

INSPECTION REPORT

Construction Industry Training Board

09 January 2003



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Estyn

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg
A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate
For Education and Training in Wales

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training 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.

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

The managing agency of the Construction Industry Training Board is the largest provider of construction work-based learning in England and Wales. It operates through a network of nine regional offices and offers extensive training opportunities in close co-operation with employers. All learners are employed and are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) within nationally agreed frameworks for their respective trades. All off-the-job training for NVQs and key skills is subcontracted to colleges of further education or commercial training centres.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Work-based learning is satisfactory in England and Wales. The overall leadership and management of training throughout England and Wales are satisfactory, as is quality assurance. The provision for equality of opportunity is good.

GRADES

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	3

Construction	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- comprehensive business planning
- strong promotion of equal opportunities to under-represented groups
- strong emphasis on continuous improvement
- many good work placements for learners
- good promotion and reinforcement of health and safety
- good support for learners by providers' staff
- good learning resources at most subcontracted off-the-job provision

KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor management of off-the-job training
- insufficient reinforcement of equal opportunities with learners and employers
- inconsistent quality assurance of subcontracted provision
- failure to use all opportunities to record work-based evidence in England
- low framework completion rates
- insufficient co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training
- poor aspects of progress reviews in England

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better access to electronic data for new entrant training officers
- extend use of individual learning plans to monitor progression

THE INSPECTION

1. Three inspectors from Estyn spent 15 days reviewing activities in north and south Wales, interviewing 60 learners and visiting 55 companies, where discussions took place with employer representatives. Inspectors interviewed nine new entrant training officers (NETOs) and visited seven colleges of further education. They examined 50 individual learning plans and reviewed the work of 45 work-based recorders. They interviewed the area manager in the Welsh regional office and other senior training staff. At the end of the second week of inspection one inspector joined the team of inspectors at Dunchurch Park, Rugby and helped to prepare the summary conclusions of the inspection.

2. In England, a total of 25 inspectors spent 201 days reviewing the work of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) managing agency. They visited the eight English local area offices, CITB offices at Bircham Newton and Carthusian House in London. During that time 215 employers were visited and interviews were carried out with 226 employer representatives. Inspectors interviewed over 600 learners and there were 174 interviews with CITB's staff, including NETOs, and, management and administrative staff. Seventy-eight colleges of further education were visited, and 79 representatives from the colleges were interviewed. A total of 287 individual learning plans were examined, along with 191 learners' portfolios. Further documents examined, included policy documents, minutes of meetings, learners' files, assessment records, management files and subcontract arrangements. Inspectors observed new entrant training activities at career and recruitment events and attended meetings for work-based recording, equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The most recent self-assessment report and its development plan, produced in November 2002, were made available to inspectors.

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

3. CITB was formed in 1964 as a non-departmental public body under the Industrial Training Act 1964. The mission of CITB is to promote and facilitate the training of sufficient people in the skills needed for a world-class construction industry throughout the UK. CITB's policies are formulated and developed in consultation with the construction industry through an extensive committee structure. There is a network of local and regional advisory committees who inform the main board on the needs of the industry. The CITB is also the lead and joint awarding body for most construction craft and operative vocational qualifications. Its prime source of income is through a statutory training levy collected from companies whose main business is construction or civil engineering. It is based upon payments made to employees and labour-only subcontractors. In return, by means of an agreed grant scheme, the CITB encourages and financially supports registered employers whose staff receive approved training. The grant scheme is reviewed annually and most of the funds are paid to employers who train new entrant learners.

4. The construction industry employs 1 in 14 of the working population in England and Wales and is a major source of employment. It provides the essential infrastructure and built environment required by all other sectors in the economy. On behalf of industry, the managing agency of CITB annually recruits over 6,500 new entrants into industry-approved schemes in England and Wales. In 2001-02, CITB contracted with most local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) for the provision of work-based learning for young people. However, in the autumn of 2002, a national contract was successfully negotiated with the National Contract Service (NCS) of the LSC.

