



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT OCTOBER 2000

Carillon Training Loughborough

SUMMARY

Carillon Training provides good training in engineering, with a wide range of learning opportunities, but there is insufficient involvement of employers in the qualification process. Business administration offers flexibility in training and good achievement rates, with some missed opportunities for assessment. Hospitality training is well planned but there is no work-based assessment. Hair and beauty training is good, benefiting from a strong training partnership but assessment in the workplace is not satisfactory. Health, care and public services (childcare) is a flexible programme and has good retention rates, but there is insufficient integration of key skills into training. Equal opportunities issues are a priority. There is a wide range of equal opportunities activities and effective use of analysis of data. There is insufficient effort to encourage men and women into non-traditional roles. Trainees receive good support for identified training needs and regular contact with trainers. Initial assessment is weak. Management of training is satisfactory and there are strong links between Carillon Training and the subcontractors but systems for gathering data are inadequate. Quality assurance standards are satisfactory. Information is collected and used effectively. There is insufficient planning to standardise work-based training.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Engineering	2
Business administration	2
Hospitality	3
Hair & beauty	2
Health, care & public services	3

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	2
Trainee support	2
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good range of workplaces
- ◆ flexible training programmes
- ◆ effectively planned off-the-job training programmes
- ◆ good range of equal opportunities initiatives
- ◆ frequent visits to the workplace by trainers
- ◆ highly effective communications network
- ◆ particularly good analysis of quality assurance data

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient work-based assessment
- ◆ late introduction of key skills training
- ◆ insufficient data on current achievement
- ◆ no overall quality assurance plan for work-based training

INTRODUCTION

1. Carillon Training (CT) is situated on the campus of Loughborough College. It is part of the new enterprise department of Loughborough College and is managed by the college's corporate development directorate. Since it started in October 1991, CT has contracted with Leicestershire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) to give work-based training to young people. CT offers training in construction, manufacturing, engineering, business administration, retailing and customer service, hospitality, hair and beauty, and care. CT has one training manager and six full- and part-time training and assessment officers, and uses two national vocational qualification (NVQ) assessors as subcontractors. There are 123 trainees on government-funded training programmes. The occupational areas of construction, manufacturing and retailing and customer service did not have sufficient trainees for inspection purposes and these areas were not reported on. Training is carried out in work placements and in five colleges of further education on a subcontractual basis. Loughborough College carries out most of the off-the-job training.

2. Loughborough is in the Borough of Charnwood, which has a population of approximately 160,000. The manufacturing sector is the largest employer, together with public administration, education and health. Warehousing and distribution is a growth area due to the central location and access to motorway links. The unemployment rate in the borough is 3.2 per cent, against a national average of 3.5 per cent. Minority ethnic groups make up 6.3 per cent of Charnwood Borough's population. Three per cent of 16 year olds enter work-based training in the Leicestershire area. In 1999, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 48.3 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

3. CT has been involved in the self-assessment process for three years. Originally, self-assessment reports were based on the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) model. Following guidance from the local TEC, the latest self-assessment report was drawn up using the guidelines in *Raising the Standard*. CT's staff were involved in the self-assessment report, and the training manager produced the final document. It gave inspectors a useful basis for the inspection. The report's descriptions of training in both occupational and generic areas were thorough. Grades were found to be accurate in five areas and lower grades were awarded in four areas.

4. In October 2000, a team of seven inspectors spent a total of 28 days at CT. The occupational areas of engineering, business administration, hospitality, hair and beauty and health, care and public services were inspected. As there were only eight trainees on the construction, manufacturing and retailing and customer service training programmes, these areas were not inspected. A total of 59 interviews took place with trainees, along with 25 interviews with employers and workplace supervisors. Twenty interviews took place with CT's staff, and 34 subcontractors were also interviewed. Trainees' portfolios and personal files were examined along with information held by the TEC and the awarding body and other paperwork held by CT. A total of nine training sessions were observed as well as six trainees' progress reviews and three NVQ assessments.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Engineering			1			1
Business administration			1			1
Hospitality			3			3
Hair & beauty		1	1			2
Health, care & public services		2				2
Total		3	6			9

