TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT
DECEMBER 2000

ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE REINSPECTION
FEBRUARY 2002

Training and Development Resource Limited

ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Grading

In summarising their judgements about the quality of provision in curriculum or occupational areas and about the quality of leadership and management, including quality assurance and equality of opportunity, inspectors use a five-point scale. The descriptors for the five grades are:

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

SUMMARY

The original inspection of Training and Development Resource Limited was carried out by the Training Standards Council's inspectors. The inspection resulted in less than satisfactory grades being awarded for equal opportunities, 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 equal opportunities, 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).

Training and Development Resource Limited offers good engineering training to large numbers of employed learners in Tyneside. There are good retention rates, a wide range of good workplace opportunities and well-resourced workshops. Since the original inspection, the management of on-the-job training has improved and is now satisfactory. On- and off-the-job training are still poorly co-ordinated. The monitoring of health and safety arrangements in training partners and on employers' premises has improved significantly since the original inspection. Management information is still not used effectively in making decisions. The company now ensures that learners have a good understanding of equal opportunities, but its monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace is still inadequate. Learners have a comprehensive induction, and then receive strong careers guidance, but their progress reviews are weak. The original inspection identified the poor monitoring of subcontractors. This remains a weakness in the training provision. Assessment and internal verification have improved significantly.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Engineering	2

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- good retention rates for advanced modern apprentices
- wide range of good work placements
- good off-the-job workshop facilities
- effective business and strategic planning
- thorough monitoring of health and safety arrangements
- thorough induction for most learners
- good assessment and internal verification
- good learner awareness of equal opportunities

KEY WEAKNESSES

- inadequate monitoring of training partners and subcontractors
- inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- weak use of initial assessment
- insufficient use of performance data to inform management decisions
- poor progress review practices

INTRODUCTION

1. At the time of the original inspection, Training and Development Resource Limited (TDR) had the sole contract to manage work-based learning in engineering for young people in the Tyneside area. Its contract was with Tyneside Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). It provided engineering training itself or through one of its 10 subcontractors. At the original inspection, the TDR partnership, which was formed in July 1998, had 130 members. It was a registered charity, limited by guarantee, with offices in a modern business unit in the Team Valley area of Gateshead. There were 852 learners employed in 248 companies. The subcontractors included large companies, some of which had over 100 learners, local colleges of further education and other training organisations. One of these training organisations had over 200 learners.

2. At the time of reinspection, TDR has a contract with Tyneside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide work-based learning in engineering for young people. It now has 140 partner members. In February 2001, TDR Training Ltd (TDR Training) was formed as a trading company, wholly owned by TDR. TDR Training began trading in April 2001. The training contract is with TDR and the management of the contract is handled by TDR Training. All surpluses from TDR Training are gift-aided to the parent company, TDR. At the time of reinspection, TDR Training provides training itself, or through seven subcontracted training providers. It has 708 learners employed in more than 200 engineering and manufacturing companies. The subcontractors include two large companies, with over 100 learners each, a local college of further education and four other private training providers. One of these training providers has more than 200 learners.

3. Tyneside has a population of about 660,000 and comprises the four local authorities of Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead, North Tyneside and South Tyneside. Historically, the area has been associated with heavy industries such as shipbuilding, heavy engineering and coal mining. These industries are in decline and this has had a severe effect on the area. The local economy is undergoing dramatic structural changes. There is streamlining of manufacturing, and growth among the service industries. This has led to a mismatch between the manufacturing-based skills of the workforce and the requirements of the newly dominant service sector. In November 2000, unemployment in the four areas was 4.7 per cent for Newcastle, which is a regional service centre, 4.6 for Gateshead, where most of the manufacturing is based, 6.4 per cent for North Tyneside, which has a large public sector workforce and significant inward investment, and 10.6 per cent for South Tyneside, which has a similar proportion of public sector employment. In September 2001, unemployment in the four areas was 4 per cent for Newcastle, 3.7 per cent for Gateshead, 5.8 per cent for North Tyneside, and significant inward investment, and 9.5 per cent for South Tyneside, which has a similar proportion of public sector employment. Overall, the unemployment rates for the area are on a downward trend, but they are all above the national rate of 2.9

per cent.

4. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above in Newcastle was 35 per cent, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent. The proportion for Gateshead was 45 per cent, North Tyneside was 45 per cent, and South Tyneside was 39 per cent. In September 2001, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more GCSEs at grade C or above in Newcastle was 36.7 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. The proportion for Gateshead was 49.3 per cent, North Tyneside was 46.6 per cent, and South Tyneside was 39.1 per cent. People from minority ethnic groups make up approximately 1.7 per cent of the population of Tyneside.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. TDR Training completed its first self-assessment report in September 2000 and updated it in December 2001 in preparation for the reinspection. TDR employed a consultant to oversee the production of the original report, who worked closely with the chief executive, a special project team and other staff. The team held meetings with subcontractors to obtain their views. A survey of learners was carried out so that their opinions could be included. The draft report was shown to the TEC for their comments. An action plan was included. The production of the second self-assessment report, in December 2001, followed a similar process, and included consultation with Tyneside LSC.

6. The original inspection was carried out by a team of seven inspectors who spent a total of 28 days with TDR in December 2000. They conducted interviews with 12 staff, and interviewed 83 learners in the Tyneside area. Four colleges and 28 work placements were visited, where 20 employers were interviewed. Inspectors looked at learners' portfolios and personal files, management information and promotional material. They witnessed one learner's progress review and two training sessions which were graded 3 and 5.

7. The reinspection was carried out by two inspectors who spent a total of eight days with TDR Training in February 2002. They inspected equal opportunities, management of training and quality assurance. They interviewed 26 learners and seven of their supervisors. They visited nine companies and one subcontracting further education college. Inspectors examined 10 learning plans and 12 learners' portfolios of evidence. They held meetings with the staff of TDR Training and their subcontractors, and observed two training sessions which were graded 3 and 4.

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Engineering — Grade 2

8. The organisation has 852 engineering trainees. All the trainees are employed. There are 650 advanced modern apprentices, 13 foundation modern apprentices and 189 trainees are on other work-based training for young people. The company directly manages 189 trainees, all of whom are advanced modern apprentices and based with 20 local employers. There are 10 subcontractors who manage the remaining trainees on behalf of TDR. These include training companies, colleges of further education and large private sector companies. The following table shows what programmes and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) trainees are taking.

9. Trainees are employed in 248 small, medium and large companies involved in a wide range of engineering and manufacturing activities. These include shipbuilding and repair, offshore/marine engineering, heavy equipment manufacturing, transport services, power generation and distribution, and microelectronics. Those trainees directly managed by TDR are assessed and verified by the organisation, with the help of one subcontractor. The remainder of the trainees are assessed and verified by the other subcontracted companies, colleges or training organisations. Two of the subcontractors further subcontract assessment and verification, as they are not registered assessment centres for engineering. All assessors and internal verifiers hold appropriate qualifications. First year trainees attend approved training centres for basic engineering skills, where they undertake the level 2 NVQ in engineering foundation. They attend subcontracted colleges of further education for qualifications in theoretical knowledge. During subsequent years, trainees work towards level 3 or 4 NVQs in the workplace, while continuing with day release at a college of further education. The self-assessment report correctly identified the good opportunities in the workplace and good off-the-job training facilities but did not recognise the good retention rates. TDR correctly identified some weaknesses but others were more relevant to generic areas. Inspectors found additional strengths and awarded a higher grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

NVQ level	NVQ TITLE	NUMBERS IN TRAINING			TOTAL
		ADVANCED MODERN APPRENTICES	FOUNDATION MODERN APPRENTICES	OTHER YOUTH TRAINEES	
level 2	engineering manufacture (foundation)	107	13	27	**147**
level 2	performing manufacturing operations	0	0	16	**16**
level 3	engineering production	434	0	114	**548**
level 3	engineering maintenance	52	0	16	**68**
level 4	technical services	57	0	16	**73**
TOTALS		**650**	**13**	**189**	**852**

STRENGTHS

- good retention rates for advanced modern apprenticeship
- all trainees employed
- wide range of workplace opportunities
- well-integrated key skills during first year
- good off-the-job training facilities
- good opportunities for progression

WEAKNESSES

- some slow progress with NVQ level 3
- weak assessment practices by some subcontractors

10. The retention rate of trainees on the advanced modern apprenticeship programme is consistently high. Analysis of data shows that most trainees entering the programme remain in training. During 2000-01, 200 trainees began an advanced modern apprenticeship. There are 176 still in training, giving a retention rate of 88 per cent. During 1999-2000 this proportion was 81 per cent and for 1999-98 it was 84 per cent. Achievement rates for the programme over a three-year period are satisfactory, at 61 per cent.

