INSPECTION REPORT

QUBE Qualifications & Development Ltd

10 September 2004

ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning 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

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.

INSPECTION REPORT

QUBE Qualifications & Development Ltd

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Qube Qualifications & Development Limited (QQD) is a private limited company and a division of the Qube Group. The company was originally known as Qube Hospitality when it was established in Enfield in 1999. It has expanded in the past five years and was renamed when it relocated its head office operations to Henley-on-Thames in July 2002.

2. QQD contracts with the National Contracting Service (NCS) and London Central Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide work-based learning for 700 young people and 39 learners over 24 years old.

3. It also provides training leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 for 197 employed adults through the employer training pilot (ETP) scheme. This training is funded through contracts with Manchester LSC, Essex LSC and Leicester LSC.

4. QQD works closely with a number of national and regional employers throughout the North, the Midlands and the South. All learners are employed before starting on their programmes and most training is carried out in the workplace. Some training, particularly for technical certificates for modern apprentices, is carried out by QQD's staff or subcontractors. All assessments and additional support are provided in the workplace. QQD is led and managed by the managing director, the operations manager and the qualifications manager. The management team has been in place since November 2003. There are two regional managers, a learning support specialist, two lead internal verifiers, six internal verifiers, an administration manager and nine other support and administrative staff. Learners are supported and assessed by 36 assessors, of whom six are also internal verifiers.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

5. There are 160 learners on business administration and management programmes. In business administration there are four young people on foundation or advanced modern apprenticeships, 79 learners on the ETP programme and 10 adult learners on NVQ programmes at level 2 or 3. In management there are 20 young people in work-based learning taking an NVQ at level 2 in team leading, and one advanced modern apprentice. Twenty-nine learners are on the ETP programme and a further 17 adult learners are on an NVQ programme at level 2 or 3. Learners are employed before joining the programmes. Their employers include public sector organisations and financial and service companies. All occupational training is provided by the employer. A team of assessors appraises and supports learners during monthly visits to the workplace. On management programmes an independent mentor is allocated to each learner.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

6. There are 222 learners on retailing and customer service programmes. In retail operations there are 40 foundation or advanced modern apprentices and two learners on the ETP programme. In customer service there are 117 foundation modern apprentices, 26 advanced modern apprentices, 24 learners on ETP programmes and 12 adult learners. The remaining learner is working towards a warehousing qualification. All learners are employed by large national organisations. Learners are visited in the workplace every month by a QQD assessor who provides individual support and assessment. Job-related skills training is normally given by the learner's employer.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

7. There are 554 learners taking a wide range of qualifications in hospitality. Programmes include bar service, quick service, food and drink service, housekeeping, food processing, food preparation and hospitality supervision. There are 387 foundation modern apprentices of whom 294 are on bar service programmes. Of the 105 advanced modern apprentices, 102 are on hospitality supervision programmes and three are on food preparation programmes. There are 62 learners on the ETP programme, just under half of whom are taking an NVQ at level 2 in bar service. All learners are employed. Many work for large public houses or leisure group companies and have satisfactory conditions of employment with reasonable hours, paid overtime and time off. Most training is given individually at employers' premises. Training in background knowledge for technical certificates takes place off the job. There are 23 assessors and nine internal verifiers. Some internal verifiers also assess learners. Some of the assessors and internal verifiers work part time for QQD.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	12
Number of inspection days	60
Number of learner interviews	148
Number of staff interviews	57
Number of employer interviews	45
Number of visits	100

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

8. The quality of provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. QQD's leadership and management are unsatisfactory and so are its quality assurance arrangements. Equality of opportunity is very weak. Training in business administration, management and professional is satisfactory. Training in the areas of retailing, customer service and transportation; hospitality, sport, leisure and travel; and catering is unsatisfactory.

GRADES

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	5
Quality assurance	4

Business administration, management & professional		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration		
- Other government-funded provision	89	3
- Work-based learning for young people	4	None
Management		
- Other government-funded provision	46	3
- Work-based learning for young people	21	3

Retailing, customer service & transportation		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Retailing		
⁻ Work-based learning for young people	40	4
⁻ Other government-funded provision	2	4
Customer service		
⁻ Work-based learning for young people	143	4
⁻ Other government-funded provision	36	4
Warehousing and distribution		
⁻ Other government-funded provision	1	None

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering		
⁻ Work-based learning for young people	492	4
⁻ Other government-funded provision	62	4

KEY FINDINGS
Achievement and standards

9. **Learners gain good occupational skills, professionalism and confidence in their work.**
In hospitality, many learners are promoted during their time on the programme. Learners
on the ETP programmes develop good personal skills; they have greater self-esteem and a
wider appreciation of their skills. Most learners are well motivated and enthusiastic and
many are inspired to take further qualifications.

10. **Good progress is made by young people on the work-based learning programme in
team leading.** Many of them have completed their NVQ portfolios well before their
planned completion date. The standard of work is generally good and it is presented
professionally. Most learners on other programmes make satisfactory progress towards
achieving their qualifications. For a few learners, progress has been slowed by delays at
the start of their programme, long periods without a specific assessor and changes in job
roles.

11. The ETP programmes and programmes for adults started in 2003, and most of the
learners are still in training. It is too early to judge the achievement rates for most of
these learners. The **retention rates for 2002-03 in business administration, management,
and customer services were good at over 80 per cent.** The retention rate in hospitality
was lower at 60 per cent.

