

TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT  
OCTOBER 2000

ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE REINSPECTION APRIL  
2002

# Training Trust



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

## Grading

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

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

## SUMMARY

The original inspection of Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust was carried out by the Training Standards Council's inspectors. The inspection resulted in less than satisfactory grades being awarded for construction, engineering, business administration, health, care & public services, equal opportunities, trainee support, management of training and quality assurance. These areas have been reinspected against the requirements of the *Common Inspection Framework* by the Adult Learning Inspectorate, which replaced the Training Standards Council on 1 April 2001. The sections of the original report dealing with construction, engineering, business administration, health, care & public services, equal opportunities, trainee support, management of training and quality assurance have been replaced with the findings of the reinspection. Also, the report summary, report introduction and introduction to the inspection findings have been updated and reflect the findings of the reinspection. Sections of the report, dealing with areas which have not been reinspected, have been left in their original form. The amended inspection report is published on the Adult Learning Inspectorate's website ([www.ali.gov.uk](http://www.ali.gov.uk)).

**At the time of the original inspection, Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust gave good off-the-job training for most of its learners. There was, however, insufficient workplace assessment. Business administration programmes had poor assessment practice. Retention and achievement rates were low on all programmes. In construction and engineering, employers' had little understanding of learners' programmes. Learners in these two areas also had little understanding of equal opportunities issues. Equal opportunities procedures and management were poor. Learners were given good support from their liaison officers whom they meet frequently. Initial assessment of basic and key skills was poor, with no identification of individual learning needs or training programmes. Although there were effective local partnerships and good links with schools and the careers service, there was poor management of training. Subcontractors, including colleges and employers, were not managed effectively and there was no link between the on- and off-the-job training. There was little use of data as a basis for management decisions and there were no effective strategies for managing staff shortages. Quality assurance was less than satisfactory. There was little quality assurance of training and no systematic action-planning. The company is now known as Training Trust. At reinspection, achievement rates are still low on all programmes. Retention rates are improving but are not satisfactory in all areas. Some construction and engineering training is good, but assessment practice in business administration is poor. The induction programme is good and learners have effective learning support. Learners and employers have a good understanding of equal opportunities, but there is no strategy to promote wider participation. Data are not used sufficiently and no targets are set for retention and achievement rates. Quality assurance does not ensure the co-ordination of all aspects of training.**

## GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	4
Engineering	4
Business administration	4
Health, care and public services	4

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	4
Trainee support	4
Management of training	5
Quality assurance	4

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Construction	3
Engineering	4
Business administration	4
Health, care and public services	3

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Trainee support	2
Management of training	4
Quality assurance	4

## KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good training
- ◆ sustained and effective pastoral support
- ◆ comprehensive and stimulating induction programme

## KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor achievement rates
- ◆ poor use of data
- ◆ poor assessment practices in business administration
- ◆ insufficient monitoring of quality assurance procedures
- ◆ lack of quality assurance and procedures for co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

## INTRODUCTION

1. Training Trust, formerly Waltham Forest Chamber of Commerce Training Trust (the Chamber), is a limited company operating as a registered charity. The company was set up in 1983 to offer training for young people in Waltham Forest and the surrounding area. The company initially offered other work-based learning programmes for young people, and began offering modern apprenticeships and national traineeships in 1995 and 1998 respectively. The company now provides training and assessment for learners across six boroughs in London. The Training Trust has programmes in construction, engineering, business administration and health, care and public services

2. At the time of the original inspection, the Chamber held a contract with London East Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) to provide work-based learning. There were 271 young people and adults in training, consisting of 87 modern apprentices, 13 advanced modern apprentices, 48 national trainees and 123 learners on other work-based learning programmes for young people. One hundred and twenty learners were on construction programmes, 70 learners were on engineering programmes, 10 were on business administration programmes and 71 were on childcare programmes. At the time of the reinspection, Training Trust holds a contract with London North Learning and Skills Council (LSC). London East LSC has given notice to terminate the contract with Training Trust in June 2002. All of the company's income comes from the local LSC contracts. There are currently 181 learners, consisting of 103 advanced modern apprentices, 33 foundation modern apprentices and 45 on other work-based learning programmes for young people. Ninety-five learners are in construction training, 32 in engineering, four in business administration and 50 in health and social care.

3. At the time of the original inspection, the Chamber operated from its main administrative offices in Walthamstow. It did not have any training facilities on site. Off-the-job training was given at six local colleges. The company employed nine staff. Seven, including the manager, were full time and two were part time. Training Trust moved to larger premises in Gants Hill in April 2001. There are two training rooms. Six further education colleges give off-the-job training in engineering and construction. Training for childcare is given by a private training provider. Training for business administration is given at Training Trust's premises. The company now employs 14 members of staff. There are a chief executive, three managers and six liaison officers and four administrative staff. Of the 14 staff, three are part-time.

4. At the time of the original inspection, 9.3 per cent of the local population was unemployed, considerably higher than the national rate for August 2000 of 3.5 per cent. By October 2001, unemployment in the area had fallen to 6.9 per cent, compared with the national average of 2.9 per cent and the average for London as a whole, which was 3.3 per cent. Data produced by the London Research Centre in

1999, show that 33 per cent of the population in Waltham Forest and 28.8 per cent of the population in LSC area are from minority ethnic groups. This is much higher than the 6.4 per cent estimated for the United Kingdom as a whole and the 24.9 per cent for Greater London.

