



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT MAY 2000

City College, Norwich

SUMMARY

City College, Norwich offers satisfactory training in construction, engineering and hospitality. There is good off-the-job training. Employers offer a wide range of training opportunities but have a poor understanding of NVQ requirements. Training in manufacturing and care is less than satisfactory. There are good work placements but assessment procedures are weak and there is inadequate integration of key skills with the vocational training. Retention and achievement rates are poor in some occupational areas. Equal opportunities, trainee support, management of training and quality assurance arrangements are all satisfactory. There are effective initiatives towards inclusive learning, although both trainees and employers have a poor understanding of equal opportunities. There is a wide range of resources at the college providing support for trainees. Progress reviews are inadequate and trainees' prior learning is rarely accredited. There are good internal communications and an effective staff development programme. Management information systems are weak. The college sets few performance targets. The self-assessment process is effective.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Construction	3
Engineering	3
Manufacturing	4
Hospitality	3
Health, care & public services	4

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide range of on-the-job training opportunities
- ◆ good-quality training resources at the college
- ◆ effective initiatives towards inclusive learning
- ◆ good promotion of training opportunities to under-represented groups
- ◆ specialist centre available for trainees requiring additional learning support
- ◆ effective staff recruitment, appraisal and development
- ◆ effective self-assessment process

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor achievement rates
- ◆ poor understanding of NVQs among employers
- ◆ inadequate integration of key skills with vocational training
- ◆ no promotion or monitoring of employers' equal opportunities practices
- ◆ inadequate progress reviews
- ◆ ineffective management information systems
- ◆ few performance targets set

INTRODUCTION

1. City College, Norwich (City College) provides education and training for over 14,500 people, over three-quarters of whom are part time. Twenty-six per cent of those studying at the college are aged between 16 and 18. The college offers a wide variety of courses including general national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) at advanced, intermediate and foundation level, national vocational qualifications (NVQs), national and higher national certificates and diplomas and degrees. The college also provides learning programmes in eight prisons in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex for over 5,000 people. The college has a main site near the centre of Norwich and a second small site nearby which specialises in prevocational training. Fifty-five per cent of the college's income comes from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC).

2. The college has a contract with Norfolk and Waveney Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) to provide work-based training for young people. The contract covers modern apprenticeships, national traineeships and other training in 10 occupational areas. Five of these areas (construction, engineering, manufacturing, hospitality and care) were inspected. The other five areas (business administration, retailing and customer service, leisure, sport and travel, hair and beauty and foundation for work) were not inspected, as there were only small numbers of trainees in each. The college has three New Deal contracts with the Employment Service through the Norfolk Unit of Delivery. One is to provide the full-time education and training option for the 18 to 24, and 25 and over, client groups. The second is to provide Specialist Gateway for the unit of delivery. The third is for a pilot project to provide New Deal for lone parents. The college has another contract with the Employment Service to offer work preparation for adults requiring additional learning support and/or a disability. The college also receives funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) to offer training, such as driving lessons or personal skills development, to the New Deal client group not available under the standard New Deal options. Further ESF funding is used to allow those aged 25 and over, who have restricted eligibility for New Deal, to join the programme earlier and to undertake a wider range of activities. The college has 337 trainees on its TEC-funded programmes, 311 of whom are in the five occupational areas inspected. There are 93 New Deal clients aged 18 to 24 and 25 clients aged 25 and over.

3. The TEC-funded programmes are administered through the Responsive Assessment Centre (RAC), which is a unit within Learning Support Services. The RAC is led by a manager, accountable to the head of Learning Support Services, and is supported by an employment liaison co-ordinator, seven employment liaison officers and an administration co-ordinator. The employment liaison team has responsibility for monitoring all TEC-funded trainees in college and in the workplace. Each employment liaison officer is responsible for a number of trainees from one or more occupational area. Training and assessment of TEC-funded trainees is the responsibility of the appropriate curriculum centre in the college.

4. The economic profile of Norwich has changed during recent years. A number of the larger employers are no longer located in Norwich. The major areas of demand in the local labour market are information technology, advanced engineering and electronics, and tourism. Unemployment in Norwich is 3.4 per cent and in Norfolk it is 3.7 per cent, compared with the national average of 3.8 per cent. In 1999, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above in Norfolk was 47.7 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. The average for England is 47.9 per cent. In Norwich, 1.7 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic groups. In Norfolk, the proportion is 0.9 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. The college produced its self-assessment report on TEC-funded, work-based training in February 2000. This is a supplement to its self-assessment report on its FEFC-funded training produced in November 1999. The college's quality systems manager is responsible for the self-assessment process, which involves staff from the responsive assessment centre and the curriculum areas. Judgements are based on analyses and audits carried out by the college's quality and standards unit. The college's senior management team examines all elements of the report as they are produced. The final report is approved first by the academic board and then by the college's corporation board.