12. **The retention and achievement rates are poor on all modern apprenticeship programmes.** They are particularly poor in hospitality, where only 4 per cent of advanced modern apprentices achieved their framework in 2001-02. Achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices were only slightly better at 10 per cent in 2001-02, and the maximum achievement rate possible for 2002-03 is 22 per cent. In retailing, the achievement rates declined in 2002-03 when QQD recruited a large number of learners without sufficient assessors to support them. Over the past nine months there have been early signs that achievement and retention rates are improving.

Quality of education and training

13. Eighty per cent of the learning sessions observed were satisfactory.

14. **Employers provide particularly good support for learners on business administration and management programmes.** Workplace supervisors understand what is required of them to help learners complete their programmes successfully. There are good opportunities for learners to develop their skills and confidence, and employers are actively involved in reviewing and supporting their progress. One large employer has trained some of its staff to become work-based assessors.

15. The assessors provide satisfactory learner support. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to learners' progress. Assessors have a good rapport with their learners and most make at least monthly visits to the workplace to assess and support them. At each visit learners are effectively consulted and fully involved in agreeing and planning the actions they will complete by the next visit. Assessors provide support where required and are accessible by mobile telephone and e-mail.

16. Verifiers and assessors are appropriately qualified and experienced, with suitable occupational backgrounds and competence in their subject areas. Assessment planning is adequate and is recorded at each visit assessors make to learners' workplaces. The internal verification process is sound.

17. Learners receive adequate information about their programme before joining. Care is taken to ensure that learners are on the programme that corresponds best with their job role. The induction is short and includes a brief explanation of a range of topics. **Many of the learners in business administration and management found the induction inadequate and did not fully understand the details of their programme.** A new induction pack has now been developed.

18. **There is insufficient support for learners' particular needs.** Learners on ETP programmes and those over 24 years of age do not have an appropriate initial assessment. Identification of learners with additional learning needs is improving with the appointment of a learning support specialist and the introduction of new procedures. However, assessors are not adequately qualified to support some of the specific additional learning needs identified. Learning materials are often resourced individually

by assessors and not co-ordinated or evaluated.

19. **In hospitality, some learners are making slow progress.** Prior learning is not effectively considered when setting targets. Most learners have a standard length of programme regardless of their experience, and they are not challenged to achieve at the level of their experience or abilities. Some learners are on programme for some time before observations are carried out, and insufficient use is made of diverse evidence.

20. **Some learners on retailing and customer service programmes are not being challenged sufficiently.** Training and assessment are not planned at a suitable pace or level. Learners are not moved on to higher-level qualifications quickly enough, or challenged by taking key skills awards at a higher level. Prior achievement is not always accredited.

21. **There are insufficient learning materials and resources to develop learners' occupational knowledge.** QQD has no library of textbooks, journals, other reading materials or learning support materials. Learners are often expected to obtain information from the internet, although not all learners have internet access at work. Some learners find it difficult to carry out independent research and explore topics. There are inadequate resources for key skills.

22. **QQD's planning of modern apprenticeship programmes in retailing and customer services, and hospitality and catering is weak.** Preparation and planning for the technical certificate is not effective. Training and assessment in key skills and employment rights and responsibilities are not always started at the beginning of the programme. There are poor links between some employers' training and the apprenticeship programme.

Leadership and management

23. There is **good individual support for staff.** All staff have monthly individual meetings with their manager to monitor and evaluate performance. Internal verifiers meet assessors regularly in the workplace both to verify assessment decisions and to offer support on other issues. Many staff are taking additional qualifications to improve their ability to support learners. There have been several workshops on a variety of topics to improve the learners' experience. However, staff have not received any training on equality and diversity.

24. Communication within the organisation is generally satisfactory. There are regular team meetings and extensive use is made of e-mail to update and communicate with staff. However, a number of staff do not have access to the internet and rely on receiving hard copies of the information, and this slows communication.

25. There is **insufficient management of resources.** There are not enough trained staff to support the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills. There are too few learning materials and other resources to support the development of learners' vocational or technical skills. Assessors do not currently have laptop computers and printers to use with learners.

26. There is **insufficient analysis and use of management information.** A variety of data is collected and recorded, but it is not routinely analysed to identify trends in the performance of the different programmes. Managers do not receive data in a form they can use or in a way that helps them to manage effectively. Assessors are not sufficiently aware of current retention and achievement rates.

27. There has been **slow action to raise retention and achievement rates.** The weakness of poor retention and achievement rates was originally identified in October 2000. Only in the past nine months have initiatives been implemented which are beginning to raise success rates for learners.

28. **Equality of opportunity is poorly promoted.** Learners have little recollection of any discussion of equality of opportunity during induction. Equality and diversity are not adequately reinforced with learners, and questioning at progress reviews is superficial. The equal opportunities policy is not easy to understand and there is no complaints procedure for learners. The checking and monitoring of equality and diversity in the workplace is weak.

29. Most staff have a satisfactory involvement in the self-assessment process but QQD does not seek the views of other interested parties such as learners and employers. The strengths identified in the self-assessment report were overstated and QQD has been slow to deal with many of the identified weaknesses.

30. **The internal verification process has been enhanced and improved during the past year.** Internal verifiers carry out a careful risk assessment on each assessor, taking into account their abilities, attitude and performance on each qualification. They then plan their monitoring accordingly. Internal verification is adequately planned and most activity is carried out in learners' workplaces. Standardisation meetings do not yet conform to awarding body guidelines. The internal verification process does not always identify learners who are progressing slowly.

31. **There is no systematic arrangement for the observation and evaluation of training** carried out by QQD's staff, its subcontractors or employers. Feedback from learners is only collected when they successfully complete the programme. There is no formal system for gathering feedback from learners during the programme, and there is inadequate collection of feedback from employers. Assessors do not have regular or formal opportunities to discuss aspects of the programmes or to share good practice.