11. TDR ensures that all trainees who join the engineering training programme are employed from the first day of the programme. The trainees see this as a motivating aspect of their training and are able to see valid career paths within the organisations where they are being trained. This employed status increases the

self-esteem of trainees as they are seen within the workplace as equal members of the workforce. If a small company is not able to employ a trainee during their first-year off-the-job training period they are employed by one of three subcontractors.

12. Employers offer a wide range of training opportunities in engineering disciplines. The activities of employers range from heavy engineering such as shipbuilding and offshore marine engineering to precision engineering and microelectronics. The scope of experiences offered varies from basic operations to highly complex tasks. One example is a company which designs, manufactures and maintains deep-sea ploughs and remotely controlled submersible vehicles for laying cables in deep-sea conditions. The engineering content ranges from the production of high-voltage power supplies and the fabrication of steel vehicle components to hydraulic sub-assemblies and electronic printed circuit boards. A trainee at the company was responsible for building and testing new control pods which contain highly complex circuitry.

13. During their first year, most trainees undertake a programme of off-the-job basic engineering training. During this period trainees also work towards some of the key skills required within their individual training plan. These include application of number, communication and information technology. In some instances, trainees also work towards a fourth key skill, that of working with others. By the time the trainees have completed their level 2 NVQ and are ready to return to the workplace, they have achieved most of their key skills. This is an effective way of integrating key skills into the training programme. Those trainees who do not enter an off-the-job training programme complete their NVQ and the required key skills through work-based evidence and support workshops. The organisation of key skills is not as effective for trainees in their final year of training. A number have not yet started to gather evidence towards their key skills. Other trainees, who have completed three of the five key skills units, do not know how, or when, they will finish the other two. A few trainees are unaware that key skills are part of their qualification.

14. The off-the-job training facilities are of a high standard. TDR has attracted European funding for new resources which they have placed in the off-the-job training centres. In one training facility there are a number of industrial specification, computer numeric controlled (CNC) machines which are often used by the trainees. Use of such machines is outside the requirements of their NVQs. This also applies in other training facilities and companies where new machines have been specifically purchased for the level 3 NVQ trainees to use.

15. Most trainees also have opportunities to undertake extended further education courses, for example higher national certificates or diplomas and in some cases full engineering degrees. These opportunities may be sponsored by the employer, the subcontractor, and in some cases, TDR. This benefit is not restricted to technician-status trainees and there is evidence of craft trainees progressing to sponsored higher qualifications in local colleges. At one college, trainees are working in some innovative projects. Some trainees are building a 30-foot offshore boat. The

keel has been laid and support stiffeners put in place. Trainees are preparing to refurbish and fit an engine donated from an old lifeboat.

16. Some trainees who have achieved their level 2 NVQ have made little progress towards the achievement of the NVQ at level 3. The late registration of the trainees on the level 3 programme has resulted in a delay in the receipt of the qualification standards. Therefore, the trainees are unable to gather appropriate evidence towards the standards. No formal assessment has taken place for some trainees, delaying their portfolio development.

17. There is some weak assessment practice. There is very little use of direct observation in the workplace as a means of proving competence. Portfolios mainly show product evidence and witness testimonies, but generally portfolios are satisfactory. The planning of assessments varies, depending on the subcontractor. Some show little evidence of assessment planning, while others plan assessments as a systematic and routine practice. In one company, trainees' portfolios were taken away by the assessor to be assessed. These trainees took no part in the assessment process and received no feedback. In another company, the assessor allocated to assess trainees in CNC machining does not have the appropriate occupational experience, or qualifications, to do so.