6. The inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of the college by the FEFC. The inspectors from the FEFC and the Training Standards Council (TSC) worked as a single team under the direction of the FEFC's reporting inspector. There was close co-operation between both sets of inspectors. A common evidence base was used where applicable. For the inspection of TEC-funded, work-based training, a team of five inspectors spent a total of 20 days at the college. Inspectors interviewed 83 trainees, representing approximately 25 per cent of the total number of trainees, and five staff from the college. They visited 30 employers and work-placement providers and interviewed 29 work-based supervisors. Inspectors observed 17 training sessions, two assessments and six progress reviews. The grades awarded for the training sessions are presented in the table on the page below. Inspectors also examined trainees' portfolios and personal files, assessment records, internal verification and external verification records, minutes of meetings, records of other external audits and other management records.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Construction	1	3	1			5
Engineering		3				3
Manufacturing			1	2		3
Hospitality	1	2	1			4
Health, care & public services			2			2
Total	2	8	5	2	0	17

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Construction

Grade 3

7. City College offers training for young people in electrical installation, plumbing, painting and decorating, bricklaying and wood occupations on modern apprenticeships, national traineeships and other training programmes. There are 154 trainees in total. The number of trainees on each of the programmes is shown in the table below. All modern apprentices, national trainees and those on other training programmes working towards NVQs at level 2 are employed by local companies, many of which are small and medium-sized enterprises. These trainees attend the college for one day each week for off-the-job training. Trainees on other training programmes working towards NVQs at level 1 are not employed. They attend the college for a minimum of 16 hours each week. Some of these trainees have work placements. All training staff hold teaching or training qualifications. Trainees are assessed by college staff who hold appropriate assessor qualifications. Qualified college staff act as internal verifiers. Employment liaison officers carry out trainees' progress reviews. The proportion of trainees remaining in training is around 51 per cent across all programmes except national traineeships, which is 83 per cent. Fifty-three percent of trainees on other training programmes achieve an NVQ. No trainees have completed a national traineeship or modern apprenticeship. Five modern apprentices have gained an NVQ at level 3 over the past two years. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and one of the weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

Numbers of trainees by programme and trade

	Modern Apprentices	National Traineeships	Other Training at level 1	Other Training at level 2	Total
Electrical installation	33	-	-	36	69
Plumbing	19	32	-	1	52
Bricklaying	-	-	8	3	11
Painting & decorating	-	-	5	-	5
Wood occupations	2	2	8	5	17
TOTAL	54	34	21	45	154

STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide range of good on-the-job training at most employers
- ◆ effective monitoring of trainees' progress and achievements
- ◆ good, well-resourced off-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient use of work-based evidence
- ◆ poor understanding of NVQs among employers
- ◆ insufficient understanding of key skills by trainees

8. There is a wide range of training opportunities at most employers. These opportunities are used effectively to allow trainees to gain a broad range of skills. Where training in particular skills is not available, employers arrange for the training elsewhere. For example, one employer has used a subcontractor to provide the trainee with the specific trade skills that the employer was unable to provide. Another employer recruited an additional service engineer for fire alarms to allow trainees normally carrying out this task to be put onto fire alarm installation work. A number of employers have arranged additional health and safety training for trainees. Trainees value the training and guidance that they receive from their employers. There is effective monitoring of trainees' progress and achievements. A detailed record is kept for each trainee. Trainees have a good awareness of their progress.

9. There is good, well-resourced off-the-job training. Course notes given to trainees are thorough and well written. In plumbing, documents issued to trainees link off-the-job training with NVQ requirements. The plumbing workshop is purpose-built and includes a gas safety centre. A two-storey, wood occupations workshop provides opportunities to work on full-sized projects. Trainees' attendance at off-the-job training sessions is lower than that for college students.

10. There is little use of work-based evidence in trainees' portfolios for construction trades other than plumbing. Much of the evidence for NVQ requirements comes from simulated work undertaken in the college. This occurs even when trainees are carrying out the same task in the workplace. Trainees regularly move from site to site, creating opportunities to gather evidence from the workplace and these are being missed. The college has recognised this deficiency and has appointed a part-time assessor in electrical installation. This assessor is working with just eight of 69 trainees. One employer with trainees is currently having a supervisor trained in assessor qualifications. Employers have a poor understanding of NVQs and the evidence required to achieve qualifications. They do not take part in trainees' reviews. Employers are unaware of the contribution that they can make to help trainees to progress. Most employers expect the college to have sole responsibility for trainees achieving their qualification. Key skills work is not fully integrated with the NVQ programme. Trainees are unclear about the purpose of key skills and their position within the training programme. Opportunities to gather naturally occurring evidence for key skills from the workplace are missed. The college has identified this issue and has made some progress towards addressing it in plumbing by introducing evidence from the workplace.