32. **The scope of the current quality assurance arrangements is too narrow.** They concentrate on compliance issues such as checking that documents are correctly completed, and are not sufficiently focused on reviewing current practices to bring about continuous improvement.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good individual support to develop staff

Weaknesses

- inadequate management of resources
- insufficient analysis and use of management information
- slow action to raise retention and achievement rates
- poor promotion of equal opportunities
- inadequate evaluation of programmes to bring about continuous improvement

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration

Strengths

- good development of personal skills
- particularly good support from employers

Weaknesses

- slow progress for a few learners
- inadequate induction for most learners
- insufficient management of programme development

Management

Strengths

- good development of personal skills
- good progress on work-based learning programme in team leading
- particularly good support from employers

Weaknesses

- slow progress for a few learners
- inadequate induction for most learners
- insufficient management of programme development

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Retailing

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates for modern apprentices
- insufficient learning resources
- insufficient challenge for some learners
- poor management of individual training

Customer service

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates for modern apprentices
- insufficient learning resources
- insufficient challenge for some learners
- poor management of individual training

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good career progression
- good support for staff

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates
- slow progress for some learners
- insufficient effective learning materials to support learning
- weak programme planning
- insufficient support for learners' particular needs

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT QUBE QUALIFICATIONS & DEVELOPMENT LTD:

- the opportunity to gain a qualification at work
- the tasks they are set
- 'my assessor has been in regular contact and has been very supportive'
- 'I enjoy working with the assessors as they are very helpful and the activities that I need to complete are clearly set out'
- 'you get a pack of qualifications on the modern apprenticeships not just an NVQ'
- 'it's given me more confidence'
- 'it's made me more aware of the job that I need to do
- 'I like the style of teaching - it's not too formal'
- 'my assessor is always there to help and my colleagues have been very supportive'
- 'I have learnt so much about my rights and responsibilities, and understand about problems in the workplace'
- 'it's helped me get promotion'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK QUBE QUALIFICATIONS & DEVELOPMENT LTD COULD IMPROVE:

- 'I would like more help on mapping the evidence for the NVQ'
- communications when assessors leave
- the time it takes to get technical certificates
- 'they need to take into consideration our experience as we are all doing the same tasks whatever our background'
- learners' involvement in agreeing a timescale for achieving their qualification
- the amount of duplication across the different units
- 'I would like more materials to read or a CD-ROM to broaden my knowledge'
- the amount of time spent on collecting evidence

KEY CHALLENGES FOR QUBE QUALIFICATIONS & DEVELOPMENT LTD:

- raise retention and achievement rates
- plan and manage learning to meet individual learners' needs
- ensure that good-quality learning materials are available to all learners
- manage the supply and use of appropriate resources effectively and efficiently
- improve the analysis and use of management information
- effectively promote and monitor equality of opportunity
- evaluate and review training programmes to bring about continuous improvement
- continue to develop strategies that raise standards on all learning programmes

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT   Grade 4

Strengths
- good individual support to develop staff

Weaknesses
- inadequate management of resources
- insufficient analysis and use of management information
- slow action to raise retention and achievement rates
- poor promotion of equal opportunities
- inadequate evaluation of programmes to bring about continuous improvement

33. There is good individual support to develop staff. All staff have individual meetings with their line manager once a month. These are used effectively to monitor and evaluate their performance. Staff value the support and guidance they receive at the meetings. Managers encourage open discussion and debate and there are particularly good working relationships between staff. Staff are encouraged to discuss their training and development needs and identify any support they require. Any needs identified are met through in-house training or external courses. Staff are working towards a variety of qualifications including key skills, basic skills teaching certificates and management awards. All staff record their training and development on a continuous professional development log which includes a record of the learning outcomes they have achieved. A company learning plan ensures that training meets the needs of the business as well as of the member of staff. Internal verifiers give particularly good support to assessors, and verification is used effectively to develop assessors' skills and knowledge. Staff are encouraged to develop their skills and knowledge so that they can progress towards more senior roles in the company.

34. Until recently, staff performance appraisals were carried out every six months and staff performance was assessed against the requirements of their job description. However, QQD is changing the timing of its appraisals to bring them in line with its financial year, so that key performance indicators and staff targets can be matched to the company's business targets. The transition has resulted in staff waiting up to 20 months between formal appraisals.

35. Communication is satisfactory. There are regular team meetings, monthly meetings of the senior management team, six-monthly staff meetings, staff workshops and internal verifiers' meetings. The managing director also reports directly to the board of QQD's parent company. Extensive use is made of e-mail to update and communicate with staff. However, a number of staff do not have access to the internet and rely on receiving hard copies of the information, and this slows communication. All meetings are minuted and

action points are clearly identified and recorded. However, the minutes of some meetings are too brief and do not form a meaningful record of the discussions that took place.

36. The strategy for supporting learners' literacy and numeracy needs is satisfactory. QQD has recently taken effective action to remedy the shortcomings in learning support identified by staff and managers. A learning support specialist has been appointed and is working towards qualifications in teaching literacy and numeracy. Her role will be to implement an action plan for providing effective support. This includes raising assessors' awareness of literacy and numeracy and the core curriculum, introducing initial assessment of literacy and numeracy, developing assessors' skills at providing support, and implementing a recording and monitoring system. Four members of staff are working towards basic certificates in teaching adults with literacy and numeracy needs. All learners identified as requiring support now receive some additional support from their assessor. However, there are insufficient links between the planned learning support and the targets set on the individual learning plan for the learners' main qualification.