GENERIC AREAS

GOOD PRACTICE

TDR Training has an interactive website where learners can identify their position in the training cycle. Learners can log on to the website and move through a flow chart towards their own goals. The website outlines what they need to do to move from one position to another and the training requirements for the move. The progression basis of the career path is operator, craftsman, engineer technician, technical engineer, incorporated engineer and chartered engineer.

Equal opportunities — Grade 3

18. TDR Training has an equal opportunities policy which gives details of current equal opportunities legislation. There are no separate equal opportunities procedures, although compliance with relevant legislation is mentioned in the procedure for recruitment of learners. The requirement for subcontractors to comply with equal opportunities legislation and practice is set out in the relevant contracts. Learners are given copies of TDR Training's equal opportunities policy at their induction. Before the original inspection, TDR Training appointed an equal opportunities representative. Data on equal opportunities issues are collected from learners at the start of the training programme. At the original inspection, there were 852 learners, of which 17 were women and four were from minority ethnic groups. There were two learners with disabilities. At the time of reinspection, there are 708 learners, of whom six are women, two learners are from minority ethnic groups and one learner has a disability. The self-assessment report identified good initiatives with schools and a comprehensive equal opportunities policy as strengths. Inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- low awareness of equal opportunities among some trainees
- insufficient collection and evaluation of equal opportunities data
- under-representation of women and minority ethnic groups
- weak monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- no written instructions for equal opportunities procedures

19. The first two weaknesses have been resolved and are now satisfactory or better. Half of the staff at TDR Training have had equal opportunities training in the past 12 months. Learners have greater awareness and understanding of TDR Training's equal opportunities policies and procedures. TDR Training staff have confirmed that training partners and subcontractors have equal opportunities policies, in line with their contractual requirements. Equal opportunities information is now gathered and evaluated during recruitment. TDR Training has tried to resolve the under-representation of some groups. The publicity and marketing department has targeted under-represented groups. This has not yet resulted in a higher proportion being recruited. TDR Training has updated its quality assurance manual to include an equal opportunities policy and procedures. The final two weaknesses, the poor monitoring of equal opportunities and the lack or written instructions, have not yet been dealt with. The self-assessment report recognised the weaknesses identified during the inspection and inspectors awarded the same grade for equal opportunities as in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- comprehensive equal opportunities policy
- good initiatives to widen participation
- good learner awareness of equal opportunities
- positive attempts to recruit from under-represented groups

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- under-representation of women and minority ethnic groups
- no written equal opportunities procedures

20. TDR Training has a comprehensive and clearly written equal opportunities policy. The company successfully brings together companies, schools and training providers, to promote engineering generally and to increase the participation of women and minority ethnic groups. There are currently eight schools and 24 companies involved in this initiative. More than 120 pupils applied for places on the training programme and 73 were accepted, of whom 20 per cent are young women.

21. Learners are well aware of equal opportunities issues. They know about grievance procedures and their rights and responsibilities. They also know what to do if they feel they have been treated unfairly. Equal opportunities are now covered as part of learners' progress reviews. After the original inspection, training staff discussed equal opportunities with all learners. Learners are now given an equal opportunities questionnaire during induction to assess their understanding of the problems.

22. TDR Training has made positive attempts to recruit learners from under-represented groups. Marketing and publicity material includes images of women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds in engineering situations. A local radio station promotes engineering to minority ethnic groups. TDR Training has developed its website as a method of reaching a wider, more representative audience.

23. Monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace is inadequate. As required by their contract, all training partners have their own equal opportunities policy or use TDR Training's policy. However, equal opportunities policies are not monitored for effectiveness or for appropriate marketing and promotional material. An inappropriate calendar was displayed in one employer's premises.

24. Women and people from minority ethnic groups are under-represented on TDR Training's programmes. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report and in the original inspection. Of the 708 learners on the training programme at reinspection, six were women and two were from minority ethnic groups. The minority ethnic population of Tyneside is estimated to be 1.7 per cent of those people over 16 years of age. Fifty-one per cent of the local population are

women.