5. At the time of inspection, there were 9,553 modern apprentices in England and 1,754 in Wales. The managing agency offers training in 25 different occupational trades, ranging from wood and trowel occupations to built-up felt roofing, mastic asphalt and plant mechanics. Some learners join these programmes as full-time learners from further education institutions, while others join directly after finishing schooling. All learners are employed from the outset. Off-the-job training is carried out in a total of 151 subcontracted training centres in England and 25 centres in Wales. Most training centres are colleges of further education and learners attend on a varied mixture of block- or day-release patterns. The Northwest region of the agency has the highest proportion of modern apprentices in England, at 17 per cent, whereas the Greater London region has the least, at 3 per cent. In Wales, the CITB holds the largest contract for work-based construction training, covering both modern apprenticeships and national traineeships. The Welsh region involves 450 separate employers, 70 secondary schools, 60 careers offices and eight curriculum centres. In England, most learners are registered as foundation modern apprentices and those who successfully achieve at this stage are transferred to advanced modern apprenticeship programmes.

Work-based learning for young people

6. The CITB's overall provision of work-based learning in England and Wales is to a satisfactory standard. In Wales, the provision is good, with effective use of work-based recorders and good, short-term target-setting in progress reviews. In England, progress reviews are less effective and do not have clear targets for progression. The overall leadership and management and quality assurance are satisfactory, but the quality assurance of subcontractors is inconsistent. Equality of opportunity is good throughout, but is not sufficiently reinforced with the learners.

7. The completion rate for modern apprenticeship frameworks is poor. The highest proportion of advanced modern apprentices achieving this in England is 44 per cent, during 1998-99. The proportion is 32 per cent for foundation modern apprentices. Retention rates have improved consistently since 1998-99, showing 93 per cent retention in 2001-02.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

8. The chief executive leads an executive team, which sets the overall policy and strategy for the CITB in meeting the industry's overall aims and targets. Senior management are responsible to a statutory board that includes industry and employers' representatives. The organisation's five-year business plan sets out the aims and objectives of the organisation. The general manager for England and Wales oversees the work of the managing agency and reports to the director of training operations. There are eight business areas within the organisation, each with a business manager. They are the managing agency, the national construction college (NCC), specialists, levy collection and grant payments, recruitment and careers, on-site assessment and training, certification and registration and business improvement. The managing agency and the NCC are primarily involved with government-funded training, although the activities of other business areas also support this work.

9. The managing agency operates through nine area offices in England and Wales. The new entrant training managers in each area have direct responsibility for new entrant training and report to their area managers. A team of 125 NETOs work directly with learners, employers and subcontractors. The managing agency employs a total of 384 staff with 20 additional posts approved for 2003. The organisation has an equal opportunities policy and procedures. There is a team of 11 equal opportunities and diversity advisers who operate out of the area offices, two of these advisers have a national role. A recently appointed quality assurance manager has national responsibility and leads the quality team. An external inspection adviser is responsible for the co-ordination of inspections and other external monitoring agencies. Policies and procedures are published on the CITB Intranet. Most areas are accredited under ISO 9000, an international standard of quality assurance, and all nine areas hold the Investor in People award, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. Self-assessment is carried out annually and the most recent self-assessment report was published in November 2002.

STRENGTHS

- comprehensive business planning
- good communications
- good staff appraisal and development
- effective target-setting
- strong promotion of programmes to under-represented groups
- good training in equal opportunities for all staff
- strong emphasis on continuous improvement
- effective self-assessment process

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient focus on achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- poor management of off-the-job training
- insufficient reinforcement of equal opportunities with learners and employers
- inconsistent quality assurance of subcontracted provision

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better access to electronic data for new entrant training officers
- further development of management information system