37. There is inadequate management of resources. There are insufficient learning resources to support the development of learners. For example, there are currently no staff trained to teach literacy and numeracy, few diagnostic tools to use after initial assessment has identified learning needs, and insufficient learning support materials. There are not enough learning materials to develop learners' vocational or technical skills. Assessors often have to supply their own training materials. There are insufficient information technology resources for staff to use with learners. QQD has focused on recruiting new learners but has not always had sufficient assessors to meet their training and assessment needs. A shortage of assessors in the past has led to significant gaps in assessment or frequent changes of assessor for some learners.

38. There is insufficient analysis and use of management information. A variety of data is collected and recorded, but the management information system is relatively new and its potential is still being explored. There has been insufficient use and analysis of the data to support business planning or to identify trends in the performance of the different programmes offered. For example, although data is collected on the reasons why learners leave their programmes early, this data has not been analysed or used to improve the programmes. Managers do not receive data in a form that helps them to manage effectively. There is a business plan which identifies the company's objectives for the following year, but there are insufficient links between this and other development and operational plans.

39. There has been slow action to raise retention and achievement rates. The weakness of poor retention and achievement rates was identified by the Training Standards Council's inspection in October 2000, and by the ALI's reinspection in January 2002. This weakness has been evident each year since. Only in the past nine months have a number of initiatives been implemented which are beginning to raise success rates. On all modern apprenticeship programmes the retention and achievement rates are still unsatisfactory.

Equality of opportunity   **Contributory grade 5**

40. QQD's promotion of equality of opportunity is poor. Learners are given a copy of the equal opportunities policy that was written for QQD's employees. The policy was updated in March 2004 and now refers directly to learners. It includes information on bullying and harassment and a clearly written disability statement. However, the updated policy is still not appropriate for learners, and they find it difficult to understand. It has not yet been included in the induction handbook nor circulated to current learners. Learners are unaware of QQD's complaints procedure, although there are good working relationships between learners and their assessors.

41. There is insufficient coverage of equality of opportunity at induction and little reinforcement during the training programmes. Learners have a poor understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Staff have not yet received equal opportunities training, although it is included in the company's learning plan. Many staff have a poor understanding of the broader concepts of equality and diversity. They are sometimes not confident enough to tackle issues raised by learners. There is only superficial discussion of equal opportunities during reviews. The monitoring of employers' equal opportunities policies is cursory. QQD does not check the content or effectiveness of its policies and procedures, recruitment practices, or terms and conditions of employment.

42. QQD collects data on learners' ethnicity, gender and disabilities. However, there is insufficient use of this data to monitor the effectiveness of its equal opportunities arrangements. There has been no analysis of the achievement or retention rates of different genders, ethnic groups, learners with disabilities or those receiving learning support. Nor is there any comparison of the achievement rates for regions, employers or assessors.

43. Although there is an equal opportunities action plan it does not include any action to widen participation on the training programmes. QQD has recognised that women are over represented on some training programmes, but there is no strategy to remedy this or to target other under-represented groups.

44. QQD has recognised the weaknesses in its arrangements for equal opportunities. A focus group has been established and meets regularly to discuss and plan ways of promoting equal opportunities. An external consultant is offering advice and guidance. Plans include a review of existing documents and the development of marketing material, information leaflets for employers and appropriate learning materials. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this new initiative.

Quality assurance   **Contributory grade 4**

45. QQD does not have a separate quality assurance policy. It uses the Qube Group's policy. The processes and procedures for internal verifiers and assessors are reviewed annually. Each assessor is issued with a booklet detailing the processes and procedures for sign-up, monitoring, assessment and exit along with guidance and examples of key documents. There is no process or procedure relating to the training and development

of learners.

46. The internal verification process has been enhanced and improved during the past year. The restructuring of the organisation has created lead internal verifiers and co-ordinating internal verifiers for each occupational sector. Internal verifiers carry out detailed risk assessments on each assessor, taking into account their abilities, attitude and performance on each qualification they assess. They then plan the internal verification monitoring and visits accordingly. Most internal verification takes place in the workplace and provides good support and feedback to assessors. There are detailed planning and recording systems to ensure that verification takes place throughout the programme and that it takes into account the full range of qualifications and assessment methods. The internal verifiers are starting to meet regularly to share information and good practice. In the past six months, standardisation workshops have been run for assessors in hospitality supervision and the team leading NVQ. No standardisation meetings have taken place for retailing and customer service programmes this year. Internal verification has identified assessors who are not performing to standard and appropriate actions have been taken. The internal verification process does not always identify learners who are progressing slowly.

47. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Workshops were conducted in occupational groups at the annual staff conference so staff had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the draft self-assessment report. Additional workshops have been held to prepare the assessors for the inspection. The self-assessment report identified many of the same weaknesses as the inspectors, although some of the strengths were overstated as the improvements are relatively recent.

48. There is no systematic arrangement for the observation and evaluation of training carried out by QQD's staff, its subcontractors or employers. Some informal observation and feedback has taken place but this is not part of a quality assurance system to review training. Different evaluation forms are being used to gather feedback from staff who attend in-house workshops. These are reviewed but not collated, analysed or used to make comparisons and identify issues or good practice.

49. QQD collects general feedback from learners on their satisfaction levels after they have successfully completed their programmes. The response rates have been very low and have not provided enough information to allow trends to be identified. There is no formal system for gathering feedback from learners during their time on the programme. Insufficient feedback is gathered, from learners who leave early, on how the programmes could be improved. Feedback from employers is gathered through informal discussion. There are no formal systems in place to collate information from employers, analyse the issues and plan actions for improvement.