Engineering

Grade 3

11. City College offers training in engineering production, engineering maintenance, aircraft engineering maintenance, technical services, welding, engineering manufacture foundation, electrical and electronics servicing and vehicle mechanical and electronic systems. There are 52 trainees. Thirty-five trainees are modern apprentices, nine trainees are on other training programmes at NVQ level 2 and eight trainees are working towards a welding NVQ at level 1. Forty-seven of the trainees are employed by 27 engineering companies throughout East Anglia. Most trainees who are not employed have work placements. All nine of the modern apprentices on the aircraft engineering maintenance programme are employed by the maintenance division of an international airline. This division is based at a site near to the college. It operates as a satellite centre of the college with all training and assessment of trainees being carried out by the airline in their own training and maintenance workshops. The satellite centre has seven work-based assessors and one internal verifier, although the college is responsible for internal verification. The other modern apprentices and those trainees on other training programmes at NVQ level 2 attend the college for off-the-job training for one day each week. Trainees working towards the welding NVQ at level 1 attend the college's off-site training workshop for their off-the-job training. All training staff are occupationally qualified and also hold teaching or training qualifications. Assessment and internal verification are carried out by appropriately qualified college staff. Three work-based assessors have recently been appointed. These assessors are also responsible for reviewing the progress of the trainees that they assess. Other trainees are visited in the workplace by employment liaison officers from the college. The employment liaison officers are responsible for carrying out trainees' progress reviews and health and safety audits of employers. None of the employment liaison officers are qualified in appropriate engineering disciplines or in health and safety. No modern apprentices have completed their training. During the last two years, 16 per cent of trainees who have left have completed their individual training plans while 21 per cent of modern apprentices and 47 per cent of those on other training programmes have achieved at least one NVQ. Data from the college on retention rates are unreliable. Inspectors agreed with one strength and the one weakness in the self-assessment report. The grade awarded by the inspectors is the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ wide range of good-quality training facilities
- ◆ effective on-the-job training in aircraft maintenance
- ◆ good use of workplace assessments

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no demanding progress and achievement targets set
- ◆ inadequate integration of key skills with NVQ work
- ◆ poor achievement rates

12. The college provides good off-the-job training. Trainees are often trained in small groups with significant amounts of individual training. There is a learning plan for the whole year. Trainees are set goals for achievement in each practical session. These are effectively monitored and the trainees are given good feedback. The college has a wide range of good-quality training facilities. These include a new block of workshops containing engineering machining, welding and fabrication, motor vehicle servicing and vehicle body repair and refinishing. The vehicle repair workshop contains new vehicle body finishing facilities. The engineering electronics and hydraulic/pneumatic rooms are furnished with a wide range of modern equipment. The satellite centre has a dedicated training area containing classrooms and modern workshop facilities. In addition, trainees are placed in the aircraft maintenance hangers on the same site, and receive well-planned and strictly controlled on-the-job training to a good standard. Aircraft maintenance trainees' on-the-job training also leads to an aviation licence qualification. The college employs three, qualified, part-time assessors to carry out NVQ assessments in the workplace. They also carry out trainees' progress reviews. The three assessors are occupationally qualified and experienced. There is good assessment practice using a wide range of evidence sources. Employers are actively involved in the assessment process.

13. Trainees are not set demanding targets for progress and achievement. Some trainees make slow progress. Many employers do not understand the requirements of the NVQ and are not able to contribute to setting targets for trainees. Key skills are not integrated into aircraft maintenance programmes. Many employers have little understanding of the requirements of the key skills elements or the need for key skills in the training programmes. Employers are not able to identify opportunities for trainees to gather work-based, key skills evidence. Trainees use simulated situations to generate key skills evidence when the situation occurs naturally in the workplace. Trainees' achievements rates are poor. Over the past two years, only 16 per cent of trainees have completed their individual training plan.

Manufacturing

Grade 4

14. The college offers modern apprenticeships both in boat building and in producing hand-crafted furniture, at NVQ levels 2 and 3, and wood machining at levels 2 and 3. There are 28 trainees. Seventeen are modern apprentices on the boat-building programme, 10 are other youth trainees working towards an NVQ in producing hand-crafted furniture at level 3 and one is working towards an NVQ in wood machining at level 2. The modern apprentices are employed by a number of