5. At the time of the original inspection, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 36.6 per cent in Waltham Forest, lower than the national average of 47.9 per cent. By 2001, the proportion in Waltham Forest had risen to 43 per cent, still below the national average of 47.9 per cent.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

6. Before producing the first self-assessment report in November 1998, all the Chamber's staff attended three half-day workshops on self-assessment organised by the TEC. This self-assessment report included the views of all staff. Employers and learners' views were collected through meetings and questionnaires and included in the monthly reviews of the self-assessment report. Self-assessment reports are produced annually. A third self-assessment report was written in January 2000, as part of this cycle. The self-assessment report attributed strengths to all occupational areas. It did not consider the work of the subcontracted colleges or employers and the impact that these have on learners. Inspectors agreed with few of the strengths and weaknesses and awarded lower grades than those given in the self-assessment report for all aspects of the training. The company was slow to produce an action plan after the original inspection. The local LSC and an external consultant gave guidance on producing a suitable action plan. Not all the targets in this plan have been met. A further self-assessment report was produced in autumn 2001 and was amended in January 2002. The self-assessment report identified a number of the same strengths and weaknesses as inspectors did, but further weaknesses were identified by inspectors in engineering, business administration, management of training and quality assurance. Lower grades were awarded than those given in the self-assessment report.

7. The original inspection was carried out by a team of seven inspectors who spent a total of 28 days at the Chamber in October 2000. They visited 41 work placements, and interviewed 98 learners, 27 workplace supervisors and managers, a careers service representative and all the staff. They observed and graded five training sessions. Inspectors examined records of assessments and internal verification, learners' portfolios, individual learning plans, learners and employers' agreements and files, subcontractors' records and files, feedback sheets, statistics, minutes of meetings, staff and learners' handbooks, initial assessment tests, induction packs, policies and procedures.

8. The reinspection was carried out by a team of seven inspectors, who spent a total of 28 days at Training Trust in April 2002. Inspectors interviewed 75 learners and carried out 26 interviews with the company's staff. Inspectors visited 35 work placements and interviewed 34 employers and workplace supervisors. Inspectors visited seven subcontractors and examined 43 individual learning plans and 23 learners' portfolios. They observed two training sessions. One was good, the other satisfactory. Inspectors also examined external and internal verification documents, quality assurance documents, minutes of meetings, induction material, the information pack sent to employers, staff files and the company's database.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at the original inspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Construction		2				2
Engineering		2				2
Health, care & public services		1				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Construction

### Grade 3

9. There are now 95 learners following construction programmes. Five are foundation modern apprentices, 67 are advanced modern apprentices and 23 are national vocational qualification (NVQ) learners. Sixty-one learners are working towards NVQs in installing electro-technical systems, and 34 learners are taking plumbing and heating NVQs. Learners are recruited by referral from the careers service, directly from employers or by direct application to Training Trust. At the start of their programmes, all learners have an initial assessment of their basic and key skills. All off-the-job training is subcontracted to three local further education colleges, which the learners attend one day a week during term time. Plumbing learners are assessed at college. Accredited assessors from a large electrical training provider assess the electrical learners in the workplace. All learners are employed, mainly in small companies, and work on sites throughout northeast London and beyond. Learners work directly with experienced workers. Site supervisors are occupationally qualified and experienced. Some learners are moved between jobs and sites to gain a range of experience in different situations. Liaison officers carry out progress reviews every two months at the learner's workplace, in addition to weekly monitoring visits at college in term time.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ no workplace assessment
- ◆ poor understanding of training programmes by employers
- ◆ low achievement rates

10. After the original inspection, the company drew up an action plan to improve the quality of training and assessment. Training Trust has sent two booklets to each employer explaining their role in the NVQ process and the nature of work-based learning. Programme review meetings have been held at two colleges to inform employers about NVQs. A liaison officer was appointed in January 2001 to review and assess plumbing and heating learners. However, at the time of the reinspection, this post had been vacant for two months and the operation manager is successfully carrying out this role. Training Trust is discussing with two colleges how key skills training and NVQ assessments might be improved. The

colleges carry out workplace assessments for electrical installation learners. Plumbing and heating learners now collect evidence from the workplace. Progress is being made, but, achievement rates have not improved and are still poor. Only two electrical installation learners and one plumbing learner have achieved all the targets on their learning plans since training started in 1998. The retention rate for electrical installation learners and plumbers for 2000-01 was around 50 per cent. In some years, this proportion was lower and the trend has been poor over a four-year period. Training Trust has developed initiatives to tackle the issues of achievement and retention rates. For example, the new initial assessment process now helps identify more clearly learning potential and needs. A more structured interview process has been developed to help learners maintain their motivation and interest. The induction programme and the progress review process have also been improved to place more emphasis on pastoral support for learners and clarify training aims and expectations. The quality assurance manager produced the most recent self-assessment report with contributions from most staff. Inspectors matched the grade in the self-assessment report.

#### **GOOD PRACTICE**

*An employer received incomplete reports from employees, and there were errors in business management. An electrical installation learner used information technology (IT) skills learned at college to enter data and provide accurate information to the business. He also improved his knowledge of the whole process. The employer now has all employees directly entering their status reports into the computer.*

#### **STRENGTHS**

- ◆ good training
- ◆ good vocational support

#### **WEAKNESSES**

- ◆ poor achievement rates
- ◆ inadequate assessment for electrical installation learners

11. Most learners have good workplaces which provide them with a variety of work experiences. Employers respond to learners' needs and training aims and help them to gain confidence quickly. Liaison officers encourage employers and site supervisors to get to know the requirements of the NVQ. Learners are given the chance to change to another employer if their work placement does not allow them to develop a sufficiently broad range of skills. Learners are effectively supervised and are helped to fulfil their responsibilities at work. Some employers are given very little information about learners' off-the-job training at college. They are not always able to organise opportunities at work which are closely related to the learners' training programmes. The training provided by the subcontracted colleges is planned effectively and the training is comprehensive. Standards are clearly defined and learners have good learning opportunities. Plumbing and heating learners gather evidence from their workplace for their assessment. Accredited assessors carry out assessments at the colleges and records are displayed in the workshops. Learners know what they have achieved and how well they are progressing. Learning resources are good. Staff are well qualified and give good support to learners. Workshop facilities and equipment are of a high standard and include good areas for simulated work activities.