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Engineering

Grade 2

5. There are 43 trainees undergoing engineering training. Fourteen of these trainees are foundation modern apprentices, two are national trainees and 27 are advanced modern apprentices. Trainees start their training on the foundation modern apprentice programme. Initially they work towards an engineering

manufacturing foundation NVQ at level 2, and they work towards other NVQs at level 2. At present, there are four trainees who are working towards NVQs at level 2 in engineering maintenance, nine who are working towards NVQs at level 2 in production engineering and four who are working towards motor vehicle mechanical and electrical systems qualifications. Three trainees are working towards NVQs at level 3 in engineering maintenance, 19 are working towards engineering production NVQs and one is working towards the motor vehicle finishing NVQ. The remaining three trainees are working towards three qualifications in technical services. Loughborough College, to which CT subcontracts, carries out the training for all level 2 NVQ units. Other local colleges are subcontracted to provide the training for the motor vehicle NVQ. All trainees attend college on a day-release basis for NVQ portfolio-building and theoretical knowledge. Many trainees work towards various academic qualifications to add to their NVQ training. College staff carry out all assessment for level 2 NVQ engineering foundation training. CT's staff assess other level 2 NVQs in the workplace. After satisfactory completion of their NVQ at level 2, trainees have the opportunity to transfer to advanced modern apprenticeships, where they extend their level 2 NVQ training to level 3 training in their individual vocational areas. All level 3 NVQ assessments are carried out using work-based evidence. The progress of trainees towards their NVQs is reviewed at eight-weekly intervals by the staff at CT. These progress reviews take place in the workplace for all NVQs, at level 2 and at level 3. All trainees are employed. In total, 25 companies are involved in work-based training. Over the past three years, 80 trainees began training, and 52 of these are still in training. Of the 28 who have left the programme, 23 achieved an NVQ. This is a retention rate of 95 per cent and an achievement rate of 82 per cent. The self-assessment report identified four strengths and four weaknesses in this area. The identified strengths and two of the weaknesses were either considered to be no more than normal practice or recognised as more appropriate to the generic areas. Inspectors identified four additional strengths and agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ wide range of workplace learning opportunities
- ◆ frequent assessment opportunities
- ◆ effective systems for monitoring trainees' progress
- ◆ good trainees' retention and achievement rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient involvement by employers in the NVQ process
- ◆ inadequate knowledge among trainees of key skills

6. Work-based training is provided by the various employers, who usually specialise in production, manufacturing or motor vehicle engineering. One internationally recognised company employs 11 of the 43 trainees, and, in common

with all the other companies involved, offers a wide range of learning opportunities using modern engineering equipment. Many of these companies manufacture high quality products for prestige markets. Every employer offers a range of experiences, from basic operations to highly complex tasks. The quality of the training facilities in the college's workshops is adequate to meet the requirements of NVQs at level 2.

7. CT's training officers are occupationally competent and accredited assessors. The two assessors are also accredited to act as internal verifiers. Each training officer acts as internal verifier to the other. There are also subcontracted assessors who visit trainees regularly. This means that trainees have an assessor's visit every four weeks and a progress review every eight weeks. If the assessor has more than one trainee in a company, they are visited more frequently. In one case, this assessment visit occurs every week. Training officers will also visit a company if requested to do so by a trainee. The combined result of these visits is, effectively, assessment on demand.

8. The training officers have a simple but highly effective monitoring system of trainees' progress. There is a graph chart on the office wall. It shows the names of trainees and the NVQ which each trainee is working towards. It shows the NVQ units completed and those to be done. It gives details of actual and planned visits by assessors and planned sampling visits by the internal verifier. Finally, it shows which NVQs have been achieved. All of the staff at CT are able to see at a glance all the details relating to the trainees' progress even if the relevant training officer is not present. Of the 43 trainees who began level 2 NVQ foundation training over the past three years, only two left the programme early, a retention rate of 95 per cent.

9. There is a detailed work-based assessment procedure, which covers registration, the keeping of records and other items relating to trainees as they work towards their NVQs. The procedure also includes guidelines for work-based assessment, as well as the responsibilities of internal verifiers. The whole process has been designed and produced by CT's engineering training officers and has also involved several subcontracted assessors.