10. CITB has a comprehensive business planning process. Good links are established with industry and its federations and the aims of CITB are closely linked to construction industry targets. The business plan clearly identifies the board's role in contributing to these over the next five years. The stated objectives for the managing agency include targeted recruitment, including those from under-represented groups, improved retention rates and to continuously improve through self-assessment and inspection. The director of training visits area offices regularly to ensure that staff understand the strategic aims of the business and recent feedback from a survey indicates an increased awareness of the organisation's aims among staff. Area business plans reflecting local priorities effectively link to the national business plan and its objectives. Area business planning and target-setting involves all staff. Local business area targets are further divided into individual targets. Tasks identified within the local plans clearly state the actions required to achieve successful outcomes. Staff readily identify their roles in achieving the organisation's objectives. The responsibilities of other business areas are clearly outlined and show how areas such as education and recruitment support the work of the new entrant training team through local initiatives.

11. Communications among staff are generally effective. The main board meets six times a year and includes representatives from industry, government and education. The vice chairman of the board chairs the national training committee that reviews the activities of the managing agency. The executive team regularly attend and contribute to board meetings. Each member of the executive team acts as a link person for one or more trade federations to allow them easy access to senior management. The executive team also attend regional meetings to update individuals on the work of the organisation. Each area office has an area advisory committee that consists of the area manager, employers, local trade federation members, representatives from further education, local LSCs and other interested parties. Advisory committees are frequently used as part of the consultation process before decisions are put to the main board for agreement. A monthly staff newsletter is sent to all employees to keep them updated about developments in the industry and current initiatives. A regular cycle of manager meetings, NETO meetings and cross-functional meetings at area level are in place. Local area meetings are used effectively to circulate information to staff and keep them updated with new developments. They are also used to discuss operational issues

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING BOARD

across a broad range of subjects which directly affect the learner, to share good practice and celebrate the achievements of individuals and teams. The CITB intranet is used to inform staff, and email is used extensively throughout the regional offices of the organisation. Managers can also access video conferencing to allow the appropriate people to attend meetings efficiently with minimum disruption to work patterns. However, most NETOs are home-based and rely on the postal service and facsimile machines with hard copy data for transfer of information and records. They do not have laptop computers so cannot easily access the intranet and do not have email facilities, although it is planned to introduce these facilities during 2003.

12. Management information and data are used effectively to monitor and control the training programme and to provide information for the business plan. Staff use the system for analysing data on all aspects of the programme including, recruitment, monitoring equality of opportunity, learner administration, learner progression and early leavers. A wide variety of reports are generated from analysis of the data and these are used constructively to inform management on the effectiveness of provision and contribute to the monitoring of key performance indicators. Effective use is made of learners' perception surveys and staff feedback through annual questionnaires. An upgrading of the management information system software is still being developed.

13. CITB has a comprehensive training plan linked to the objectives of the business plan. An annual evaluation of what has taken place and whether it has been effective is carefully carried out. Staff appraisal and performance planning takes place annually with two interim reviews and a final review. Mandatory training is identified nationally and is linked to the requirements of the job. In addition to the appraisal system there is a feedback system provided by an external organisation to ensure confidentiality. Individual training and development needs are identified and planned locally, linking directly into the corporate plan. There is a good staff appraisal and development system at area level and local area training plans detail staff training for the year. In some areas, new staff are assigned a mentor. This person helps to provide support in the early days, creating opportunities to share good practice with other areas. In addition, staff shadow others to improve performance and share good practice. Staff take professional qualifications such as the diploma in management studies, and institute of management qualifications. Where possible, training opportunities are created to prepare staff for future roles within the organisation. In one area, a NETO has completed a Masters degree in critical equal opportunities, and is now the area adviser for equality of opportunity.

14. There is an effective system of target-setting measured against scorecards. Each area office has targets set across the business areas, linked to targets set out in the national business plan. For example, targets for recruitment from under-represented groups in the business plan form part of area targets and individual NETO targets. Staff can clearly identify how their targets contribute to achieving the targets identified in the business plan. Progress against targets and the range of indicators are reviewed regularly within individual areas and discussed at six-monthly managers' meetings. Quarterly reports are produced to update the CITB on the performance of the managing

agency.