**GOOD PRACTICE**

*A plumbing learner was identified at initial assessment as having the aptitude and relevant experience to be fast tracked through the level 2 NVQ programme. The learner was able to achieve this qualification in one year.*

12. Liaison officers, tutors, and assessors give learners good support and encouragement. Reviews are carried out in the workplace every two months to monitor learners' progress and resolve any problems learners have. Liaison officers speak to the plumbing tutors before they carry out the learners' progress reviews. Employers are involved in these site-based progress reviews. On- and off-the-job plumbing training is co-ordinated effectively. No formal short-term targets are set, but in most cases, on- and off-the-job training are linked well. Learners are also monitored and reviewed every week at college. Liaison officers and tutor/assessors are happy to give learners any additional help with assignments or with gathering evidence for their portfolios. Staff have strong working relationships with learners and take a close interest in their welfare and progress. Learners are well motivated and are enthusiastic about wanting to achieve their qualifications. Training Trust responds quickly to learners' and employers' requests for technical information.

13. The achievement rate is very low. Only two electrical installation learners and one plumbing learner have achieved the qualification aims on their training plan since training started in 1998. Sixty-six learners are still on their planned programmes and there are some signs of improved progress. In plumbing, five NVQ learners are on target to complete their planned learning in July 2002. Twenty per cent of electrical installation learners are expected to achieve all the targets on their learning plans by September 2002.

14. There is no effective system for planning and recording on-the-job assessments in electrical installation. There are no regular, documented progress reviews for portfolio development. Learners are not given their portfolios at the beginning of the course and do not understand how to compile them. Learners and employers do not understand the links between on- and off-the-job training. Some learners are making slow progress.

## **Engineering**

## **Grade 4**

15. There are currently 27 young people on engineering training programmes, just over a third of the number in training at the time of the original inspection. There are 20 advanced modern apprentices, two foundation modern apprentices and five learners on other work-based learning programmes for young people. Thirteen learners are taking NVQs in motor vehicle mechanics, five in vehicle body repair, four in motorcycle mechanics and five in mechanical engineering. All of the learners are employed, working in businesses including large-scale car dealerships, small independent garages and other engineering companies. The learners attend one of two local further education colleges on a day-release basis for two or three years, depending on their NVQ level. Assessment is carried out in the colleges' workshops, using work-based evidence. More work-based assessment is being carried out by the college and Training Trust's staff. The number of learners

joining the programme has declined significantly over the past four years. Since 1998, only seven learners have fulfilled all the requirements of the advanced modern apprenticeship framework, although many programmes are scheduled to take three to four years. Sixty-five of the 99 learners who have started programmes in the past four years have left early.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ no workplace assessment
- ◆ poor understanding of training programmes by employers and trainees
- ◆ poorly structured final year of motor vehicle modern apprenticeship
- ◆ infrequent reports on trainees' progress from subcontractors

16. Improvements in all four areas of weakness are evident. Workplace assessment is being introduced and integrated with assessment by the subcontracted colleges. Some employers now understand the training programmes. Learners' understanding of the programmes remains poor. The issues around the third year of the motor vehicle modern apprenticeship no longer exist. The colleges now give more frequent feedback to Training Trust and employers. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ good work placements
- ◆ effective vocational support by liaison officers

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ poor achievement rates
- ◆ poor retention rates
- ◆ poor knowledge of training programme by learners

17. The college where most of the learners receive their off-the-job training has good resources. Mechanical engineering training is given at the main college site where there are workshops, classrooms, and computer rooms, all with ample space and equipment. Training Trust's learners are taught in groups with other learners. Training sessions take into account the needs of individual learners. For example, staff make sure that learners gain experience on machine tools that are unavailable at their workplace. The motorcycle workshops are also based on this site and have a good selection of motorbikes and associated equipment. The motor vehicle training takes place at two spacious, modern sites. Maintenance, cleanliness and attention to health and safety are exceptional here and the equipment is more up-to-date than that in many of the learners' workplaces. Computer facilities are particularly good and include sophisticated equipment to simulate vehicle systems. All the resources are used to good effect by experienced staff. Lesson plans are structured but allow flexibility and there is a mix of learners from different years.

Those who are further into their course give guidance to learners who have recently started.

18. Learners are employed in a wide range of good workplaces. Learners are either recruited by Training Trust or directly by the companies. Employers occasionally take on learners who have been made redundant. Learners who are recruited directly by a company usually have a trial period and then go through the normal induction. Employers and workplace supervisors recognise the value of the learning process. Not all employers understand the qualification requirements but they are willing, with guidance from the liaison officer, to give learners the appropriate learning experience and opportunities to gather evidence. Learners are given time at work to prepare evidence for their portfolios and some employers also give learners time to revise for tests.