boat builders and repairers near Norwich. The boats built in these yards range from cruisers, for use by the many boat-hire companies on the nearby Norfolk Broads, to luxury, ocean-going yachts. Trainees working towards qualifications in handcrafted furniture and wood machining are employed by local furniture manufacturers. Typical products are display cabinets and tables for the reproduction furniture sector. Trainees receive on-the-job training from their employer. They attend the college for off-the-job training in the school of construction one day each week. The college has specialist workshops for each trade. Trainees are assessed and internally verified at the college by qualified college staff. There are two employment liaison officers who visit trainees in the workplace to carry out progress reviews. No modern apprentices have completed their programmes, although none have yet reached the expected completion date on their individual training plan. Over the past two years, 47 per cent of those starting modern apprenticeships in manufacturing have left without any qualifications. Over the past four years, 32 per cent of trainees across all training areas have completed them. A further 20 per cent have left with at least one qualification while 41 per cent have left with no qualifications. The remaining 7 per cent are still on their training programmes. These figures are approximate, as there are some inconsistencies in the college's data. The self-assessment report gives a reasonably accurate description of the manufacturing training offered by the college but training has since been affected by the long-term absence of a member of teaching staff. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given by the college.

GOOD PRACTICE

This is a good example of trainees gaining additional experience during their training. In hand-made furniture production, trainees have to make a number of pieces of furniture. Rather than making these to pre-set designs out of prescribed materials, trainees are encouraged to modify the design and experiment with different materials. This motivates trainees, and increases the breadth of their experience. The finished pieces display a very high standard of craftsmanship, innovative use of materials and good design.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good on-the-job training
- ◆ wide range of training opportunities at work placements

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some weak assessment practice
- ◆ slow progress for many trainees
- ◆ some poor off-the-job training

15. Trainees receive good on-the-job training. They are trained in the workplace by skilled, experienced craftsmen. Trainees' standard of practical work is good, particularly in handcrafted furniture where they are allowed to develop both design and manufacturing skills. Work placements offer a wide variety of training opportunities. Trainees make a variety of products or components during their training, and they are given the experience of working in a variety of areas within the company, to broaden their experience and increase their flexibility.

16. There is some poor assessment practice. Many opportunities for gathering work-based evidence are missed. There is little use of witness testimony. When witness testimony is used, it is rarely authenticated. Trainees' statements describing work they have undertaken are often unsigned or undated. The majority of the evidence in trainees' portfolios is obtained from work carried out in college.

Assessors rarely visit the trainees at work. There is little assessment by direct observation. There are often long periods between assessments. Trainees are unaware of the subject or date of their next assessment. Many trainees do not know when they were last assessed. Little feedback is given to trainees following assessment. As a result, many trainees make slow progress, most taking two or more years to complete an NVQ at level 2. Few achieve their qualification within the time set out in their training plan. The expected completion date of one trainee on an NVQ level 2 programme was put back by a whole year following a review, three-quarters of the way into the planned training schedule. Off-the-job training in boat building is poor. A member of staff is on long-term absence due to illness. This trainer has only recently been replaced, and trainees have missed a number of weeks of training. They are taught in a single group, which means that some trainees repeat work that they did in the previous year. Some trainees have been sent to work by themselves in the library. Attendance at off-the-job training sessions has been poor. Training sessions are unplanned and trainees are unaware of what they are supposed to be doing midway through a training session.

Hospitality

Grade 3

17. City College offers modern apprenticeships, national traineeships and other training programmes in hospitality and catering. There are 41 trainees, 23 of whom are national trainees and 18 are on other training programmes. Of the national trainees, five are working towards NVQs in bakery service, 17 in food preparation and cooking and one in food and drink service. Of those on other training programmes, nine are working towards NVQs at level 1 in preparing and serving food, four in food preparation and cooking at level 1 and five in food preparation and cooking at level 2. There are two New Deal clients on the full-time education and training option, one in food preparation and service at level 1 and one in food preparation and cooking at level 2. There are no modern apprentices. All trainees on level 2 programmes are in full-time employment. Most of the trainees who are not employed have work placements. Trainees on programmes at level 2 or higher attend college for one day a week for theory and practical skills training and assessment. Trainees who are working towards NVQs at level 1 attend the off-site training centre where they provide a breakfast and luncheon service for other trainees and staff at this location. All assessments for level 2 NVQs take place at the college during the trainees' second year on the programme. Most assessments for NVQ level 1 take place in the off-site training centre, although there is some assessment in the workplace by staff from the training centre. Assessors are appropriately qualified. Training staff hold teaching or training qualifications. All trainees achieve the basic food handlers and basic food safety certificates as additional qualifications. Key skills training and assessment is carried out separately from the occupational training. The college's self-assessment report is detailed and includes the main strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the grade given by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-chosen and varied work placements for NVQ level 1 trainees
- ◆ flexible access to training and assessment
- ◆ good off-the-job training
- ◆ good monitoring of trainees' progress and achievements

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ ineffective target setting
- ◆ inadequate workplace assessment
- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates

18. Trainees working towards NVQs at level 1 are on varied and well-chosen work placements which suit their individual requirements. Some trainees work on more than one placement to increase their range of work experience. The amount of time spent in the placements varies, depending on the ability and confidence of the trainees. Access to training and assessment for all trainees is flexible, with extra training and assessment available outside the normal college timetable. This allows trainees to adapt their training and assessment schedule to their shift pattern at work. There is good off-the-job training. Trainees display good practical skills. Most practical training is carried out in realistic working environments. Staff are well qualified and possess wide experience of the hospitality industry. Training sessions are effectively planned with good lesson plans and clearly stated objectives. Monitoring of trainees' understanding of theory sessions is good. The course notes given to trainees cover a wide range of topics and are well presented. The resources and facilities are of a good standard. There is good monitoring and recording of trainees' progress and achievements by trainers and employer liaison officers.