50. The internal verifiers have started to observe and evaluate inductions and progress reviews. However, there is no mechanism for this information to be collated centrally and used to identify areas for improvement. Assessors do not have regular or formal opportunities to discuss aspects of the programmes or to share good practice. Where good practice is identified, such as the employee rights and responsibilities pack for

assessors, this is reviewed by the qualifications manager and issued to assessors. There is insufficient follow-up to ensure that assessors fully understand the information and guidance they are given and to find out whether they have effectively adopted the practices suggested.

51. The current quality assurance arrangements are not comprehensive. They concentrate on compliance issues such as checking that documents are correctly completed. They are not sufficiently focused on reviewing current practices to ensure the continuous improvement of programmes.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration, management & professional		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration		
- Other government-funded provision	89	3
- Work-based learning for young people	4	None
Management		
- Other government-funded provision	46	3
- Work-based learning for young people	21	3

Business administration

Strengths

- good development of personal skills
- particularly good support from employers

Weaknesses

- slow progress for a few learners
- inadequate induction for most learners
- insufficient management of programme development

Management

Strengths

- good development of personal skills
- good progress on work-based learning programme in team leading
- particularly good support from employers

Weaknesses

- slow progress for a few learners
- inadequate induction for most learners
- insufficient management of programme development

Achievement and standards

52. Learners demonstrate good personal skills development. They gain confidence, greater self-esteem and a wider appreciation of their skills. Learners' approach to their work and their interaction with colleagues have improved. Many learners find that working for their qualification has greatly improved their organisational, communication and time management skills. It has also contributed to developing their proficiency in the workplace. This is recognised by employers, and inspectors found examples of learners

being given increased responsibility. Most learners are well motivated and enthusiastic and many are inspired to take further qualifications.

53. Good progress is made by young people on the work-based learning programme in team leading. Many of them have completed their NVQ portfolios well before their planned completion date. The standard of their work is generally good and it is professionally presented. The NVQ certificates are in the process of being claimed so the achievements are not shown in the retention and achievement tables. The achievement rate in 2002-03 was satisfactory, with half of the six learners successfully completing the programme.

54. Most of the learners in this area of learning are on the ETP programme which started in 2003. It is too soon for many to have completed the programme and too early to judge the achievement rate. Currently 30 per cent of adult learners and 13 per cent of ETP learners have successfully completed their programme, while 87 per cent of business administration learners and 47 per cent of management learners are still in training.

55. Some learners on the ETP and adult programmes are making slow progress. In one area, learners made a slow start to their programme when there was a delay between them signing up and being visited by an assessor. There has been some poor assessment practice, but much of this is now satisfactory following work by the assessors and internal verifiers. Most learners are now improving their rate of progress, although they are not expected to complete their programme on time.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced apprenticeships																
	2003-04		**2002-03**		**2001-02**											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	1		3		2											
Retained*	0		0	0	0	0										
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0										
Still in learning	0		2	67	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

LSC funded work-based learning															
Apprenticeships															
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	5		4		2											
Retained*	0		1	25	1	50										
Successfully completed	0		1	25	0	0										
Still in learning	2		1	25	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

LSC funded work-based learning															
NVQ Training															
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	31		6													
Retained*	0		3	50												
Successfully completed	0		3	50												
Still in learning	20		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

Other government funded															
	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	179		42													
Retained*	123		35	83												
Successfully completed	18		18	43												
Still in training	125		10	24												

*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

Quality of education and training

56. Employers provide particularly good support for learners. Workplace supervisors understand what they need to do to help learners complete their programmes successfully. They provide good opportunities for learners to develop their skills and confidence. Employers are kept fully informed about the requirements of the qualification and most take an interested and active role in supporting the learner. Most employers allow learners to work on their portfolios during the day. Links between assessors and employers are good, and supervisors say they value the regular contact with assessors. QQD has worked in partnership with one large employer to train some key staff to become work-based assessors. Employers are responsive to learners'

programme needs. Most workplace managers have a good understanding of the NVQ system and are involved in formal reviews of learners' progress. Learners on all programmes have good workplaces where the working environment is often of a high standard.

57. The assessors provide satisfactory learner support. They are enthusiastic and committed to learners' progress. Internal verifiers and assessors are appropriately qualified and experienced with suitable occupational backgrounds and competence in their subject areas. Assessors have a good rapport with their learners. Most make frequent visits to the workplace to assess and support learners and make learning a positive experience. They are well organised in their approach and give clear guidance to learners on the purpose and structure of the meetings. Assessors provide learning and personal support where required and are accessible by mobile telephone and e-mail. Learners appreciate this. Assessors encourage learners to contact them between progress reviews and are prepared to visit more frequently if necessary.

58. Assessment of learners' work is satisfactory. The assessment process has been significantly improved through the recruitment of new assessors. The learners are encouraged through a variety of assessment techniques. Assessors provide constructive feedback which helps learners' progress. Satisfactory short-term targets are negotiated between the learner and assessor for the next visit. Most learners interviewed during the inspection understand the progress they have made within individual units. However, they are not always clear about what they have to do to complete their entire qualification, and some do not have a record of the units and elements completed or in progress. The internal verification process is sound. The internal verifier reports on assessors' performance and identifies clear action points. There are insufficient standardisation meetings to share good practice and to ensure that assessors are meeting awarding body expectations.

59. Learners are on appropriate courses which reflect their job roles and meet their aspirations. Some learners following the ETP programme are not challenged sufficiently but still gain benefits in terms of personal development.