15. There are no targets set at national level for modern apprenticeship framework achievement. Over the past six months management reports have been produced measuring modern apprenticeship framework achievements, but they do not distinguish individual programmes or qualifications. There is insufficient detail to allow useful analysis. Issues relating to key skills and framework achievements are discussed at meetings, but there is no systematic review of achievement and performance. At area level, modern apprenticeship framework achievement has been included as a target from the beginning of 2003.

16. The management of subcontractors is not effective and in many cases does not identify potential problems early enough. Subcontract agreements with colleges and other training centres have been revised this year, although some centres have not yet signed them. Issues with subcontractors are usually dealt with locally as they arise, but this is a reactive rather than an active process. Key performance indicators such as external verification reports, achievement data and self-assessment are not routinely discussed with subcontractors. There is often no formal record sent to the training centre of what was agreed, action to be taken and by whom. In some areas there are few records of any meetings to review the management of training, and some colleges have not been visited for this purpose for more than six months. There are continuing problems with key skills training in some colleges and this has yet to be resolved. A new system to monitor performance each term against key performance indicators, including key skills and modern apprenticeship framework achievements has recently been introduced. However, this system has not yet been adopted in some areas and in others it is not being applied thoroughly.

17. There is no organisational strategy or mechanism for providing for the additional literacy, numeracy and language support needs of new entrant learners. CITB relies on college initial assessments to identify additional learning needs and currently basic skills initiatives are taken at area level. Some subcontractors have recently provided information on the diagnostic tests they use and the additional support needs of learners at college, but this has been done to varying standards and is not consistently applied. Where additional literacy and numeracy needs have been identified at college, additional learning support has been good.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

18. There is a clear policy for equal opportunities which is reviewed annually. It is supported by sound procedures and all staff and learners are made aware of the policy at induction. Realistic targets for the recruitment of under-represented groups are being met nationally and staff are aware that performance planning and pay are linked to achievement. There is a clear improvement in the recruitment and selection of women and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, but the percentage of such applicants remains low, despite the continued efforts of committed staff. There is an active approach to equal opportunities that extends well beyond the achievement of recruitment targets. Two national posts have been created to support equality of opportunity, which is a key priority of the organisation. A dedicated liaison officer has been appointed in each region to co-ordinate an area action plan. Officers work closely with employers, subcontractors and external organisations to promote best practice. Subcontractors are monitored appropriately for their application of equality of opportunity.

19. A national conference on equal opportunities has resulted in the development of a network of staff who share good practice. Each area has a regular forum where issues are raised and developments are reviewed. Equal opportunities and diversity issues are regularly on the agenda of meetings at all levels. Staff make good efforts to use data to analyse local population trends and develop creative recruitment strategies to attract applicants to a career in the industry. An extensive range of well-resourced projects is used to promote equality of opportunity. Staff identify target groups, geographical areas and activities where they might be involved. For example, staff work with Afro-Caribbean and Asian groups in local community settings at appropriate times. Equal opportunities staff work in partnership with the education team to take positive role models into primary and secondary schools. Attractive and well-produced posters and leaflets devised by staff for a positive image campaign have a high profile in training centres and public places.

20. Learners have a general knowledge of their rights and responsibilities and understand the steps to take if they wish to complain. In progress reviews, NETOs question learners about harassment and bullying, but this is often superficial, although most responses indicate that few problems occur. Training staff deal promptly with issues as they occur and appropriate challenges are made to employers when necessary.