19. Trainees are set few targets for progress or achievement. Those targets which are set relate to long-term goals. Short-term targets are not used effectively to help them to progress from week to week. There is insufficient assessment in the workplace. Good opportunities for gathering work-based evidence are missed because trainees and employers are unaware of the requirements of the NVQ programme. Retention and achievement rates are poor. Over the past two years, 54 per cent of trainees have left without achieving any qualifications. Of the 96 who have started during this period, eight have achieved an NVQ at level 2 and 16 have achieved an NVQ at level 1. No trainees have completed a national traineeship.

Health, care & public services

Grade 4

20. City College offers modern apprenticeships, national traineeships and other training programmes in care and childcare and modern apprenticeships in emergency fire services. There are 36 trainees; 21 of whom are modern apprentices, eight are national trainees and seven are on other training programmes. Six of the trainees on other training programmes are working towards

NVQs at level 2 in early years care and education and one at level 3. Fifteen modern apprentices and eight national trainees are working towards qualifications in care. One modern apprentice is working towards an NVQ in promoting independence, four in caring for children and young people and one in emergency fire services operations. Two trainees need additional learning support. All but two trainees are employed. The two trainees who are not employed are in work placements. Trainees work in schools, residential care homes for young people and the elderly and the fire service. Care trainees attend college one day each week for off-the-job training and assessment. Childcare trainees have a choice of off-the-job training. They can choose between an evening class one day a week or block release during each college term. All trainees have access to open-learning materials and workbooks. Trainees also attend sessions to help them to prepare their portfolios, and training sessions on first aid, food hygiene, moving, lifting and handling (care trainees only), and health and safety at work. Enrolment can be flexible to suit trainees' needs. There are two employment liaison officers who visit trainees in the workplace and carry out progress reviews. Qualified college staff carry out assessments. Assessors visit trainees in the workplace. Inspectors agreed with all of the weaknesses in the self-assessment report and identified others. They agreed with only one of the strengths and identified others. The self-assessment report does not include sufficient information on trainees' learning and assessment experiences, the monitoring of their achievements and the links between City College and employers. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

POOR PRACTICE

This is an example of poor key skills training and the inappropriate treatment of a trainee. In a key skills training session, approximately half of the trainees were having difficulty in reading the material being used as the basis of one of the exercises. The quality of the written material in these trainees' portfolios was also poor. The treatment of one trainee was inappropriate. The trainer told the trainee to go to the college's learning support centre if the trainee could not read the article. The trainee was clearly embarrassed at being told this in front of the other trainees.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good work placements
- ◆ extra qualifications gained
- ◆ flexible access to off-the-job training in childcare

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some weak assessment practice
- ◆ missed opportunities for training in the workplace
- ◆ inadequate integration of key skills with vocational training
- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates

21. A wide variety of work placements provide good opportunities for learning and assessment. Many work placements offer good work experience relevant to trainees' career aspirations. In childcare, some trainees are given time while on their placements to work on their NVQ. Work-based supervisors in childcare are particularly supportive of trainees' development. Trainees receive additional training in food hygiene, moving and handling, first aid and health and safety at work. These courses encourage safer working practice and improve trainees' employability. There is flexible access to off-the-job training in childcare to take into account trainees' personal needs and work schedules. The training course

helps trainees to develop evidence of the background knowledge required for their NVQ and key skills qualifications.

22. There is some weak assessment practice. Although work placements provide good opportunities for assessment, these are insufficiently used because there are no work-based assessors. College-based assessors do not give sufficient time to carrying out observations. Some care trainees have not been assessed for months, and one trainee has not been assessed for six months. Assessors sometimes cancel and trainees feel that this adversely affects their level of motivation. Trainees do not have a realistic idea of what is required for NVQ assessment and are not adequately prepared for their role and responsibilities in the assessment process. Some trainees are under the impression that they have almost completed their course, even though their competence has only been assessed twice. Witness testimony by appropriately qualified people is not effectively used. Some trainees are expected to prepare assessment plans themselves with insufficient guidance from the assessor. Some assessment documentation is incomplete and trainees are not aware of which units they have completed. In care, assessment practice is not adequately monitored. Internal verification systems are not effective. Trainees' portfolios vary in quality, with some being well presented and organised. Evidence in some portfolios cannot be authenticated. Some inappropriate materials are included in portfolios, for example, policies, photocopied leaflets and attendance certificates.