60. Most learners receive an inadequate induction to their programmes. Few learners are satisfied with the thoroughness of the induction, or clear about the details of their programme. The induction is short and covers a range of topics, but it mainly consists of completing paperwork. It does not include interactive and practical examples of how and when to collect evidence or how learners can manage the programme while still fulfilling their job roles. Learners complete a questionnaire about their duties at work which is used appropriately to identify the course they should follow. However, the results are not used to recognise skills and experiences already gained in the workplace. There is no assessment of learning styles to plan and support how the learner may best progress through their programme. Induction does not include a thorough initial assessment of individual learning needs. Some learners are identified as requiring additional learning support, through a discussion, and this is followed up with a test which only identifies their literacy or numeracy needs.

Leadership and management

61. Staff have a range of satisfactory training and development opportunities. Many are taking additional qualifications, for example new assessment and verification units, level 3 key skills and a level 4 NVQ in management. However, staff have not received any equality of opportunity or diversity training.

62. Communication within the company is generally satisfactory. Staff have individual monthly meetings with their regional manager. Caseloads and personal training needs are discussed appropriately. Local communication between internal verifiers and assessors is good with regular meetings and e-mail contact.

63. Programme development is insufficiently managed. There is no forum for sharing ideas and good practice or developing the quality of provision through discussion. There are no formal team meetings for assessors. Standardisation meetings are few and irregular. Assessors rely heavily on their own research to provide suitable learning materials. They are not set individual targets for retention and achievement rates, and learners' progress is not centrally monitored, although achievement of units is recorded. Learners' achievement is not formally recognised or celebrated. There are insufficient learning materials and resources available to learners to support occupational and independent learning and research. There is a small supply of materials for assessors to use to support learners with literacy or numeracy needs.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Retailing, customer service & transportation		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Retailing		
- Work-based learning for young people	40	4
- Other government-funded provision	2	4
Customer service		
- Work-based learning for young people	143	4
- Other government-funded provision	36	4
Warehousing and distribution		
- Other government-funded provision	1	None

Retailing

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates for modern apprentices
- insufficient learning resources
- insufficient challenge for some learners
- poor management of individual training

Customer service

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates for modern apprentices
- insufficient learning resources
- insufficient challenge for some learners
- poor management of individual training

Achievement and standards

64. The standard of learners' work is good and many of the portfolios examined by inspectors contained good evidence and personal assignments of a high standard. Most learners are very enthusiastic and well motivated to succeed. Portfolios are well organised and presented. Some contain a well-structured range of evidence including witness statements, records of personal assignments and records of direct observations. There is good involvement of learners in the short-term planning of actions to be completed between assessors' visits. Learners develop good work-related skills which

prepare them for taking on responsibilities in the workplace and increase their personal confidence.

65. Most learners make satisfactory progress towards achievement of their qualifications and some achieve before their planned target dates. A few learners have made slow progress when they have changed jobs and experienced a period of disruption to their programme. Others have had difficulties when assessors have left and alternative arrangements have not been implemented quickly enough.

66. Retention and achievement rates are poor for modern apprentices but better for learners on NVQ programmes. The achievement rate for foundation modern apprentices in retail operations fell from 26 per cent in 2001-02 to 21 per cent in 2002-03. During this time the number of learners starting retail operations programmes increased from 27 to 107. QQD acknowledges it did not have sufficient assessors for retail operations at that time. The number of learners starting retail operations programmes in 2003-04 has fallen to 37, while the number starting customer services programmes has increased to 151. There are currently enough assessors, and 70 per cent of retailing learners who started in 2003-04 are still in learning. Success rates among recent leavers suggest that changes implemented in both retailing and customer service over the past nine months are starting to help more learners complete their frameworks. Achievement rates for adult learners and those on the ETP programme are potentially good. Sixty-five per cent achieved in 2002-03, and so far in 2003-04, 32 per cent have achieved and 41 per cent are still in training.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Advanced apprenticeships																	
	2003-04		**2002-03**		**2001-02**												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	40		55		24											
Retained*	1		8	15	7	29										
Successfully completed	1		8	15	6	25										
Still in learning	28		10	18	1	4										

*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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Apprenticeships																	
		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02											
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts		188		164		74											
Retained*		2		60	37	38	51										
Successfully completed		1		26	16	20	27										
Still in learning		128		14	9	2	3										

*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

Other government funded																	
		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02											
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts		85		40													
Retained*		31		36	90												
Successfully completed		27		26	65												
Still in training		31		8	20												

*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

Quality of education and training

67. Reviews of learners' progress are satisfactory. Assessors review progress against the action plans agreed at the previous visit. Short-term targets are set which are specific, measurable and timed. Assessors use a variety of suitable methods for individual coaching, but most training is given by employers in the workplace. Most learners have a good understanding of the programmes they are following, although some are not fully aware of the component parts of their framework.

68. Assessment planning is adequate, and plans are recorded every time assessors visit learners' workplaces. In many cases clear targets for gathering evidence are negotiated between assessors and learners. Learners have a good understanding of what they have to do by the next visit to meet the standards for their qualifications. Timescales are not recorded, but there is an informal understanding that targets should be achieved by the assessor's next visit. Some portfolios contain a narrow range of evidence for particular units; for example, some consist exclusively of product evidence with an explanatory statement by the learner. Some assessors do not use sufficient direct questions to check knowledge, and they allow learners to write statements rather than give short answers to questions. The frequency of assessors' visits is satisfactory and learners appreciate the ease of contact they have with their assessors by mobile telephone and e-mail. However, a few learners had not been visited by an assessor for six months. Others have been assessed by a series of different assessors and their progress has been delayed. Some

learners' progress has been poorly monitored.