10. Many trainees work towards additional qualifications. These range from additional NVQ units and specialised computing courses to related academic courses. In this way, some trainees are able to progress from craftsman courses to technician courses, while others are working towards computer-aided design qualifications or nationally recognised supervisory management certificate qualifications.

11. Workplace supervisors have little understanding of the NVQ process. While supervisors are present with the trainees and the training officer during most progress reviews, most of them do not consider themselves as part of the NVQ process. They see CT's role as looking after the NVQ, their role being to provide practical training. It is assumed by employers that the work done by trainees will in some way be relevant to the NVQ programme. There is insufficient planning of

training in the workplace to fulfil NVQ requirements.

12. Trainees have insufficient understanding of key skills and, in many cases, trainees are not aware that they have to develop key skills even though they have completed their NVQ foundation training. For example, a subcontracted assessor had informed some trainees that key skills would be drawn from their level 3 NVQ portfolios once completed and specific attention would then be given to any shortfalls identified by this exercise. In motor vehicle engineering, key skills are not integrated into the NVQ programme. Engineering foundation training is only offered in mechanical or fabrication vocational areas. Consequently, the minority of trainees employed in an electrical vocational area receive no electrical training at foundation level. This situation has been recognised by CT, which is arranging additional training.

Business administration

Grade 2

13. CT provides business administration training in the three areas of accounting NVQs at levels 2 to 4, administration and information technology NVQs at levels 2 and 3. There are 28 trainees following these training programmes. Three trainees are following information technology programmes, 15 are on accounts courses and 10 are taking business administration training. The trainees apply to CT either as a result of personal recommendation or advertisements or are referred by the careers service. All trainees take a literacy and numeracy basic skills test. They have a half-day induction during which the paperwork required by the TEC is completed and CT's policies, including health and safety and equal opportunities, are explained. A variety of work placements are used, including various departments in the college, small family businesses, health farms and national freight companies. Over 90 per cent of the trainees are employed. The accounting trainees attend the college on day release for their off-the-job training. Most of the administration trainees have a half day's off-the-job training in the college, while the remaining administration trainees train solely in the workplace. One information technology trainee has his training subcontracted to another college which offers a specialist NVQ, while the others are fully trained in the workplace. The responsibility for all the assessment, internal verification and certification is subcontracted to the colleges in the case of the accounting and information technology trainees. There are three training officers, one of whom is occupationally experienced, and one subcontracted assessor for the administration area. Internal verification is done by the college. The training officers review the trainees' progress every six to eight weeks in the workplace. Including all business administration areas, the retention rate among trainees has increased over the past three years from 20 per cent in 1997-98 to 75 per cent in 1999-2000. Over the same period, 58 per cent of trainees have achieved all the objectives of their individual training plans. The self-assessment report identified four strengths, of which two were agreed with by inspectors and two were identified as no more than normal practice. The report identified four weaknesses, one of which the inspectors agreed with. Two of the other weaknesses were not found by inspectors, and one was identified as more appropriate to a generic aspect of the training.

Inspectors also identified one other strength, relating to well-planned progression by trainees, and one other weakness, and agreed with the overall grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ flexible training programmes
- ◆ well-planned progression by trainees
- ◆ good rate of achievement in awarding bodies' external examinations
- ◆ improved retention rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient work-based assessment
- ◆ inexperienced training officers

GOOD PRACTICE

All training sessions are prepared on computer software. Copies of all slides and notes are prepared as handouts for trainees in class and are posted to the college intranet system to ensure that any trainee who misses a session can access the materials used in that week.

14. The off-the-job training in accounting is on a modular basis, with two modules running at any one time. Each module lasts for two days and is offered three times a week. Training sessions are held on either a morning, afternoon or evening basis. Trainees choose which session to attend. If they miss a session because of illness or work pressures they can catch up by taking the module at another time, as they are all issued with a complete programme. The administration trainees choose between training in the workplace and a half-day-release option at college. Some trainees feel that they would benefit from more off-the-job training. The flexibility of the training sessions allows trainees to attend off-the-job training at a suitable time for both themselves and their employers. This helps attendance rates.