23. Opportunities are missed for training in the workplace. Employers have little involvement in work-based learning and most have a poor understanding of the NVQ requirements or their responsibilities to trainees. Key skills are not integrated into the training programme. Classroom sessions are used to generate evidence for key skills under simulated conditions. Trainees' individual requirements for key skills training are not identified. Trainees do not know what is required of them to meet the key skills standards. Retention and achievement rates are poor. Approximately 70 per cent of trainees who start training in care and 60 per cent of trainees who start training in childcare leave without a qualification. About one trainee in four achieves an NVQ. No trainee has completed a modern apprenticeship or national traineeship. The college is unable to provide reliable data on retention and achievement rates.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

24. City College has a well-publicised and -established equal opportunities policy. Student handbooks, provided during induction to the college, refer to the equal opportunities policy. Information about complaints procedures and copies of the equal opportunities policy are available to staff, students and trainees in a variety of formats. City College collects and analyses data by age, disability, gender and ethnicity. Minority ethnic groups represent less than 1 per cent of the population for Norfolk and Waveney. Student services provides information, advice and counselling for trainees on a range of issues including social, health, financial,

rights and entitlements. There are additional support services for trainees with learning difficulties. Most college facilities are accessible for trainees with mobility difficulties and those with other physical disabilities. There is a range of resources for people with visual and hearing impairments. Work-placement providers sign an agreement which requires them to conform to the City College equal opportunities policy. The marketing department monitors the quality of promotional material. Inspectors agreed with the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report and identified further strengths and weaknesses. They awarded a lower grade than that given by the college in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective initiatives towards inclusive learning
- ◆ good promotion of training opportunities to under-represented groups
- ◆ high level of trainees on other training programmes from minority ethnic groups

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor understanding of equal opportunities issues by trainees
- ◆ no promotion of equal opportunities to employers or monitoring of employers' practices
- ◆ inadequate staff training in equal opportunities

POOR PRACTICE

One trainee was subjected to occasional verbal abuse from a colleague in the workplace and this was not detected by the college for some time.

The trainee, having been subjected to the verbal abuse for between nine and 12 months, finally informed his employer, who relocated the trainee within the workplace and allocated him a mentor.

This relocation affected the trainee's NVQ programme slightly. It was only at this point that the employment liaison officer and the college became aware of this situation.

25. The college's equal opportunities strategy group has launched a new 'inclusive learning initiative'. The initiative is designed to raise staff's awareness of trainees' individual learning needs, and to develop and share good practice. Flexible learning approaches and access are being increasingly developed and a variety of approaches are being used with trainees. A wide range of learning aids and materials are available to trainees with diverse needs, for example those with visual and hearing impairments. Although it is not yet common practice, teachers are being encouraged, through staff training sessions, to be more alert to the needs of trainees who have mental health problems. There is good access to most facilities in the college. Car parking for trainees with disabilities is arranged on an individual basis. There is a wide range of publicity material which promotes diversity in a positive way. There are a number of staff and trainees working and training in occupational areas which challenge gender stereotypes and provide good role models. For example, there are female lecturers in plumbing and furniture making, two female trainees in construction and two male trainees in care. The college has established collaborative partnerships with external organisations and businesses which promote learning opportunities to under-represented groups. Trainees from minority ethnic groups are well represented on other training programmes. Six per cent of trainees on other training programmes are from minority ethnic groups.

26. Most trainees have little understanding of the principles of equal opportunities or of the policies and procedures applicable to themselves and others. Although they have undergone induction, trainees have little understanding of their

employment rights or the assessment appeals procedure. Employment liaison officers do not actively promote equal opportunities to employers or monitor employers' equal opportunities practices. Although most employers have an equal opportunities policy, a small number do not. Staff are not aware of their responsibilities for promoting awareness and monitoring employers' compliance with legislation. Inadequate consideration of equal opportunities issues is given during reviews. Although some staff training is given to raise staff's awareness and competence relating to equal opportunities legislation and practice, this is still insufficient. Some staff are not adequately trained to fulfil the equal opportunities aspect of their job. This has been recognised by the college, which recently recommended that equal opportunities training should be mandatory for all staff.