69. Induction programmes and initial assessment are satisfactory. A new induction process has recently been introduced which is completed over three visits. Assessors have been given induction packs to ensure a uniform approach across the company. The appeals procedure is not easy to use, although the new induction book gives space to record the names of those involved in the process. A comprehensive occupational questionnaire is used to make an initial assessment of learners. Some learners now have their literacy, numeracy and language skills assessed, and there are plans to extend this to all learners. The appointment of a learning support specialist has improved the identification of individual learning needs. Individual learning needs are taken into account in planning learning, and additional support is provided by assessors. Assessors are not adequately qualified to support some of the additional learning needs identified.

70. There are insufficient learning resources to meet the needs of learners. QQD does not maintain a resource library of textbooks, journals, other reading materials or other learning support equipment such as laptop computers, voice recorders or digital cameras. However, the company has plans to provide assessors with laptop computers. Learners have to rely on their employers' resources and the internet to complete the employment rights and responsibilities module of their frameworks. Learners do not all have access to the internet. Some assessors have created their own worksheets to support learners with additional learning needs, and some learners have been directed to study independently on basic skills support websites. Key skills assessments are used for potential key skills learners who already have general certificates of secondary education at grade C or above. They assess learners' existing skills but do not develop their knowledge. Learners work in safe, healthy and appropriate environments. Staff are suitably qualified and have a range of occupational experience and competence.

71. Some learners' programmes are insufficiently challenging. Training and assessment is not planned at a suitable pace or level. The choice of programme is determined by the learners' current job role rather than their potential. Learners with qualifications at a much higher level participate in foundation modern apprenticeship programmes. Insufficient effort is made to move these learners on to higher-level qualifications more quickly or to challenge them by working on key skills at a higher level. Prior achievements are not always accredited to speed up learners' progress. Insufficient attention is paid to learners' needs when choosing a programme. Most learners interviewed, however, were content with their programme.

Leadership and management

72. Internal verification is satisfactory. Assessors receive frequent support from their regional manager and the internal verifier. Internal verification is adequately planned and most activity is carried out in learners' workplaces. Some portfolios are internally verified only on completion of the NVQ, but most have sufficient ongoing and final sampling. Risk assessment of assessors and qualifications is part of the sampling process. Assessors and qualifications deemed high risk are sampled more frequently. Standardisation meetings do not yet conform to awarding body guidelines. Assessors do not attend

regular standardisation meetings although there have been specific workshops for some qualifications.

73. Staff receive a thorough induction and satisfactory support from QQD for personal and professional development. There are some useful resources for assessors, including a reference manual. The management information system generates analyses which assessors can use to monitor learners' progress. These are not adequately used, and are sometimes incomplete and out of date. There is insufficient management of key performance indicators, and assessors have insufficient knowledge of current retention and achievement rates.

74. Learners have little recollection of any discussion of health and safety or equality of opportunity during their induction. Equality and diversity are not adequately reinforced with learners, and questioning at progress reviews is superficial. There is no evidence of equality issues being actively followed through. Assessors have not received any equality and diversity training from QQD. Learners' comments on equality of opportunity show no more than a superficial understanding.

75. The management of training for individual learners is poor. Preparation for technical certificates is inadequate and begins too late. Insufficient attention has been paid to the number of guided learning hours recommended to prepare learners for technical certificates. Co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training is inconsistent. Some assessors successfully match employers' training to the award standards, but others do not use materials from employers to demonstrate learners' competence. One employer's training materials, including induction and other workbooks, have been used very successfully to provide evidence for training in employees' rights and responsibilities. Some employers are unaware of the modern apprenticeship framework and do not contribute to their learners' progress. Formal training is not often given, but learners are encouraged to research from the internet and this increases their understanding of their jobs. There is ineffective management of initial assessment and additional support for literacy and numeracy needs. Learning materials to support additional learning needs are often resourced individually by assessors and not co-ordinated or evaluated. QQD is collating materials for a more cohesive approach and has begun training staff to this end.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering		
- Work-based learning for young people	492	4
- Other government-funded provision	62	4

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good career progression
- good support for staff

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates
- slow progress for some learners
- insufficient effective learning materials to support learning
- weak programme planning
- insufficient support for learners' particular needs

Achievement and standards

76. Many learners achieve good career progression during their programme. They gain good occupational skills, and employers notice an improvement in their professionalism and confidence at work. Many learners gain promotion to supervisory roles during their programme and are willing to take on additional responsibilities. Many take part in in-house training schemes and have a greater interest in their own personal development.

77. Retention and achievement rates are poor on all programmes but particularly so on the modern apprenticeship programmes followed by most of the learners. Between 2001-02 and 2002-03, 175 learners started advanced modern apprenticeship programmes. Ten have been retained, only two have completed the full framework and 27 are still in learning. Judging from the success rates for leavers in the past nine months, there are early signs that achievement and retention rates are starting to improve. On the foundation modern apprenticeship programme, 10 per cent of learners achieved the full framework in 2001-02 and 15 per cent achieved in 2002-03, but these rates are still poor. Achievement rates on ETP are unsatisfactory but show early signs of improvement. Over a third of learners achieved their NVQ in 2002-03, and one-fifth have achieved so far in 2003-04 with half still in learning. QQD continues to support those learners who continue beyond their planned completion date.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Advanced apprenticeships																	
	2003-04		**2002-03**		**2001-02**												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	96		120		55											
Retained*	0		2	2	8	15										
Successfully completed	0		0	0	2	4										
Still in learning	78		25	21	2	4										