15. Trainees' progression is well planned, beginning with an individual training plan to decide long term career objectives. Accounts trainees' individual training plans show progression through two or three levels of the qualification up to NVQ at level 4. Of the 20 trainees who have started on accounts training in the past three years, two left without achieving an NVQ, while one left with an NVQ at level 2 and one left after gaining NVQs at levels 2 and 3. Six trainees have achieved NVQs at level 4 and there are currently four trainees working towards this level. The remaining six are training for the level 3 NVQ. Trainees who achieve NVQs at level 4 are encouraged to progress to the professional accounting qualifications. For administration trainees, planned progression includes achievement of other qualifications relevant to their individual jobs. These include NVQs in customer service or information technology. These planned progression routes are effective in that they motivate trainees towards clearly defined targets. As they achieve their qualifications, their confidence in using their skills increases.

16. There is a high level of achievement in the awarding body's external examinations. Centralised external examinations are held twice a year and CT's trainees consistently achieve at a rate above the national average. At the last examination, CT's achievement rate for an NVQ at level 4 unit was 100 per cent,

compared with the national average of 64 per cent. The awarding body recognises this achievement. Such consistent success in external examinations not only motivates trainees and staff, but also gives potential trainees full confidence in the training being offered by the organisation.

17. There is insufficient work-based assessment throughout all the training programmes. Until four months ago, all administration and information technology trainees were assessed in the workplace three times each year, on average. There is no work-based assessment for accounts trainees. However, CT has recently subcontracted the assessment of the administration NVQ. The assessor is contracted to assess all administration trainees every two weeks. This has not yet had time to affect the training programme, and many trainees have had only one, introductory visit so far. The lack of work-based assessment slows the rate at which trainees progress through their qualifications.

18. Opportunities are missed, not only for assessment, but also to support the trainees as they progress through their NVQs. This is due to the fact that although training officers have good working relationships with the trainees and visit them frequently in the workplace, they do not have the relevant experience or specific knowledge of the occupational area or the NVQs appropriate to it. For example, a trainee asking a specific question of the training officer may or may not get an answer until later in the day. Assessment and evidence-gathering opportunities are therefore frequently missed, particularly in accounting. Training officers cannot help the trainees to identify NVQ evidence from the day-to-day activities in their workplace. Not all trainees have individual tutorial support in the off-the-job training to support their studies. These missed opportunities slow progress towards achievement, and the slow response to queries discourages trainees. In administration, key skills are taught within the framework of the occupational area but only at the end of the NVQ. In the accounting programme, the key skills are taught at the end of the course, but are not related to the NVQ or the occupational area. With information technology, key skills sessions are not fully integrated into this programme. Although related to the occupational area, this late integration of key skills teaching is considered to be a weakness in the management of training.

Hospitality

Grade 3

19. There are 12 trainees in hospitality. Four are national trainees, two are foundation modern apprentices and six are modern apprentices. Eleven trainees are working towards NVQs at level 2 or level 3 in food preparation and cooking. One trainee is following the on-licensed-premises route. Trainees are encouraged to take additional qualifications to the hospitality NVQs. All of the trainees are employed. They usually attend college for one day or evening each week for off-the-job training and portfolio-building and spend four days a week in the workplace. Training and assessment are carried out in the college's training kitchen and licensed restaurant by qualified staff, and internal verification procedures are part of the college's quality assurance system. Fifteen trainees have started training over the past three years, 10 of whom are still in training. Modern

apprentices still in training who started in 1998-99 are not expected to achieve their NVQ at level 2 until 2000-01, and their level 3 until approximately 18 months to two years after that. Inspectors agreed with one of the strengths, relating to the close relationships between all working partners, and both of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Inspectors also identified additional strengths and another weakness. The grade awarded by inspectors was lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ particularly well-planned off-the-job training
- ◆ good quality and range of work placements
- ◆ good level of trainees' understanding of the NVQ process
- ◆ strong links between all working partners

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no work-based assessment
- ◆ insufficient consideration of individual needs in training plans
- ◆ inadequate training resources

20. Off-the-job training is effectively planned. There are comprehensive training programmes which cover the academic year, from September to September. Trainees are clear at the beginning of every practical training session what is expected of them in terms of allocated tasks and the required level to be achieved. Menus are developed which take account of the individual assessment requirements of the trainees. Trainees work in integrated groups and, where possible, are linked with other trainees who are further advanced than themselves. This provides the opportunity for trainees to experience mentoring, as well as giving them the chance to gain some experience of supervision. Trainees are adequately supervised and receive practical training, coaching and feedback throughout the sessions. This applies to both kitchen and front-of-house training. The quality of training is satisfactory.