21. Staff training in equal opportunities is good. There is a planned programme to ensure that they respond to the targets of the business plan and promote and share best practice. Staff induction includes equal opportunities and is followed up by a half-day mandatory session for all staff, covering awareness raising, current legislation and other work issues such as parental leave. A comprehensive two-day training course in recruitment and selection techniques helps managers and training officers to gain a sound knowledge of good practice, especially for interviews. There are one-day training sessions for administration staff. CITB are active in pursuing policies and procedures that will protect the more vulnerable learners, for example, 14 to 16 year olds. New training

is planned for all staff to ensure that new measures for child protection are implemented.

22. The monitoring of employer's responses to equality of opportunity issues is poor and the stereotypical image of the industry often persists in the workplace. Learners and employers do not sufficiently understand wider diversity and equal opportunities issues. Learners are given informative equal opportunities documentation and induction includes a dedicated session on the topic. However, most learners are unable to recall this information, despite the questioning that takes place in the progress review process and responding to questions included in the feedback survey.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

23. The managing agency has a clear, national quality assurance policy statement that aims to promote and encourage a culture of self-assessment and development planning leading to continuous improvement and the achievement of better standards of training. The principal objective is to improve the quality of the learner's experience and achievements. There is a strong emphasis on continuous improvement at all levels in the organisation. This has been reinforced by the appointment of a national quality assurance manager who is supported by a quality assurance team comprising representatives from the managing agency. The quality assurance team has been given demanding terms of reference to improve the quality of training, by ensuring the continued development, evaluation and refinement of procedures and documentation. The new entrant training (NET) managers have responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the quality assurance process in their area.

24. An effective review of the key local policies and procedures of each area has been completed. A coherent set of agreed national policies and procedures have been introduced, incorporating the best practice from around the regions. In the first instance they have been published on the CITB intranet and not as paper copies. There is good quality control of these documents and all future amendments will be distributed through the intranet. To ensure effective compliance, appropriate training is planned to support staff in implementing any revised procedures. There is a good system of internal audits conducted by competent, trained staff. Audit findings are effectively used to monitor systems and inform management of actions needed for continuous improvement.

25. There was a very effective approach to the compilation of the most recent self-assessment report. A national external inspection adviser was appointed in March 2002 to work with the business area manager and the management team in co-ordinating the production of the report which was published in November 2002. The findings and judgements contained in the self-assessment report closely matched those identified by the inspectors. The self-assessment report was used for the production of a comprehensive development plan that covers all of the identified issues. The development plan allocates responsibilities for dealing with weaknesses and highlights areas for improvement with a timetable for completion. The criteria for success and their expected effect on improving training are clearly stated.

26. The off-the-job training, assessment and verification of learners is subcontracted to colleges and training providers in all regions. The agency has relied primarily on the subcontractors' own quality assurance systems, but these are inconsistent. Internal verification of NVQ assessments by subcontractors is satisfactory, except for one subcontractor where the awarding body has imposed sanctions. Inspectors found instances of poor quality assurance procedures by some subcontractors and failure of others to meet the full contract requirements for teaching, assessing and verifying key skills. In order to remove these inconsistencies, a new contract for the academic year 2002-03 was agreed between the CITB and its subcontractors in September 2002. It specifies in more detail the level of service to be provided by the colleges and the key

performance indicators that will be reviewed by NET managers each academic term. Contract review meetings now include standard agenda items providing information on the CITB's quality assurance requirements. NET managers agree local action plans with subcontractors to highlight good practice and areas of concern. At the time of the inspection, however, it was not possible to identify any improvements resulting from the first round of these new review arrangements.

Good Practice

The agency operates a young presenter craft award. Selected young learners are trained in presentation skills and then act as role models, carrying out presentations in schools to potential recruits. This lifts individual self-esteem and bridges any age gap between the listener and presenter.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	11307	3

27. The CITB provides training for modern apprentices at foundation and advanced level in England and for modern apprentices and national trainees in Wales. A total of 21 different construction occupations are provided at NVQ levels 2 and 3. Learners follow the national modern apprenticeship frameworks appropriate to their trade. The CITB business areas for recruitment, education and careers ensure that relevant advice and support is provided for potential learners. Most learners are recruited to the training programmes through schools, colleges, the careers service, or by direct referrals from prospective employers. A standard recruitment and selection process to the training programme is carried out for all applicants. All learners recruited to the programme are employed and registered through the industry's Construction Apprenticeship Scheme (CAS).

