience or training programmes.

52. The proportion of LSC-funded work-based learners, compared with full-time students on college programmes, is small. The revised quality assurance procedures do not focus sufficiently on work-based learning and assessment, employers' involvement in the training programme, and progress reviews. College assessors monitor employers' premises for health and safety, resources, staff expertise and written procedures. Many of the monitoring forms are incomplete.

There are no clear procedures for following up those employers where there is an identified high health and safety risk or when employers' liability insurance is due to expire. Monitoring takes place and is occasionally delayed after learners start their training programme. College assessors have a poor understanding of what they are required to check with regards to resources, staff expertise and written procedures. Assessors do not consistently complete monitoring and quality assurance records. Where there are problems at work, there are no clear procedures for how assessors should deal with them. There is insufficient monitoring or follow-up of the college assessors' quality assurance paperwork by the training programmes manager. Training in the workplace is not regularly monitored by college staff.

53. The college was very late in introducing its post-inspection action plan. Many of the actions were only introduced in the six months leading up to reinspection. Many weaknesses from the original inspection still apply at reinspection. Achievement rates on hospitality programmes have dropped since the original inspection. There is insufficient time for some new strategies to be monitored or evaluated for their effectiveness.

54. In its original self-assessment process, the college did not use sufficient feedback from learners and workplace supervisors. The self-assessment report had no detailed analysis of achievement and retention rates for work-based learners. The sections on the two occupational areas inspected identified accurately several of the strengths and weaknesses awarded by inspectors. In both the original and draft self-assessment reports the grades were not accurate. In the original self-assessment report, the sections on the generic areas did not focus on work-based learning. A draft work-based learning self-assessment report was written shortly before reinspection, in line with the college's quality assurance process and the *Common Inspection Framework*. This report has still to be moderated by the quality assurance services manager and senior management. Some of the findings from the analysis of learners' and employers' feedback have been used to support the judgements in self-assessment. The process was insufficiently self-critical and did not identify all of the weaknesses. Many of the strengths were found by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. The grades in the self-assessment report were generally higher than those given by inspectors at reinspection.