19. Liaison officers give learners effective vocational and pastoral support. One liaison officer has responsibility for the five mechanical engineering learners. Two others share responsibility for the 22 motor vehicle learners. Formal progress reviews are conducted every two months and new systems now help to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training. Liaison officers, employers and college staff are now better informed and better able to guide and offer support to the learners. Liaison officers also visit workplaces on other occasions and are increasingly involved in work-based assessment. They also attend the colleges and so many learners see their liaison officers every week. There have been a number of instances where liaison officers have worked with employers and colleges to make changes to the work placements or to programmes to suit learners' needs. Learners know that help is available when needed and value the support, as do their employers.

20. Achievement is poor. Of the 99 starters since 1998, only seven have completed the advanced modern apprenticeship and one has achieved a foundation modern apprenticeship. Retention rates are poor. During the past year, there was an improvement in retention rates.

21. Learners' understanding of their training programmes is poor. They have little appreciation of the modern apprenticeship programme as a whole and the contribution of on- and off-the-job training. Learners are not shown how to take charge of the assessment process by identifying their individual assessment opportunities in the workplace. The college insists that portfolios of evidence are kept on site. Portfolios do not always contain sufficiently varied evidence, such as photographs and job cards. Learners do not always know what progress they are making. Learners do not develop the attitudes and skills to work independently and take charge of their careers.

## **Business administration**

## **Grade 4**

22. There are four foundation modern apprentices in administration. Most learners

start their programmes directly from school and are referred to Training Trust by careers advisers. Learners have an initial written assessment followed by an interview with a liaison officer and vocational specialist. Learners are then interviewed by local employers, who employ successful applicants. One learner works for Training Trust, one for a building surveyor, another in a family-run plumbing and heating firm and the other in a company supplying closed circuit TV. The training manager carries out the internal verification. There is one part-time assessor. The liaison officer has recently qualified as an assessor and can carry out workplace assessment if necessary. Learners attend Training Trust every fortnight for training, portfolio-building and assessment for the NVQ and key skills. Training Trust has no computers but learners develop IT skills in the workplace. The assessor has six laptops, which learners can use during visits and at Training Trust for training and testing. Commercial learning materials are used for the development of key skills. Learners work through the key skills units at their own pace and receive individual coaching from the assessor who also assesses the administration NVQ. Their assessor visits them at work at least every two weeks and sometimes every week. The liaison officer visits the learners at work every two months to carry out progress reviews and meets them when they attend Training Trust.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ inflexible national traineeship programme
- ◆ poor assessment practice
- ◆ low retention rates

23. At the time of the original inspection, training and assessment for administration NVQs and key skills was subcontracted to a local college. Since then, Training Trust has become an accredited centre for administration NVQs and key skills. Training Trust now has full responsibility for the learners' development and assessment. The training manager has been in post since April 2001 and the part-time assessor started in January 2002. Before the assessor was appointed, the liaison officer for care acted as an assessor for administration. The training manager gave some administration and key skills training until the new assessor was appointed. The original weakness of poor assessment practice referred to a local college acting as a subcontractor. However, at the time of the reinspection assessment practice at Training Trust is poor. Retention rates have improved since the original inspection but the number of learners is very small. Training Trust has not recruited for this area of learning since October 2001. In 2001-02, three out of four learners were retained. In 2000-01, only one out of five and in 1999-2000, five out of 15, learners were retained. The self-assessment report of January 2002 identified four strengths and one weakness. Inspectors confirmed one strength. Two were more appropriate to learner support. There was one weakness, which was confirmed by inspectors. Inspectors identified a further weakness and awarded a grade lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good workplace opportunities
- ◆ good vocational support for learners

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ poor assessment practices
- ◆ poor achievement rates

24. Training Trust offers learners good opportunities for training and development in the workplace. Learners are employed in small companies where they are trained in a wide range of activities and work closely with experienced administrators. The employers take a close interest in learners' development at work and in their NVQ and key skills. One employer spent considerable time teaching a learner how to convert metric and imperial measurements for the application of number key skill. Another learner has been encouraged to take on additional responsibilities and has developed a new customer care system. One employer has paid for a learner to attend a local college for additional training in word processing and audio skills. Learners are enthusiastic and appreciate these opportunities. All employers play a full part in learners' reviews. Employers discuss progress when the assessor visits and provide witness statements as evidence.

25. The liaison officer provides good vocational support for learners. Learners have frequent contact with their liaison officer at Training Trust and in their workplace. A change of employment has been arranged when necessary. One learner's job role became more that of a packer. She was relocated within four weeks and is now carrying out work which not only meets the requirements for her NVQ at level 2 but will enable her to progress and develop further. One learner was experiencing particular difficulties at home. The liaison officer, who is a qualified assessor, has given the learner additional help which has enabled the learner to keep up to date with work towards the NVQ and remain in training through a difficult personal time. Learners turn to the staff and the liaison officer for support and employers report this has contributed to learners' growth in confidence at work. Training Trust provides each administration learner with a textbook for reference and development of knowledge and understanding.

26. Assessment practice is poor. There is no continuity in assessors' records of action-planning, progress reviews and feedback. Since three of the current learners started in the autumn of 2001, there has been a series of changes and interruptions in assessment due to recruitment of new staff, illness and holidays. Assessment records are inadequate and it is impossible to follow learners' progress. Assessment paperwork has recently been redesigned but is not yet being used. Where there are any assessors' records, these are just short notes to prove that a meeting took place between the assessor and learner. They do not provide a useful reference for the learner. Short-term action-planning is not sufficiently detailed and is usually verbal and informal. Learners have little evidence recorded and are

struggling to cope with a backlog. Achievement is slow. Evidence is not systematically recorded during the programme. Some evidence has been used in one element of the NVQ, but is not cross-referenced to other elements or key skills units. Observations only started in February when the new assessor became involved. Observations are specific to one element of the NVQ at a time. Key skills training is not planned in conjunction with the NVQ, but is taught separately. No workplace evidence has yet been logged for key skills units. During training sessions at Training Trust, learners work through key skills development packs individually.