25. TDR Training has no written equal opportunities procedures, a weakness identified in the original inspection. The staff recruitment section in the quality assurance procedures manual states that a job specification should take equal opportunities into account. However, there are no instructions on how to follow equal opportunities procedures when shortlisting and interviewing candidates.

Trainee support — Grade 3

26. TDR recruits trainees by advertising engineering apprenticeships in the local press and taking referrals from the careers service or the TEC. All those who apply take an aptitude assessment which tests numeracy, literacy and mechanical and spatial awareness. Successful candidates are then interviewed by the training manager or the chief executive of TDR to determine their knowledge of, and interest in, engineering, their ability to communicate and their expected GCSE results. They are also asked to bring along any certificates which they have gained and any relevant examples of practical work. Unsuccessful candidates are referred back to the careers service. Those who are accepted are matched to NVQ programmes and further education courses. Trainees attend a two-hour induction by TDR at one of the subcontracted training companies. This includes an outline of the modern apprenticeship framework requirements and the rights and responsibilities of trainees. An individual training plan is drawn up at this stage. The induction is then continued by TDR on a more detailed basis, and by a variety of methods, over about three days. Trainees are then matched to appropriate work placements and off-the-job training arrangements are made. All companies are visited by TDR on a regular basis, although the visits are not all formally planned. Trainees' progress reviews are carried out every three months. Some trainees who did not begin their training with TDR are reviewed every four months in their second and third year and every six months in their final year. TDR has a contract with the TEC to cover this arrangement. Trainees are initially tested for key skills at college or at another subcontracted provider and key skills are integrated into the level 2 NVQ foundation training. Extra tuition is given in the workshop and colleges determine, and provide, learning support on the academic side. The strengths indicated in the self-assessment report were not relevant to this generic area and inspectors found other strengths. TDR accurately identified that some progress reviews are inadequate and had already rectified weaknesses concerning the lack of staff and an underdeveloped job-search programme. The other two identified weaknesses were not relevant to this area. Inspectors identified others. The grade awarded by the inspectors is the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

GOOD PRACTICE

This is an example of good support to resolve a medical problem. An academically able trainee learning plating was very poor at drawing and could not join two dots together with a straight line. He was sent to the works' medical officer, to his doctor and eventually to an optician where it was found that he had no depth of vision. He had an operation, was given spectacles and now uses specialised computer equipment. He is a highly regarded trainee. TDR paid for all of this.

STRENGTHS

- some thorough induction

- strong career support
- good job-search opportunities for trainees
- effective identification of opportunities for accreditation of prior learning

WEAKNESSES

- weak progress-review practices
- weak use of initial assessment
- inadequate knowledge of the training process by some trainees and supervisors

27. TDR has its own thorough induction process. A member of staff visits a training provider, such as a college, and gives the trainees, who may be trainees from companies subcontracted to TDR, in addition to those from TDR itself, a short overview of the training process. The induction then continues in a manner designed to interest the trainees, by a mixture of discussion, overhead slide presentation, video material and engineering tasters in the workshop. The induction is memorable and very helpful in its content. The induction in other companies is of mixed quality. There is no formal evaluation of the effectiveness of TDR's induction.

GOOD PRACTICE

This is a good example of flexibility in training programming. A large engineering group took over a shipyard and discovered a group of trainees had received no training for two years. TDR took charge of their training. As the trainees were near the end of their apprenticeship, TDR put them on programmes to achieve NVQs at level 3 only, so they might be able to complete the modern apprenticeship framework. Some of the trainees have not completed NVQs at level2. In addition, the company is giving them all a fast track course in drawing to help their work and is in the process of training 10 mentors/assessors for the current and future trainees.

28. Trainees are well supported, both in their career aims and pastoral needs. Examples include the rapid transfer of 14 trainees to nine different companies when a sponsoring company closed down and a trainee who was given good guidance and support to make the change from being a welder to a mechanical fitter when he became asthmatic. One trainee sustained a disabling injury and was transferred from production engineering to engineering services so that he could continue his training. Trainees can be temporarily transferred to another organisation to gain skills which they cannot obtain with their own employer. Trainees are given good advice and encouragement if they wish to progress to degrees or higher national certificates. Those trainees who are struggling with higher theory courses are quickly moved to more appropriate levels to maintain their motivation.