Trainee support

Grade 3

27. Trainees are recruited either through the careers service, employers or by direct application. They are interviewed and given an assessment test. Those trainees, whose initial assessment test indicates a need for additional support, are offered a basic skills assessment. Other trainees may take a key skills diagnostic test. Trainees who are unsure of which occupation to follow are able to sample training in a variety of occupational areas. The college has a specialist centre for trainees who require additional learning support. Advice on occupational training and NVQs is given to all applicants before being offered a place. Those applicants who accept a place on an NVQ programme are allocated an employment liaison officer. The employment liaison officer is the main link between the employer, college tutors, workplace assessors and the trainee. The employment liaison officer processes the trainees' individual training plan, provides an induction to the NVQ process and outlines the roles and responsibilities of the trainee. There is a ratio of approximately 50 trainees to each of the employment liaison officers. College tutors carry out trainees' induction to the individual training programme. The employment liaison officer visits trainees in the workplace every 12 weeks in order to provide pastoral support, develop their awareness of equality of opportunity and monitor their progress towards achieving the NVQ. Although employers or work-placement providers carry out trainees' induction in the workplace, this is not monitored. There are currently four staff who hold qualifications in the accreditation of prior learning. City College's self-assessment report contained one strength which inspectors considered to be no more than a basic statement of intent, and one weakness. Inspectors identified further strengths and weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide range of resources to support trainees' needs
- ◆ specialised centre for trainees with learning difficulties
- ◆ most trainees employed

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficiently rigorous progress reviews
- ◆ little accreditation of trainees' prior learning
- ◆ ineffective induction

28. The college has comprehensive learning resources which are available to all trainees. Trainees are initially assessed at the interview stage and those requiring additional learning support are identified. There are timetabled support sessions for trainees to attend during their time at the college. Learning support materials are varied and of good quality. They cover literacy, numeracy, dyslexia and key skills. The learning materials are available in large print, colour, Braille and computer-based software. There are also materials to help programme tutors to recognise and work with trainees requiring learning support. The learning materials and personal support are located within the college's library complex. The support available is publicised using a range of posters in all college buildings. Job vacancies are posted throughout the college. The student services division in the college offers careers advice as well as additional support for social assistance.

29. The college has a separate training workshop which is dedicated to students and trainees who require additional learning support. The workshop is located away from the college's main campus and has facilities for a range of occupational skills. Trainees requiring literacy and numeracy support are well catered for during their occupational training and assessment on NVQ level 1 programmes. Those trainees who have not decided which NVQ route to take can sample different occupational trade areas. Trainees at the training workshop are placed with companies which are supportive of their learning and social needs. Many national trainees and trainees on other work-based training programmes are employed. A number of trainees requiring additional learning support have been employed by their work-placement provider on completion of their level 1 training programme. A number of these trainees have progressed to NVQ level 2.

30. Most reviews are not sufficiently thorough and lack detail. Some employment liaison officers are not occupationally qualified in the areas that they are reviewing. They are not always familiar with the detailed requirements of the trainees' NVQs. Employers are not involved in reviews. Individual training plans are not always updated when projected completion dates are changed as a result of a review. Trainees' prior experience and qualifications are rarely taken into account during initial assessment or when preparing trainees' individual training plans. The college has identified this weakness in its self-assessment report and has arranged training in the accreditation of prior achievement for four members of staff. Trainees' induction is ineffective. Trainees are unable to recall specific details or relate the induction to their NVQ programme. Most trainees are unable to clearly recall the NVQ appeals procedure, equality of opportunity issues and the grievance procedures covered in the induction programme. The occupational induction by college tutors is combined with the NVQ programme at the start of

the college academic year. Trainees starting training at other times of the year do not receive this induction.

Management of training

Grade 3

31. City College has a strategic plan and a clearly identified management structure. The RAC within the learning support services of the college has overall responsibility for work-based training for young people. This centre has a designated manager supported by an employment liaison co-ordinator and a team of one lecturer and seven employment liaison officers, some of whom are part time. Two of the employment liaison officers are also part-time lecturers. The training centre manager, the lecturer and one of the employment liaison officers are qualified as assessors, internal verifiers and in the assessment of prior learning and achievement. Another three of the employment liaison officers are qualified assessors. The one full-time and both part-time lecturers hold teaching or training qualifications. An administration co-ordinator and two administration assistants provide support for the area. The employment liaison officers are responsible for establishing links with local companies, finding work placements for trainees and carrying out trainees' progress reviews. Responsibility for training, assessment and internal verification rests with the managers of the curriculum centres within the college. The curriculum centre managers report directly to an assistant principal of the college. Staff have an annual appraisal and a personal development plan. The college was re-accredited with the Investors in People Standard in March of this year. Management information is held in a variety of formats on different information systems. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the college in its self-assessment report. They identified additional strengths and weaknesses and awarded the same grade as that given.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective staff recruitment, appraisal and development
- ◆ good internal communications
- ◆ good links with external agencies

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ◆ ineffective management information system

32. City College has effective procedures for the recruitment, appraisal and development of staff. Recruitment procedures, whether for internal or external appointments, are comprehensive, consistent across the college and well recorded. The recruitment and selection process is closely monitored. New staff have an induction to the college which covers the staff appraisal and development process. All staff are subject to appraisal and personal development plans have recently been introduced. The college's procedures require staff to undertake a self-assessment of their performance as a context for appraisal. Appraisals are normally

carried out by an individual's line manager but academic staff can elect to be appraised by another member of staff who is not their line manager. Staff have clear job descriptions which identify their roles and responsibilities. These are well understood by staff and form part of the appraisal process. Observation of teaching has been introduced but is not part of the appraisal process for teaching staff.