27. Few learners achieve all the requirements of the administration modern apprenticeship framework. Since the original inspection, only one learner has gained an NVQ at level 2. In 1998-99, two out of 13 completed the full framework and five achieved the NVQ. In 1999-2000, five out of 15 completed the full framework, and one the NVQ at level 2. In 2000-01, there were five starters. One is still in training and has achieved her NVQ at level 2. The other four left early but achieved the NVQ. The remaining three began in September and October 2001. None has yet achieved any administration or key skills units.

### **Health, care and public services**

### **Grade 3**

28. Training Trust has 50 childcare learners, of whom 24 are working towards the early years care and education NVQ at level 2 and 26 at level 3. There are 22 modern apprentices at foundation level, 14 at advanced level and four learners on other work-based learning programmes. All learners are women and 30 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Twenty-two occupational settings are used, all private day nurseries except for one Local Education Authority (LEA) nursery and one school for children with additional learning needs. Twenty-eight of the learners are employed. One subcontractor provides off-the-job training for the level 2 NVQ and key skills one day a week. Learners are assessed and reviewed in the workplace by an assessor from Training Trust, who is occupationally qualified and experienced. Level 3 learners attend the subcontractor's premises for one evening a month. The subcontractor has 10 vocationally qualified and experienced assessors. Learning material is sent to those learners who cannot attend training, or they may be visited in the workplace. The subcontractor provides an assessor to assess the learners in the workplace. Level 3 learners are visited, monitored and reviewed by Training Trust's liaison officer.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ missed assessment opportunities
- ◆ poor work placements for some trainees
- ◆ slow implementation of key skills
- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates

**GOOD PRACTICE**

*One trainer has analysed the level 2 NVQ units and identified ways to meet individual learning needs. This is incorporated into the planning of training sessions and determines some of the activities and training methods to be used.*

29. Since the original inspection, Training Trust has appointed a liaison officer and assessment practices have improved. The new subcontractor has more assessors to work with level 3 learners. Learners and employers are satisfied with the frequency of assessment and have a good understanding of the process. The liaison officers monitor and record learners' progress, and keeps employers and work-placement providers informed. There have been some changes to the work placements since the original inspection. Some unsatisfactory work placements are no longer used. The liaison officers discuss any difficulties with work placements with the learners and work-placement providers. In most cases, learners remain at the work placement. This was not the case at the original inspection where learners were swiftly moved and problems were not investigated with employers. Retention rates were still low in 2000-01, at 26 per cent, but improved significantly to 72 per cent in 2001-02. The self-assessment report identified two of the strengths and partly recognised the third. Other strengths identified are more appropriate to learner support. Inspectors agreed with one of the two weaknesses in the self-assessment report and identified an additional weakness.

**STRENGTHS**

- ◆ particularly effective co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ good understanding of the NVQ process by learners
- ◆ good off-the-job training for the level 2 NVQ

**WEAKNESSES**

- ◆ slow achievements
- ◆ poor co-ordination of key skills training

**GOOD PRACTICE**

*Some level 2 learners have made signs showing 'welcome' in different languages. Each sign is postcard size, and they are then displayed on the door. The languages are based on those in the local area, and learners can transfer this to their nursery settings.*

30. There is effective co-ordination of on- and off-the job training. The liaison officers are aware of the needs of different employers. They visit the subcontractor twice a week and Training Trust holds formal monthly meetings with the subcontractor. Training Trust's staff understand the off-the-job programme, and share this knowledge with employers and work-placement providers. Liaison officers monitor the learners' progress carefully. Employers and work-placement providers are well informed. The subcontractor actively seeks information about their learners' progress in work or work placement. There is a useful range of systems for sharing of information. Training Trust's staff, learners and subcontractors all have a good understanding of the progress made by the learners.

31. Employers and work-placement providers have a good understanding of the NVQ process. They take a keen interest in the learners' progress. Liaison officers and employers work together to give good support to learners. Employers and work-placement providers rearrange learners' duties to match the requirements of the NVQ, for example, to give learners the opportunity to work with other age groups and encourage learners to put their off-the-job training activities to use in the workplace.

32. Training sessions for the level 2 NVQ are well planned and include a wide variety of interesting learning activities. They provide good opportunities for learners to relate the knowledge and understanding required for the NVQ to their experiences at work. Learners are enthusiastic about the training sessions and enjoy them. The trainer ensures that equal opportunities issues are considered as a matter of course and training materials include positive images of under-represented groups. The level 3 training programme is more flexible in both timing and content.

33. Achievements have been slow. For example, of 52 foundation modern apprentices who started between 1998 and 2002, only 10 per cent completed the full framework in the appropriate timescale, but 22 are still in learning. Assessment processes and retention rates have improved since the original inspection and more learners are achieving units of the NVQs. Of the current learners at level 2, 80 per cent are making sufficient progress to be able to complete the qualification by August 2002.

34. Although key skills training has been introduced for level 2 learners since the original inspection, the approach to this is poorly co-ordinated. Learners are not aware of the requirements for application of number portfolios. They are not sure who is responsible for giving communications key skills training and assessment. Learners at level 3 have been informed that they will work with subcontractor's staff individually to achieve key skills, but this has not yet started.