28. Most learners receive their off-the-job training at local colleges of further education or commercial training centres and their on-the-job experience through a wide variety of general and specialist construction companies. NETOs monitor and review the progress of learners and provide support to them throughout their training programme. Most NETOs operate from their homes and are regionally managed. The local NETOs take responsibility for carrying out reviews and monitoring the progress of learners in their area. NETOs are supported by office-based new entrant training administrators. A few learners have to travel considerable distances to their off-the-job training centre and approved lodging providers are used as required. On-the-job progress reviews are usually conducted with the learner's site supervisor present. Reviews are carried out every 12 weeks and alternate between on-site and the college or training centre. Off-the-job training and assessment is supported by work-based evidence. Learners registered after November 2000 will be unable to achieve a full NVQ without adequate evidence from the workplace. The published tables show the achievement and retention rates in England only. They do not include in-training figures for the three months leading up to the inspection.

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

Work-based learning for young people														
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	371		1394		2169		1967		3155		2291		
Retained*	0		244	18	245	11	1091	55	1678	53	1170	51		
Successfully completed	0		244	18	245	11	665	34	1387	44	995	43		
Still in learning	348		1052	75	1159	53	411	21	33	1	0	0		

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people														
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	1773		3968		1886		1400		326		25		
Retained*	0		253	6	1133	60	761	54	159	49	11	44		
Successfully completed	0		253	6	396	21	429	31	104	32	8	32		
Still in learning	1694		3081	78	679	36	71	5	1	0	0	0		

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people														
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	53		22		34		17		230		552		
Retained*	0		2	9	21	62	10	59	120	52	382	69		
Successfully completed	0		2	9	12	35	8	47	102	44	287	52		
Still in learning	52		13	59	9	26	1	6	2	1	0	0		

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- many good work placements for learners
- good promotion and reinforcement of health and safety
- good support for learners by providers' staff
- good resources and facilities at most off-the-job provision

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY TRAINING BOARD

- good additional learning support
- effective use of work-based recorders in Wales
- detailed progress reviews with good short-term target-setting in Wales

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate linkage between selection testing and initial assessment procedures
- insufficient recording of work-based evidence in England
- low modern apprenticeship framework achievement rates
- poor key skills training provision at some colleges
- insufficient co-ordination between on-and off-the-job training
- some ineffective progress reviews in England

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- extend use of individual learning plans to monitor progression

29. Most employers are involved in a good variety of contract works, involving new build, refurbishment, maintenance and renovation activities. This provides learners with adequate opportunities to develop appropriate skills within a wide range of work activities associated with their NVQ. For example, a carpenter working to NVQ level 2 has only been employed for four months, but is already carrying out stud partitioning, roof construction, timber floor covering, window fixing, door hanging and skirting and has been allowed to carry out this work with minimal supervision. Employers are supportive of training and when made aware of learning programmes, do their best to provide suitable experiences at work for the learners. Most workplace supervisors are enthusiastic about developing learners' skills and recognise the need to help support the next generation of skilled tradespeople. Most emphasise the need for learners to develop good tool skills and organise a suitable range of opportunities to increase their abilities and speed.

30. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety issues relevant to their place of work. The managing agency has a good track record in accident prevention. Employers are supportive and most provide a thorough health and safety induction for learners, supplying and promoting the routine use of good personal protective equipment. The learners' progress review has a thorough health and safety checklist and issues are reinforced at every opportunity. Care is taken when learners start their training to ensure they have a thorough understanding of their personal health and safety commitments, and learning programmes introduce the topic from the outset of training. Before an employer can access the CITB training programme, they are vetted

and must demonstrate that the thorough health and safety criteria, are met. Where an employer does not meet the specified criteria, an action plan is produced quickly to help them to comply. NETOs ensure that learners wear appropriate personal protective equipment at work and any non-compliance is dealt with promptly. Accidents at college or on site are recorded and investigated by the regional health and safety co-ordinator. During two progress reviews carried out by different NETOs, important health and safety issues were identified. Both dealt with these issues in a very effective and professional manner. Workplace supervisors are routinely reminded of their responsibilities regarding the learner and employers are quickly notified of any issues raised.