33. The college has clear, identified lines of communication. A manager's forum, consisting of the college's senior management team, heads of curriculum and head of support services, are responsible for the implementation of the college's strategy and policies. Curriculum centres are responsible for training and assessment on the programmes. There are regular team meetings within the RAC. Employment liaison officers also meet at regular intervals. All meetings are well recorded. Meetings between curriculum programme managers and employment liaison officers are held twice each term. These concentrate primarily on the progress of trainees. There is good communication between staff and effective use of electronic mailing. Employment liaison officers can attend meetings of the curriculum teams as and when appropriate. The RAC has well-developed links with external agencies. Regular contact is maintained with careers centres which are important sources of referrals. A network has been established with other training providers through Norfolk and Waveney TEC. Employment liaison officers have well-developed links with local industry through the placements that they have already established. Frequent attendance at school and other careers events is used to help to further improve the links with the local community.

34. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is inadequate. For example, in care, some trainees are assessed before they have had the off-the-job training to provide the necessary background knowledge to the NVQ competency being assessed. Employers are not involved in designing training programmes for their trainees. Learning in the workplace is often not planned and is negotiated by the trainee with workplace supervisors, without formal recognition by the college. Connections between on- and off-the-job training are rarely made during reviews. Employers are not always involved in the review process and are often unaware of their trainees' current off-the-job training programmes or the requirements of the NVQ programme. There is little direct contact between the staff in the curriculum centres who are carrying out the off-the-job training and assessment and employers, and staff in the curriculum centres are often unaware of the training being given in the workplace. There is communication between staff in the curriculum centres and those in the RAC who visit trainees in the workplace, but information on trainees' progress and achievement is held within the curriculum centres and is not well communicated. This has been recognised by the college and improvements are planned for the next academic year. The RAC has attempted to involve employers more in the training process but has had a poor response. Management information is inadequate to effectively guide management decisions. For example, data for government-funded programmes are inaccurate and unreliable. This has been recognised by the college. A new management information system, which will allow closer monitoring and analysis of trainees' progress at an individual level, is being implemented.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

35. The college has a written quality assurance policy and procedures which apply across the college and include work-based training. Responsibility for implementing these measures lies with the quality systems manager. The college is accredited to the ISO 9002 quality standard. There are no procedures covering quality assurance for trainees in the workplace. City College's staff carry out annual audits of the implementation of the procedures. All training staff are observed during training sessions. City College's managers have written agreements with employers and work-placement providers which cover the roles and responsibilities of both parties regarding trainees and their training. Qualified college staff carry out internal verification satisfactorily across all occupational areas. The college's quality systems manager monitors external verifiers' reports, taking action as necessary. The views of trainees, employers and staff on the training programmes are sought regularly. Staff from both the RAC and the curriculum areas were involved in the self-assessment process and the preparation of the report. The self-assessment report provides an accurate summary of quality assurance for work-based training. Inspectors agreed with the grade given by the college.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective self-assessment process
- ◆ regular collection and use of the views of trainees, staff and employers

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient monitoring of quality of training in the workplace
- ◆ few performance targets set

36. There is insufficient direct monitoring of the quality of training in the workplace. Employers are not involved in many quality assurance activities. The employment liaison officers do not regularly monitor the implementation of the employer's agreement during their scheduled visits. Few performance criteria are set. The college uses some basic performance information provided by Norfolk and Waveney TEC for each occupational area as a means of comparing its performance with that of other training providers. There are no targets for the successful completion of training or achievement of qualifications. There is no effective use of targets for individual trainees to encourage them to progress and to achieve their qualification. There is no monitoring of the length of time spent on training programmes.

37. The self-assessment report is self-critical and thorough. Collection of evidence is also thorough, and includes the observation of teaching. There has been careful evaluation of the evidence. Accurate judgements have been made. Staff view self-assessment as a means of achieving continuous improvement. Including many of those identified. The action plan resulting from self-assessment is realistic and is being implemented. There is regular collection and evaluation of trainees,



employers and staff's views concerning the effectiveness of work-based training. The views of a small sample of trainees are collected, together with those from other students at the college. The college has also devised its own system for obtaining information from trainees and employers based on the computer analysis of responses to standard questionnaires. Staff are encouraged to give their views to their managers at any time on an informal basis and more formally at their annual review.