## **GENERIC AREAS**

### **Equal opportunities**

### **Grade 3**

35. The quality assurance manager is responsible for equal opportunities at Training Trust. The equal opportunities policy was completely reviewed and updated in November 2001. The equal opportunities policy statement is included in the contract that is signed by employers or work-placement providers. Training Trust does not have a contract to provide for learners who have been identified as having additional learning or social needs. There are written procedures covering complaints, grievance and harassment, which are included in the learners' handbook. Thirty per cent of the learners are from minority ethnic groups. Most of these learners are in the occupational area of childcare. In engineering and construction, there are no female learners and in childcare, no men.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ poor evaluation, reviews and action planning of equal opportunities
- ◆ low staff awareness of equal opportunities
- ◆ some trainees lack awareness of equal opportunities issues

36. A quality assurance manager was appointed in April 2001 and an action plan was drawn up to remedy the equality of opportunity weaknesses. There were delays in putting some of the actions into place. Employers and learners are now more aware of equal opportunities issues. Outside agencies were enlisted to help with staff development. A further staff training session is due to take place in May 2002. A comprehensive database has been set up since the original inspection to produce statistics for recruitment, starters, early leavers and those completing a programme of learning. Data are not yet being used to develop action plans to encourage participation in training by under-represented groups. The induction procedure for new learners has been improved to include a substantial section on equality of opportunity. The self-assessment report identified a number of strengths and weaknesses and the grade awarded by inspectors was the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good understanding of equality of opportunity issues by learners
- ◆ good promotion of equal opportunities policies with learners

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ lack of clarity in the learners' guidance documents
- ◆ no strategy to widen participation

37. Learners now have a good understanding of equality of opportunity issues. The induction programme effectively introduces learners to equality of opportunity and develops their understanding. Learners are encouraged to gain an understanding of different cultures and backgrounds. Learners appreciate that induction takes place with learners from other occupational areas. This helps to build respect and understanding of learners' different needs. The anti-harassment and bullying, and the complaints procedures, are clearly laid out in the learners' handbook. Learners can recall the knowledge and a few have used the complaint procedure. There is a question on equality of opportunity at learners' progress reviews. Any issues are clearly identified and dealt with. Employers, particularly those in the construction and motor vehicle areas, now have more knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities. The Training Trust's equal opportunities policy forms part of its agreement with employers. Training Trust allows employers who do not have an equal opportunities policy to adopt Training Trust's policy and will reproduce it on the employer's headed paper. A few employers have appreciated this offer. Training Trust's liaison officers are encouraging employers to display the equal opportunities policy clearly in the workplace.

38. The learners' guidance documents on equality of opportunity are difficult to follow. The documents use complicated language and some sections have been copied from various publications. There is some use of inappropriate language in correspondence to learners. For example, some learners have been told that they will be taken off the training scheme if they do not complete the logbook. There

are no strategies to promote equality of opportunity. There is no procedure for recording any initiatives, or evaluation of their effectiveness. There are no women engineering or construction learners and only one male childcare learner. At 30 per cent, the proportion of minority ethnic learners is representative of the local population. Publicity material does not effectively encourage wider participation by learners. Although the subcontractors' agreements state that equal opportunities policies must be in place, there are no procedures to ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted in teaching and learning.

### **Trainee support**

### **Grade 2**

39. Most learners find out about Training Trust through the careers service and school open days. Training Trust participates in road shows and job fairs organized with the careers service and other local organizations such as West Ham football club. Careers advisers understand that for applicants to be accepted by Training Trust, they need to have sufficient basic and personal skills to be able to start work immediately. Prospective learners complete an application form indicating their area of interest, such as motor vehicle or childcare. They are invited for an initial assessment and, if successful, are interviewed by one of Training Trust's liaison officers and a member of the senior management team. If they are unsuccessful in the initial assessment, they are given immediate individual feedback about the areas in which they need to improve. They are told they can re-sit the initial assessment in a month's time and are advised to return to their careers office to discuss the outcome. This is confirmed to them in writing. Successful applicants are matched to employers. The employer interviews learners and successful candidates are then offered a training place with Training Trust. A comprehensive one-day induction is then held at the company's offices and an individual learning plan is completed. Liaison officers systematically check whether learners have any prior learning and experience, particularly in key skills, which might be accredited. Learners receive a general handbook and information pack, which sets out support arrangements and contains general information about their programmes, equal opportunities, health and safety, key skills and the learners' charter. Arrangements are made for learners to join courses at a local college or, for childcare, for training with a specialist subcontractor. The administration learners attend Training Trust for their off-the-job training. A liaison officer accompanies each learner to the workplace on their first day and generally visits again a week later. They also visit the learners regularly between these progress reviews at their work and during the off-the-job training sessions.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ weak initial assessment
- ◆ some inappropriate advice and guidance
- ◆ inaccurate and incomplete training plans
- ◆ ineffective progress reviews and action plans