29. A small number of trainees who achieve their qualifications are not employed by their sponsoring companies. In order to help them gain employment a good, computerised job-search program has been installed at TDR. All trainees, including those from subcontractors, can use this facility. The programme is updated daily and at any one time holds 200 engineering vacancies. Trainees are helped by TDR's staff to use the programme effectively.

30. TDR effectively identifies opportunities within the recruitment and selection procedure for the accreditation of prior learning. From information in the application form the age and previous experience of applicants is noted. Sixteen-year-old trainees are unlikely to have useful experience, but TDR does not discount the possibility. On reaching the interview stage, the candidates are asked in detail about their past experiences and possible evidence is noted. This evidence is then checked and suitable action taken, such as the amendment of individual

training plans. TDR plans to have subcontractors use this system, when necessary.

31. TDR's progress-review process is weak. Some records of reviews do not contain short-term and long-term targets and lack detail concerning specific training goals. TDR carries out progress reviews at intervals of more than 13 weeks for second, third and fourth year trainees, although this is allowed by the contractual agreement. Frequent informal visits by trainers compensate for these long intervals between progress reviews. Subcontractors carry out quarterly progress reviews, as required by their contracts. Attendance at progress reviews is inconsistent, as the employer's representative is not always there, so dialogue among the three parties cannot always take place. Employers, colleges' representatives and the trainee fill out written pre-review assessments which are discussed in the review meeting. Not all trainees receive a copy of the progress-review sheet or possess a copy of their training plan.

POOR PRACTICE
This is an example of poor initial assessment. An apprentice welder who developed asthma and changed programmes to become a mechanical fitter was made to repeat the whole of the level 2 NVQ foundation programme when he only needed to cover the three mandatory mechanical units.

32. There is weak use of initial assessment. The results of initial assessment tests are mainly used to help TDR decide which applicants to take, rather than to help in the development of the individual training plans. As trainees are assessed at TDR, learning support is identified. Test scores are not given to trainees and explained, and the results are not passed to colleges where they could be of use in deciding the level of learning support. On some individual training plans initial assessment is simply stated as an introduction to apprenticeships, NVQs and health and safety. An example was found where two trainees had successfully worked on computer-controlled lathes for two years, but were made to begin their training at level 2 NVQ rather than level 3.

33. Some trainees and workplace supervisors are unsure of the requirements of the individual training plans. The workplace supervisors are uncertain of the modern apprenticeship framework and NVQ process as a whole. Some trainees do not know if they are modern apprentices or not, cannot name their NVQ and have little, if any, knowledge of key skills requirements. They do not know how to identify appropriate evidence for their portfolios.

Management of training — Grade 3

34. TDR is a partnership of 140 members and was formed in July 1998. It is a registered charity, which is limited by guarantee. The partnership members include representatives from local manufacturing and engineering companies, schools, colleges and universities, industrial training centres, trades unions and other work-based learning organisations. In February 2001, TDR Training Ltd (TDR Training) was formed as a trading company, wholly owned by TDR. TDR Training began trading in April 2001. The training contract is with TDR and the management of the contract is handled by TDR Training. All surpluses from TDR Training are gift-aided to the parent company, TDR. At reinspection, TDR Training provides training itself or through seven subcontracting training providers. It recruits and directly manages 91 learners, employed by 19 local companies. TDR Training has

a board of directors, an executive vice chairman, a chief executive and 13 staff. The training manager and two training co-ordinators carry out assessment and internal verifications. A contracts manager acts as the quality assurance manager, and there is a business development manager. There is a finance and administration manager who is supported by four administration assistants. The schools/industry co-ordinator deals with school and industry projects. There is also a finance and business development group, made up of members of the partnership, which gives financial and strategic guidance. There are other strategic groups which give direction on school and industry initiatives, modern apprenticeships and workforce development. Engineering training is subcontracted to six training companies and one local college. TDR staff and its subcontractors and employers, are encouraged to be involved in management discussions and to take part in developing strategy.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- no staff appraisal system
- inadequate monitoring arrangements for health and safety
- ineffective management information system
- poor management of training in the workplace
- lack of co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