21. All hospitality teaching staff are particularly well qualified in terms of their years of industry experience, and teaching and training qualifications. They update their knowledge of the industry by attending trade fairs and continue their professional development through training programmes, for example in cellar management and the national licensee certificate. Trainees are offered a wide range of work placements which includes hotels, restaurants, public houses, hospitality facilities at universities and high-quality contract catering operations. Employers are supportive of trainees' personal development and many take a keen interest in the progress of the trainees. For example, some employers have altered their menu planning to accommodate the training needs of their trainees. Most work placements provide opportunities for the main units of the NVQ to be practised in the workplace. Trainees have a good understanding of their

programme, and the key skills involved. Many trainees are highly motivated and are keen to achieve, even when some work is required to be done in their own time. Retention rates are good, with 85 per cent of trainees remaining on the training programme.

22. There are strong relationships between the workplace supervisors and CT's staff. College tutors and CT's trainers work as a team, emphasising the interests and needs of the trainees. Tutors and trainees have a mutual respect, and a good rapport. Trainees also work as a team and support each other in practical training situations. There is regular open communication between all concerned. Trainers play a central role in this partnership approach.

23. There is no work-based assessment in the hospitality sector. All assessment takes place off the job at the college. These assessments take place either in the training kitchen or in the restaurant kitchen, when it is operating as a realistic working environment. For some trainees this means that there are missed opportunities for assessment and consequently achievement of the NVQ takes longer than is necessary. Some trainees' progress is slowed because units selected for the training plans are based on the training which the colleges can deliver, rather than taking into account trainees' experience in the workplace. Trainees are expected to take two years to achieve an NVQ at level 2 or 3, regardless of experience gained in the workplace, and there are no arrangements for trainees to progress more quickly.

24. The resources available to the trainees are inadequate and outdated. Some of the simulated training environments are not up to industry standards. The makeshift cellar for the bar service NVQ is one example. Trainees often have to substitute menu items and ingredients because there are insufficient supplies for all the trainees attending a practical session. Groups of trainees are often too large for the available facilities.

Hair & beauty

Grade 2

25. There are nine trainees on the hairdressing programmes and two on CT's beauty therapy programme. All are working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3. Six of these trainees are working towards a hairdressing foundation modern apprenticeship, three of them are working towards a hairdressing national traineeship and the two beauty therapy trainees are working towards a beauty therapy NVQ at level 2. All trainees are employed in a variety of hairdressing and beauty therapy establishments. These include a health farm and various privately owned small and large salons around the local area. All trainees attend college for off-the-job training and assessment once a week. CT has three trainers and assessors for this sector. Their main role is to visit trainees in the workplace every eight weeks to review progress. CT's trainers and assessors are not occupational experts and do not give training or assessment. This is done by the college. The employers and supervisors take part in the progress-review process and also support the development of trainees' practical skills. Over the past three years, the

retention rate of trainees on the programme has been 65 per cent, and 55 per cent of the trainees achieved an NVQ. The self-assessment report identified three strengths, two of which were agreed with by the inspectors, and one of which was seen as a weakness. Inspectors agreed with the weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Inspectors also identified three additional strengths, including one relating to the trainees' good level of understanding of the NVQ process, and two additional weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good level of trainees' understanding of the NVQ process
- ◆ strong training partnerships
- ◆ particularly good learning facilities and resources

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate assessment practice in the workplace
- ◆ failure to individualise training plans

GOOD PRACTICE

The learning packages have been designed to help people with dyslexia and contain a variety of activities to test knowledge such as labelling diagrams, multiple-choice questions and quizzes.