40. Since the original inspection, the initial assessment process has been thoroughly overhauled. There is a detailed procedure in Training Trust's quality assurance manual for staff to follow. All the necessary standard letters, marking sheets and instructions for administering the initial assessment tests are held in the manual. Tests are rotated so that learners do not retake the same test. The results are logged in learners' files. Learners' key skills are initially assessed when they start their off-the-job training at college or Training Trust. The results of the initial assessment generate an individual programme which learners work through at their own pace. All staff have received training to raise their awareness of occupational areas and frameworks to ensure they give learners accurate and appropriate guidance. Three of the original liaison officers are now qualified assessors and carry out some workplace assessment in administration, childcare and engineering. The Trust has introduced a procedure to accredit prior learning. Progress reviews are now carried out every eight weeks and dates are entered on the individual learning plans. Progress review documents have been changed and a new form is now in use, which requires feedback from the employer or supervisor, college tutor and assessor. In administration, care and mechanical engineering progress reviews, liaison officers set short-term targets for unit achievement and specific areas to be developed. In construction and motor vehicle, short-term target-setting is loose and not yet being used to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training. The January 2002 self-assessment report did not give a grade for this area or identify any specific strengths and weaknesses.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ sustained and effective pastoral support
- ◆ positive acknowledgement of learners' progress
- ◆ comprehensive and stimulating induction programme

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ inadequate completion and updating of individual learning plans

41. Training Trust has developed effective support for the learners, both in the workplace and in their off-the-job training. Learners meet their liaison officers on a frequent basis, often weekly, at work and college. Issues are resolved quickly and in a sensitive manner. Liaison officers often help to ensure that learners stay on their training programme. Learners appreciate the liaison officer's face-to-face support with personal and work-related problems. Learners may also telephone their liaison officer. During this reinspection, a learner electrician called to report that he had been allocated a type of work which is not allowed for learners. The liaison officer immediately contacted the employer who discovered that this had happened without his knowledge. It was stopped immediately. Another learner reported verbal abuse while attending college training. The liaison officer immediately went to resolve the situation. The liaison officers note all outcomes in writing. The liaison officers have excellent constructive relationships with employers, some of whom have provided work placements for many years, and

work with them to guide the learners. Employers value this and liaison officers have much credibility with employers. Every six months, each programme area has a review meeting, where learners, supervisors, college tutors, representatives of the careers service and the LSC, Training Trust's managers and liaison officers meet to discuss issues relating to learner support. The mix of learners is carefully chosen to incorporate different employers, programmes and levels. Training Trust also funds additional courses for learners, such as first aid training or welding courses, which are not part of their qualification aims.

42. Training Trust encourages learners to succeed by celebrating their progress and successes during the programme and when they complete it. Learners receive letters congratulating them when they achieve units. Certificates are framed and presented to learners. Liaison officers and learners take pride in this success. When learners achieve their qualification they and their work-placement provider receive a financial award. Letters are also sent to the parents of young learners when particular progress is made. During this reinspection, a motor vehicle learner won the regional trainee of the year award from the awarding body. A high profile awards ceremony is usually held annually.

43. There is a comprehensive, well-structured one-day induction programme which brings together learners from the different vocational areas. Induction covers health and safety and equality of opportunity through assignments and group discussions. Some interesting newspaper articles are used, covering, for example, racism in football and the stress of starting in a new job. The emphasis throughout the day is on group work and developing understanding. Some activities help to develop key skills and can later be used as evidence. There is a half-day follow-up session three months later, to check how well learners can recall the first induction day and to reinforce learning.

44. Many individual learning plans are incomplete and not tailored to each learner. The end of programme date is used as a universal target date for the achievement of all components of the framework. The plans of administration learners do not identify options or enhancement units. Sometimes, these could be found in the learners' portfolios or assessors' notes, but were not entered in the plans. One learner gained an administration NVQ at level 2 in December 2001 but this had not been entered on her learning plan. There are schedules for progress reviews and these are updated as they happen, but frequently, targets for achievements are not updated in the learning plans.

## **Management of training**

## **Grade 4**

45. Training Trust has three trustees who are all directors of the company. Since the original inspection, two new managers have been appointed. There is now an operations manager, a training manager and a quality assurance manager. The chief executive and three managers form the senior management team. Six liaison

officers, of whom two are part time, have responsibility for learners in the occupational areas. In addition, there is an administration and finance team of four staff. Since the original inspection, the company has moved to larger premises in east London. In 1997, Training Trust achieved the Investors in People award, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people, and was successfully re-assessed in 2000. Most training and assessment is subcontracted to six local further education colleges. A local subcontractor gives training in early years care and education. At present, Training Trust works with 90 to 100 employers, most of whom are in the local and greater London area.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ poor management of subcontractors
- ◆ poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ little staff training and development
- ◆ poor use of data
- ◆ ineffective strategies for managing staff shortages.

46. The company has revised its contracts with the subcontractors. These are now negotiated annually. The specific requirements for teaching and assessment of the occupational framework are included within the contract. The contracts are modified to include the requirements of individual learners where necessary. Training Trust has recently started a pilot scheme with one subcontractor to monitor and evaluate the provision. From September 2002, all subcontractors will be included in this process. Employers now have a better understanding of NVQs. Work placements provide learners with the range of experience they need to gain their NVQ. One of the roles of the liaison officer now is to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training for their occupational area. Since the original inspection, staff development needs are identified through appraisal and data are collated centrally. There is one management information system which provides accurate and up-to-date information. Now that Training Trust employs more staff, there are fewer problems with staff shortages. In its self-assessment report, Training Trust outlined much of the progress made since the original inspection. Inspectors agreed with the most of the strengths and all of weaknesses in the report, but an additional significant weakness was identified. Inspectors awarded a grade lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ effective staff training and development
- ◆ good internal communication for operational staff

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ insufficient use of data for management decisions
- ◆ no target setting for retention and achievement rates

47. Training Trust has systematic and thorough arrangements for the training and development of its staff. Staff are encouraged and supported to improve and extend their skills. The company has made significant changes since the original inspection. Comprehensive staff appraisal takes place annually. The training needed to meet the requirements of the organisation and for personal development is identified. Training Trust has organised staff development through external speakers, updating all staff on key issues, attendance at appropriate courses and individual observations and feedback by managers. Managers carry out performance reviews with their staff. New staff have a good understanding of the company, equal opportunities and grievance procedures. Procedures are clearly documented for recruitment, staff induction, appraisal, performance review and professional development.