35. The first three weaknesses have been resolved. TDR Training has set up a staff appraisal system and more than half of its staff have been appraised. At the original inspection, TDR Training had recently introduced a system to monitor subcontractors and work placement health and safety arrangements. This is now fully established and effective and inspectors judged it to be a strength. TDR Training has made significant progress in developing its management information system. Data are now successfully collected, stored, and analysed to some extent. The data are not used effectively to inform management decisions. Attempts have been made to rectify the fourth weakness. Management of training in the workplace has improved and assessment and internal verification are now good. Other aspects of the management of training in the workplace still need to be improved. The final weakness, the poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training has not been dealt with.

STRENGTHS

- effective business and strategic planning
- good external and internal communications
- thorough monitoring of health and safety arrangements
- good arrangements for work-based assessment

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- no formal monitoring of subcontractor staffing arrangements

- insufficient use of performance data to inform management decisions

36. TDR Training has a comprehensive business plan which states clear strategic objectives and identifies the actions required to achieve them. The board of TDR Training includes representatives of major engineering and manufacturing companies. They meet regularly and meetings are well attended. The board is actively involved in determining the strategic direction taken by the company. The board does not, however, monitor effectively the quality of training provision, or set corporate performance targets relating to recruitment, retention and achievement rates. The board has not been formally involved in self-assessment.

37. Internal and external communications are good. All subcontracting organisations have formal agreements with TDR Training. The members of the training partnership hold regular meetings which have standard agendas and are well attended. The purpose of this group, however, is not clearly defined, and the minutes of meetings do not identify action to be taken. TDR Training holds monthly staff meetings which most staff attend. Agendas are circulated before the meetings and detailed action minutes are produced. Since the original inspection, TDR Training now uses e-mail systems much more to communicate with all subcontractors. The website has been developed further and is comprehensive and well structured. Potential learners can now apply for a place on a training programme on-line, and they are encouraged to e-mail the company. Many company policies, procedures and documents are available to staff on screen.

38. Arrangements for monitoring health and safety in companies and subcontractors are thorough. At the time of the original inspection, a system to monitor the health and safety arrangements of subcontractors and employers had recently been introduced. This is now well established and covers those learners who are TDR Training's direct responsibility, as well as those with subcontracted training providers. All employers and work-placement providers have a thorough initial assessment of their health and safety arrangements, then an annual review. If the subcontractor carries out the evaluation and review, TDR Training audits the process. In the past year, all employers have had their initial assessment and several have been reviewed. Although companies must inform TDR Training if a learner takes time off work as a result of an accident, TDR Training does not systematically collect data or monitor trends on accidents in the workplace. Since the original inspection, more attention has been paid to health and safety, in learners' inductions. Health and safety is covered in the initial one-day induction at TDR Training, and again, six weeks later, during learners' off-the-job training. It also forms a major part of induction in the workplace.

39. TDR Training has been successful in encouraging employers to train their staff to become work-based assessors. Currently, there are 23 work-based assessors who have been trained by TDR Training, and a further seven are being trained. This means that learners have colleagues with a good understanding of NVQ assessment requirements who are involved in the learners' work-based training as well as assessment. Assessors are trained at no cost to the assessors or the companies. TDR Training also employs three assessors, two of whom are

internal verifiers.

40. As recognised in the self-assessment report, there is insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Employers do not know what learners do during off-the-job training and they are not actively involved in learners' progress reviews. Employers are, however, briefed on the outcomes of the progress reviews and they sign and keep copies of the progress review documents. Although work-based learning is good, learners' training and practical experience is determined by production targets and not by the assessment requirements of the NVQ. Training and practical experience is not linked to the work that learners do in college. Staff in subcontracted colleges do not know what on-the-job training their students have received, or what is planned.