*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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Apprenticeships																	
	2003-04		**2002-03**		**2001-02**												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	557		507		535											
Retained*	1		137	27	113	21										
Successfully completed	1		74	15	54	10										
Still in learning	349		36	7	2	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

Other government funded																	
	2003-04		**2002-03**		**2001-02**												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	114		141													
Retained*	31		83	59												
Successfully completed	23		49	35												
Still in training	58		4	3												

*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

Quality of education and training

78. Most assessors have satisfactory experience and qualifications, although some do not have sufficient recent occupational experience of the areas they are assessing. Assessment is satisfactory, although some assessment planning is not detailed enough. Regular assessments and progress reviews are carried out to monitor learners' progress, and action plans are devised in response. Internal verification is satisfactory.

79. Learners receive adequate information about their programme before joining. Care

is taken to ensure that learners are on the programme that best meets their job role and career aspirations. The induction for learners is satisfactory, although they do not all remember the main points covered. QQD has recently developed a learner support pack but many learners have yet to receive this.

80. There is slow progress for some learners. Prior learning is not effectively taken into account when setting targets on individual learning plans. Learners consider the learning plans to be a document for the assessor rather than a guide for them. Generally, learners have a standard length of programme regardless of their experience. They are not challenged to achieve at the levels of their prior experience or abilities. Reviews and action plans often set poor targets for learners. Some targets continue from one visit to the next without a satisfactory explanation being recorded. Some learners are on programme for some time before observations are carried out. Insufficient use is made of diverse evidence. Learners' daily work activity is not effectively used as evidence. There is insufficient involvement of most employers. Some learners' supervisors are qualified assessors but are not involved in providing witness statements or other evidence. Some learners have gone for considerable periods of time without an assessor or an internal verifier, but these problems have now been resolved.

81. There are not enough effective materials to support learning. Learners are expected to download information from the internet, especially to complete the employment rights and responsibilities section of their framework. However, some learners do not have internet access. One learner had work on a disk but no access to a printer. Assessors do not currently have laptop computers or printers to support learners, although plans are in place to remedy this. There are inadequate resources for teaching key skills. Some assessors use materials they have purchased themselves and others do not make sufficient use of the materials that are available. There are few occupational learning materials to support training given by QQD. Most advanced modern apprentices are not given learning materials to support the higher-level learning they require. QQD has purchased some workbooks to help assessors support learners with additional learning needs, but these are not yet effectively used.

82. There is weak planning of modern apprenticeship programmes in hospitality and catering. The training and assessment for technical certificates and employment rights and responsibilities are started late in the programme for some learners. Planning for the technical certificate courses is ineffective, with few opportunities for learners to attend courses. Key skills training is also started late in the programme for some learners, although this is improving for learners who started in the past nine months. There are poor links between some employers' training and the modern apprenticeship programmes. For example, one national company's in-house training is not linked to the NVQ or the overall framework. Many learners do not see the links between their in-house training and their apprenticeship programme. On-the-job training is not sufficiently planned by assessors and employers to develop the learners' knowledge and skills. Some employers are not sufficiently briefed on their role in the training programme. Prior experience and attainment are not always taken into consideration in the planning of assessment and training for learners on ETP programmes.

83. There is insufficient support for learners' additional needs. QQD has introduced a new procedure for initial assessment but most learners who started before this was introduced have not received an adequate initial assessment. The new initial assessment process is not individualised enough to identify adequately the range of learners' needs. Learners are given an opportunity to tell their assessor about their additional needs, but there are inadequate arrangements to ensure that these are systematically met. Assessors do support learners who are having difficulties by giving them additional time, but this rarely deals with the specific additional needs. Many QQD staff have limited knowledge of the range of needs that learners may have, and links with specialist agencies are inadequate. Recent staff development on learner support has focused on basic literacy and numeracy support and it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of this. Additional support given is adequately recorded. Two staff have been appointed to provide learning support, but they have yet to take up their posts. Assessors and most employers are supportive of learners, especially in dealing with personal issues. However, this relies on the informal knowledge of individuals rather than any planned and managed process.

Leadership and management

84. There is good support for assessors. Internal verifiers meet assessors every month both to verify assessment decisions and to offer support on other issues. The meetings are well planned to cover a range of related learning processes, and verifiers give good written and formal feedback. Assessors value these monthly meetings. There is an effective system to evaluate each assessor's effectiveness and support needs. The frequency and level of support from internal verifiers is planned accordingly. Regional managers make time to help assessors with any problems. There are monthly meetings to review staff performance, but formal staff appraisals have not been carried out recently as the system is being changed. Each assessor keeps a personal professional development log and while this is not directly related to the business plan, managers are quick to react to assessors' training needs. Most assessors have attended several recent workshops on training-related topics.

85. The strengths in this area of learning identified in the self-assessment report were no more than normal practice, and QQD has been slow to deal with many of the identified weaknesses. Most staff have satisfactory involvement in the self-assessment process, although the views of other interested parties such as learners and employers are not sought. Staff are involved in the review of operational documents. Assessors are set targets for learners to achieve their qualification aims within funding timescales, but they often fail to take account of individual learners' needs and abilities.

86. Equality of opportunity is not promoted well to learners. Learners are given some information at their induction, but they have little recollection of this. The equality of opportunity information given to learners in their portfolio does not cover bullying and harassment. Equality of opportunity is not discussed at progress reviews and learners' understanding of the broader issues is poor. Equality of opportunity is inadequately monitored in the work placements.