48. There is good internal communication. Staff have a clear vision of the overall aims of the company and its training programmes. Staff meetings include items discussed by senior managers. In October 2001, all staff were involved in a review week to agree the priorities for the future development of the company. The resulting action plan formed the basis for the self-assessment report. Training Trust's staff are clear about the progress made since the original inspection. Staff are encouraged to contribute ideas and are always able to discuss issues and concerns with their managers. Informal communication is good. Notes are taken at staff meetings but there is no systematic use of minutes and action notes to enable the progress of actions to be monitored.

49. Since the original inspection, Training Trust has begun to use a good system for collecting data. However, the information is not analysed centrally to determine patterns and trends or to set targets to improve retention rates. For example, data on retention, completion and early leavers are not analysed by qualification level, type or subcontractor to enable comparisons to be made. Reports are not produced as part of a regular and systematic process to enable managers to monitor training and identify areas for improvement. Data are not routinely shared with subcontractors. Weaknesses in the analysis of data were identified in the self-assessment report

50. Training Trust does not set targets for retention and achievement rates. This weakness was not identified in the self-assessment report. There are no targets set for the company as a whole, or for individual occupational areas. The company does not monitor progress towards achieving better retention and achievement rates. One of the objectives in Training Trust's strategic plan is to improve retention and qualification rates, but none of the senior management team has direct responsibility for this objective.

## Quality assurance

## Grade 4

51. There is a quality assurance framework at Training Trust that allocates the overall responsibility for quality assurance to the trustees, the chief executive and the quality assurance manager. Training Trust has appointed a manager since the original inspection who has overall operational responsibility for quality assurance within the company. The quality assurance procedures are now co-ordinated centrally. The quality assurance manual contains the standard procedures of the company which the staff are expected to follow. It also contains standard paperwork and guidance on how this should be completed. Liaison officers are given targets based on the number of visits to learners and progress reviews completed.

At the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ little quality assurance of training
- ◆ no systematic action planning

52. Since the original inspection, a training manager has been appointed. The training manager attends the six-monthly liaison meetings between learners, employers, off-the-job trainers and Training Trust's staff. The training manager observes and gives feedback on how performance might be improved. The liaison officers' performance reviews are part of the quality assurance process. The quality of the advice and guidance now offered to the learner has been identified as a strength in most occupational areas. Liaison officers are now appropriately qualified. There is still no mechanism to evaluate the training given at work placements. The initial assessment and induction of learners has been observed and analysed and positive changes have been made. Induction is longer and involves a range of interesting activities and a follow-up day. Training Trust has set up a group of staff to monitor the progress of the action plan, following the original inspection. There is no overall strategy to monitor the effectiveness of the company. Self-assessment gave a realistic view of the company's progress. Inspectors agreed with one strength identified in the report. This was a key strength at the original inspection. One significant additional weakness was identified which Training Trust had identified as an area for improvement. Inspectors awarded a grade lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good use of feedback from learners and employers

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ insufficient monitoring of quality assurance
- ◆ lack of quality assurance procedures for the co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training.

53. Training Trust gathers valuable information from questionnaires and employer

telephone surveys and uses it to make changes. Additional information is also gathered at programme review meetings. Learners, employers, liaison officers and college staff attend these meetings. The quality assurance manager collates and analyses the information. This analysis was included when improvements to the company were discussed and decided upon during a review week. These improvement included providing textbooks for learners and, employers' packs with additional information about NVQs, and arranging for senior managers to visit employers to explain the training process in greater detail.

54. There is insufficient monitoring of quality assurance at Training Trust. Since the original inspection, Training Trust has developed an overall quality assurance framework. The quality assurance procedures describe accurately how a particular activity should be carried out, but there is no mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of these procedures, particularly those relating to the quality of training. For example, those learners who start a programme late receive a good induction but are not included in any monitoring or evaluation process. Monitoring processes are often inadequate. There is a checklist for the contents of learners' files but there is no procedure to ensure that any inadequacies in the paperwork are reported and improved. The quality of information is not monitored sufficiently to ensure that all learning plans meet the contractual obligations of the LSC. At present, there is no cycle of quality assurance activities and no monitoring of quality assurance statements. Quality assurance does not cover the important aspects of on- and off-the-job training. There are no quality assurance statements that describe the training process and no written procedures to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the learner's experience. Employers are not aware of this important aspect of the liaison officer's role. Errors and discrepancies were found in the process where on- and off-the-job training was co-ordinated. The college tutors do not comment on learners' attendance and punctuality in their progress reviews. Some progress review records are not sufficiently detailed. At a recent telephone survey, employers requested additional information about the content of the college programme and the progress made by their employees. Each learner has a training programme itemising the requirements to demonstrate practical competence for the NVQ. These do not relate to specific units of the NVQ or co-ordinate with the college programme.

55. Training Trust is responsible for the internal verification of one area of learning with four learners. The external verifier has identified a number of problems. Monitoring sheets were not being completed regularly and details of the initial basic skills and key skills assessments were not included in the learning plan. The subcontractors carry out internal and external verification of the other three occupational areas which Training Trust offer.