26. The trainees are well supported by staff in the workplace, and have a clear understanding of the NVQ and what is expected of them. They are given a variety of opportunities to develop their skills and interests. For example, one trainee working at a health farm has been given the opportunity to attend specialised training courses for massage and facials. Hairdressing trainees have attended manufacturers' courses. The trainees are highly motivated and make good progress in learning practical skills. They can assess their own progress by referring to the monitoring sheets in their portfolios, which are completed and kept up to date by both the trainee and the college's staff. The trainees understand the purpose of their portfolios, which are well documented and include photographs of the trainees' work.

27. The working partnership between training staff, CT's staff, assessors, trainees and employers is good. CT's trainers and assessors visit salons every eight weeks to review trainees' progress. The trainee and the employer or supervisor are present at these meetings. CT's staff also give good pastoral support. They respond promptly to any requests from the trainee or employer.

28. Qualified hairdressing assessors from the subcontracted college carry out assessments in the workplace. All assessors have excellent vocational qualifications and commercial experience and attend technical training courses regularly. Most assessors still work in the hair and beauty industry. Trainees work in a variety of well-resourced establishments, which vary in size. Most are well equipped with modern facilities and have a good range of products. Most trainees have frequent opportunities to practise new skills on clients, as well as working alongside senior staff when carrying out salon duties. The college's hairdressing

and beauty therapy salons are equipped to a high standard. One of the hairdressing salons has a stage area where shows can take place and where level 3 NVQ trainees can demonstrate parts of their training programme. There is an excellent display of career route options available to both hairdressers and beauty therapists in the college's training department. There are also photographs displaying the winners and runners-up for the trainee-of-the-year awards for both part-time and full-time trainees. A range of learning resources is available to trainees, which includes textbooks, videos and well-designed learning packages.

29. CT's trainers and assessors frequently liaise with the college to discuss trainees' progress and any relevant issues. Assessments are planned, agreed and recorded both off and on the job, and feedback is given after each assessment. However, assessment in the workplace is not always provided regularly. The usual number of visits is eight each year. Trainees are given two weeks' notice of when the assessor is to visit the salon. As part of the college's hairdressing department's policy, two formative assessments must be recorded before a summative assessment is carried out. For trainees in the workplace who are practising their technical skills on a day-to-day basis, being assessed on basic techniques such as shampooing in three stages is slowing down their progress. Staff at the salons take part in the assessment process only to provide witness testimonies. Their experience of NVQ work, training and development is not used. There is no work-based assessment for trainees on the beauty therapy programme. In hairdressing, most trainees have a good understanding of the key skills requirements of their programmes, although they do not always know how to achieve them. Relevant assignments exist for most of the key skills, but they are not integrated into the hairdressing programme and are often taught separately at the end of the course.

30. Trainees attend college either one day a week or two evenings a week for training and assessment. The training schedule is rigid and gives no opportunity to individualise training plans, or to allow trainees to progress at their own pace. The scheme does not take into account the training which takes place in the workplace. Action plans with short-term targets are agreed by the college's work-based assessor and the trainee during the assessor's visits to the salon. However, these action plans are held in the trainee's file at the college. There are no copies for the trainee, the employer or the trainer/assessor.

Grade 3

Health, care & public services

31. CT offers training and assessment for NVQs in early-years care and education at levels 2 and 3. There are 23 apprentices on the programme. In September 2000, six trainees joined the foundation modern apprentice training programme and eight joined as advanced modern apprentices. Five of the nine trainees who started their training in 1999 are still doing their advanced modern apprenticeship. The remaining four apprentices are on other training programmes. All apprentices are employed and work in nurseries caring for children aged from six months to school

age. There are various methods of recruitment to the programme. Most prospective trainees are referred to CT by their employers when it is clear that the person is willing to be training in this occupational area. Some employers approach CT for a trainee when there is a vacancy in their nursery. There are referrals from the college when work-based training has been identified as more appropriate for the person than a full-time course. All work placements are checked by CT's staff for safety and suitability for training. The relevant workplace manager interviews apprentices, gives them a tour of the nursery and explains nursery procedures. If the apprentice is employed, the nursery manager contracts with CT to follow its training policy. Some nurseries have after-school and holiday clubs, giving apprentices the opportunity to work with older children up to the age of eight years. Three strengths and two weaknesses were identified in the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with one of the strengths, relating to good retention rates, but considered two of the strengths to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors agreed with both of the weaknesses and gave the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good retention rates
- ◆ flexible training to suit trainees and employers' needs