41. TDR Training has a clear and well understood organisational structure. All staff have comprehensive job descriptions, although these do not carry review dates. Since the inspection, TDR Training has introduced a comprehensive staff appraisal system, and approximately half the staff have been appraised. The link between staff appraisal and individual job descriptions, however, is not clear. In some cases, targets identified during staff appraisal are not part of the individual's job description. Staff have appropriate industrial experience and are suitably qualified. Records are kept of completed staff training, but the training is not formally evaluated. A quality assurance procedure is in place to appoint new staff, but this lacks detail, particularly in relation to equality of opportunity and membership of interview panels. TDR Training does not formally monitor subcontractors' staffing arrangements.

42. Since the original inspection, TDR Training's management information system has improved significantly. The company now collects data on all applications and can produce reports showing, for example, the number of learners awaiting interview, or the aptitude test results for a particular section of learners. This database was developed in-house. There is also spreadsheet information about all learners who are on a training programme. Data are comprehensive and are checked regularly for accuracy against the returns made to the local LSC. Other software is being piloted which will allow better monitoring of learners' progress in achieving their NVQ units. Most software and associated reports are accessible through TDR Training's computer network and are available to all training and support staff. There is, however, insufficient use of performance data to inform management decisions.

Quality assurance — Grade 3

43. TDR Training developed and began to introduce a quality assurance system in October 2000. It appointed a quality assurance representative who reports directly to the chief executive. Since then, TDR Training has introduced a range of quality assurance procedures covering various aspects of its operation. All TDR Training's required activities, such as monitoring subcontractors or staff

recruitment, are covered by procedures. However, some procedures have yet to be fully introduced or audited as part of the quality assurance system. Internal audits are generally carried out twice a year, sampling a variety of procedures.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- some poor internal verification practice
- incomplete implementation of quality assurance procedures
- weak use of feedback data
- poor monitoring of subcontractors

44. The first two weaknesses have been resolved. Assessment and internal verification practices are effective. Procedures have been developed for monitoring training partners. TDR Training has introduced additional quality assurance procedures. The company has attempted to resolve the third and fourth weaknesses. These still remain unsatisfactory, although learners and training partners do complete a questionnaire to assess the effectiveness of training. The monitoring of subcontractors is not thorough or effectively recorded. TDR Training has produced an updated self-assessment report. Inspectors awarded the same grade for quality assurance as that of the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- thorough quality assurance system
- clear and concise quality assurance procedures
- good assessment and internal verification

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate monitoring of training partners and subcontractors
- poor use of questionnaire feedback
- unsatisfactory self-assessment process

45. TDR Training has a thorough quality assurance system, which is modelled on an international standard for quality assurance management systems. Procedures in the quality assurance manual are explained clearly and concisely using flowcharts. The manual was reviewed in 2001 and is awaiting internal audit. Since the original inspection, training and development and equal opportunities have been added to the manual. Procedures on staff disciplinary issues have been written, but not yet adopted.

46. Assessment and internal verification practices are good. Assessment is well planned and evidence is gathered effectively. Learners show good awareness of internal verification requirements. Inspectors observed learners in different training organisations and at various stages of assessment. In all observed sessions, the assessment process was discussed in detail with the learner. Health and safety was considered, and internal verification was thorough. Logbooks are assessed and

verified regularly by appropriately qualified staff.

47. The monitoring of training partners and subcontractors by TDR Training is inadequate, a weakness identified in the original inspection report. Quality assurance problems are a standard agenda item at monthly meetings with training providers. However, the monitoring process is not thorough enough, is not systematic and sometimes is not well documented. TDR Training has recently produced procedures to monitor training partners, but these have not yet been introduced. TDR Training is also preparing to introduce service level agreements, which will contain agreed performance indicators for each training partner and subcontractor.

48. Since the original inspection, all learners have been sent questionnaires asking them to comment on the progress they are making and the effectiveness of their training. TDR Training has given feedback from the questionnaire to training partners, but learners have had no feedback on their comments or on actions taken as a result. The data have still to be evaluated fully, and feedback from the questionnaire has not been used to make any significant improvements to the training.

49. The self-assessment report is unsatisfactory. A number of TDR Training staff, including the chief executive, were involved in producing the second self-assessment report. However, the board of directors, training partners and subcontractors were not sufficiently involved in the process. The self-assessment report is a commentary on the company and its personnel, it is not sufficiently self-critical and does not focus on the learners and their experiences.