31. NETOs provide effective support to learners by frequent visits to off-the-job locations and, more infrequently, to the workplace. Considerable time is spent building a rapport with learners. During formal progress reviews, NETOs motivate learners and encourage them to be open and honest about vocational and personal issues. Effective working relationships have been developed with off-the-job, training-provider staff who hold most NETOs in high regard. Employers are confident that the NETOs are organising the elements of off-the-job training well.

32. There are good resources and training facilities at most off-the-job training establishments. Workshops generally have sufficient space, are well maintained and many contain realistic working environments where learners can practise their skills under near-site conditions. Learners have good access to specialist tools and equipment that are to current industrial standards and are available in sufficient quantity to cater for the large groups in many colleges. Classrooms are generally fit for purpose and equipped with good quality training and assessment materials. Most off-the-job, training-provider staff have good industrial experience and are well qualified to develop and assess learners' work.

33. Once a need is identified, good additional learning support is provided by the managing agency and its subcontractors. Separate teams of appropriately qualified and experienced college staff usually carry out the training required. Learners interviewed appreciate the additional support, although some resent the help available and do not always attend sessions. Good support is provided in England and Wales for learners who speak English as an additional language. Help is available for learners with dyslexia and those with physical learning difficulties.

34. CITB Wales has trained over 800 work-based recorders. Training is designed to increase the recorders' knowledge of the qualifications and the role of employers in the learners' training. Most work-based recorders are actively involved in making sure that the learners' on-site experience matches the content of the new NVQ scheme. In a few cases, work-based recorders and NETOs work together to move learners to alternative employers for short periods, to gain experience in activities that their employer would not normally be able to provide. Many work-based recorders plan the learners' work to make sure that they can generate enough site evidence to satisfy the new NVQ scheme.

35. NETOs in Wales plan the progress review process well and ensure that appropriate

targets are agreed with the learners and their supervisors. There is a very good relationship between the off-the-job training providers and the NETOs. They jointly agree an action plan for the next progress review period. In many cases, they also set short-term goals and review these at interim stages. This happens more often when learners have not completed a previously agreed action plan. All learners, employers and off-the-job tutors have copies of the progress review. Learners have ownership of these targets and are able to describe the progress they are making.

36. All learners receive a standard selection test before entry, but this does not systematically identify learners' additional literacy or numeracy needs. There are no links between the results of the selection tests, the colleges' initial assessments, individual learning plans, or the additional support arranged by subcontractors. Most of the individual learning plans do not include any prior learning or experience, the results of initial assessments or learning support arrangements.

37. Throughout Wales and in some regions of England there is extensive use of work-based evidence recording, but in other parts of England learners do not routinely maintain records of their activities in the workplace. Many learners new to the programmes where site evidence is a mandatory requirement, have no awareness of evidence-recording documents. They are often ignorant of the need to gather diverse evidence in the form of witness testimony, photographs or site documents. Some training centres supplement work-based evidence by incorporating on-site assessments and visits, but many still rely on simulated activities to assess competence. Many training centres do not make sufficient use of work-based evidence in portfolios and some staff are reluctant to accept evidence from the workplace. Many good opportunities are available in the workplace from the outset of training. Some centres are not encouraging learners to collect evidence in their first year, as this is considered to be a training year. Some supervisors have not been inducted into the training role and do not understand the purpose of the workplace-recorder system. Internal verification is generally satisfactory for off-the-job training, but the procedures for the verification of work-based evidence are inadequate. For example, college assessors rarely visit learners' workplaces to verify that work has been done. Few physical checks are made to confirm the accuracy of the workplace diary entries.