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some poor assessment practice
- ◆ no integration of key skills into NVQ programmes

32. The retention rate of apprentices is good, at 83 per cent for apprentices who started training over the past three years. The retention rate for apprentices on the modern apprenticeship programme has been particularly good, with 80 per cent of these apprentices still in training. Over the three-year period, 72 per cent of apprentices have achieved an NVQ at level 2 and 68 per cent have achieved a level 3. The training officers at CT visit trainees every eight weeks in their work placements to review their progress and performance. Workplace supervisors contribute by commenting on the apprentices' work, timekeeping, and ability to work with others. The training managers offer good support to the trainees, and although they are not vocationally experienced, they do have experience of NVQ and work-based training and give apprentices good guidance on completing their NVQs. They also offer pastoral support to apprentices, using the college-based advisors for help with welfare benefits, housing and health care as necessary. Any concerns which the training managers, the apprentices or the workplace supervisors have about training, teaching or progress are discussed with the college's staff and these concerns are resolved as quickly as possible.

33. CT has suggested a day-release programme to employers, for off-the-job training. This has not been possible as employers cannot meet the legal requirements for staff-to-children ratios. Therefore, to accommodate training

needs, off-the-job training is provided one evening each week, with an additional evening for key skills training. Off-the-job training takes place in well-equipped rooms, dedicated to childcare. A wide range of up-to-date equipment for the care and healthy development of babies and children is available to trainees. Childcare facilities are available to apprentices if required. There are separate groups for first and second year apprentices working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3 respectively. A small group of apprentices are in their third year of training and have made little progress towards their NVQ, owing to some unsatisfactory assessment practices. Apprentices receive good support from occupationally experienced staff. During the summer holidays, an assessor visited them in the workplace to provide extra support in putting together their portfolios of evidence.

34. Basic skills are assessed by suitably qualified staff and, where necessary, staff and assessors give additional support in preparing written evidence. Although assessors are aware of alternative assessment methods, apprentices are asked to produce mainly written evidence for all units of the NVQ. Off-the-job training is given at two further education colleges by occupationally experienced teachers. Both of the training sessions observed by inspectors were good. Apprentices were given relevant information and took part in both large and small group activities. Sessions included activities such as completion of work sheets which are used as evidence in trainees' portfolios. The college's staff are also qualified to assess trainees and carry out assessment in the workplace. Direct observations in the workplace are recorded in detail and apprentices receive immediate verbal and written feedback on their performance during these observations. The college's staff inform CT on a weekly basis if apprentices do not attend the training sessions and give reports on their progress at the end of every term.

35. Internal verification is satisfactory and takes place three times a term. A newsletter, containing internal verification dates is distributed to all trainees. This gives apprentices time to submit their portfolios for verification. The facility for unit accreditation is also available if trainees have to leave the training provider. The verification process is fairly new, as the college only received accreditation from the awarding body in July 2000, but is adequate for the current training programme. However, there has been some unsatisfactory assessment practice which has slowed progress and the achievement of NVQ units. Some assessors have made excessive and repetitive demands on apprentices to produce evidence of their competence. This behaviour has been identified by the external verifier, who is working closely with the internal verifier to standardise assessment practice according to the awarding body's requirements. There is conflicting information given to trainees about the use of their prior learning and achievement. Some assessors make good use of written evidence of previous experience, while others ask trainees to repeat the work if it is appropriate to the NVQ. Prior achievement is identified during initial assessment and accredited to trainees by their assessor. Assessors and trainees make detailed plans for the assessment of each element or unit of the NVQ. These plans include activities and skills which assessors must observe in the workplace. However, many of the assessment plans did not include the date or time when assessors were due to visit, thereby giving trainees no record of when they would be observed at work.