38. The overall achievement level of modern apprenticeship frameworks is poor, although NVQs and other components are often achieved and many early leavers progress into sustainable employment. In 1998-99, in England, 44 per cent of advanced modern apprentices successfully completed all aspects of their frameworks. Thirty-two per cent of foundation modern apprentices achieved their frameworks in the same period. Numbers have declined in subsequent years. As the number of learners successfully completing the framework has declined, the number of learners continuing in learning has increased, thereby improving retention rates to good levels.

39. In Wales, during the period between January 2002 and December 2002, 54 per cent of modern apprentices achieved NVQs at level 3. However, only 11 per cent completed the full modern apprenticeship framework. The remaining 35 per cent all

achieved units towards the NVQ at level 3. In the same period, 51 per cent of national trainees achieved the NVQ at level 2. However, only 13 per cent achieved the full framework. The retention rate for this period was nearly 97 per cent. These rates have shown continuous improvement over the past three years and those still in learning are making good progress.

40. Key skills training is subcontracted to training centres, but is inadequate in some colleges. Some key skills training is based on open learning packs with little integration into the trade-specific areas and with no attempt to meet individual learner's needs. In other training centres key skills are carefully timetabled into the learners' programmes, some of whom have passed the tests early, compiling good portfolios of evidence. Many centres make appropriate use of proxy qualifications. There is insufficient emphasis on key skills training in the workplace and they have been introduced late into the programme for some learners, others are unaware of their inclusion to complete their modern apprenticeship framework. Internal verification is often carried out too late in the college year, only shortly before moderation by the awarding body. Some learners leave without completing the necessary components for accreditation.

41. On- and off-the-job training is poorly co-ordinated. There are no training plans in place for on-site activities to ensure that learners meet the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework. Off-the-job training centres rely heavily on the NETOs to provide feedback regarding learners' performance and work activities carried out on site. Most supervisors and work-based recorders are unaware what their learners are doing during the off-the-job training. Learners often have to replicate tasks off the job when they have previously demonstrated competence on site.

42. In England, the communication of information between training centres and on-site progress reviews is ineffective. Learning plans are very poor and are not used to record and monitor progression. Learners are often unaware of their individual progress. Some off-the-job training centres have good monitoring systems, but the available information is seldom used by the NETOs during the progress review process. Specific short and medium targets are not regularly set during the progress review process and there is insufficient reference to previous reviews to provide a clear focus. Framework and individual support details are not included in the plans. Most individual learning plans record standard completion dates that are dictated by the academic year of the subcontracting colleges. Learners are not made aware that they are able to achieve their qualifications sooner than indicated on their individual learning plans. Some site reviews take place in situations that limit their effectiveness and surrounding noise and other activities distracts learners. A few progress reviews have not taken place within the target period of 12 weeks. The number of learners allocated to NETOs is often excessive. Reviews are sometimes bland and not thorough enough.

Good Practice

In some LSC regions funding is being provided for disposable cameras to be supplied to learners, allowing good photographic evidence to be used in portfolios. One employer has posted the photographs of learners' work on the company's website. Learners expressed satisfaction at this public acknowledgement of their work. The photographs are also being used as evidence of competence.

Poor Practice

At one college, learners attended for their normal day of off-the-job training, unaware that they had a key skills numeracy test. Some learners mentioned that they should be exempt because of previous qualifications. This was largely ignored, as accreditation of prior learning had not previously been effectively carried out. Twenty-five learners were sent for the exam. When they returned it was realised that they had all been enrolled for, and taken the wrong examination, level 2 instead of level 1. One learner had proof with him that he had previously obtained level 3 key skills. He was told to take the exam anyway because it was college policy. He took the level 2 examination, but only needed level 1 for his modern apprenticeship framework.