36. Key skills are not integrated into workplace activities. Apprentices are given assignments to complete which relate to childcare, but not key skills. Because key skills are thought to be separate to their occupation, they are regarded by the apprentices as being difficult. Training for key skills takes place one evening a week at college. This extra evening in college is not popular with the apprentices. All apprentices have completed their key skills early, some after only six months into their training programme. But training being given separately from the main programme, has slowed progress with the NVQ. Both trainees and employers regard key skills as less important than the NVQ itself.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 2

37. CT uses Loughborough College's policy and procedures for equality of opportunity. These include information on recruitment, selection and all forms of discrimination. The policy is reviewed every year. The training manager of CT is responsible for promoting equal opportunities across all aspects of work-based training. Codes of practice and procedures for ensuring equal opportunities are thorough and meet legal and contractual requirements. Procedures describe standards for interviews, appraisals and job descriptions for both staff and trainees. Equality of opportunity is discussed during trainees' and staff inductions. A handbook is issued at this point which supports the discussion. Subcontractors must have their own equal opportunities policies and are aware of CT's standards in equal opportunities. A handbook is also issued to employers when trainees join a work placement. Data on equal opportunities are gathered at both the interview and recruitment stages and are regularly analysed. People from minority ethnic groups form 6.3 per cent of the local population. A complaints system is in place and all complaints are held in a central file. Inspectors agreed with the strength related to the range of initiatives to widen participation in the self-assessment report and found additional strengths. Inspectors did not agree with one of the two weaknesses in the self-assessment report. They did agree with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good recording and analysis of equal opportunities data
- ◆ wide range of initiatives to encourage recruitment

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ gender imbalance in some occupational areas

38. CT fully monitors applications, trainees starting programmes and achievements by gender, disability and ethnicity. As a result of this, CT identified

that 94 per cent of young people from minority ethnic groups in the county chose to enter full-time further education rather than work-based training. The organisation has raised this at Loughborough's training providers' forum. A small working group has been formed whose aim is to promote work-based training to the various minority ethnic communities, in schools and community groups. The manager of CT takes part in many local recruitment programmes. These involve good liaison with youth and community leaders. CT has also begun to produce information and marketing materials in a range of other languages. These are currently being translated and printed.

GOOD PRACTICE

The college has a multi-faith room, which can be accessed by all trainees. This room provides a quiet environment for prayer, which is used by people from many faiths. It is especially popular with people of the Muslim religion, as washing facilities with running water are provided. Informative publications about many religions are provided for trainees to read. Literature, including information about local places of worship and useful contacts, is also available.

39. CT's manager has attended many of the TEC's training events and shares the information with staff. One member of staff has a personnel qualification which includes employment and equal opportunities legislation. Newspaper and journal articles relating to equal opportunities are circulated to all staff to ensure that they are kept up to date with any new issues as they arise. Equality of opportunity is promoted in all paperwork at CT.

40. Service level agreements with employers and work-placement providers all refer to equality of opportunity. All prospective work-placement providers have to sign this and agree to protect the trainee and ensure equality of opportunity in the workplace. Most trainees have a good recall of equal opportunities training at induction. Trainees are aware of the grievance procedure, and there is a computerised system for recording complaints. This system gives trainees the opportunity to express their concerns anonymously. So far, the trainees at CT have not used this system, as there have been no formal complaints. Trainees tend to use their trainer to discuss their concerns. All complaints from trainees are dealt with swiftly and to the trainees' satisfaction. Feedback forms confirm this general satisfaction with the situation.

41. When the trainers review trainees' progress in the workplace, they include questions relating to harassment, bullying and unfair practices in a language which is easily understood by all trainees. All comments are recorded on the progress-review paperwork. CT monitors and evaluates trainees' satisfaction both during training and on completion of training. The college has easy access for trainees with restricted mobility and disabilities, facilities are provided within the premises to allow a degree of independence, and there are also signs in Braille for trainees with impaired vision. The subcontractors' premises visited by inspectors also provided good facilities for people with restricted mobility.

42. Despite CT's dedication to equal opportunities, there is a gender imbalance across several vocational areas, especially engineering, hospitality, hairdressing and childcare. There have been no applications from women for engineering training or from men for childcare training for several years. CT's staff attend careers events in schools, but no positive action is taken to try to remedy the gender imbalances. This weakness has been recognised by CT and there are plans to correct the situation, but no action has yet been taken.

Trainee support

Grade 2

43. CT receives referrals from the careers and guidance services, as well as direct requests from local employers and young people themselves. CT also carries out direct advertising and attends careers events. Some trainees approach CT looking for suitable employment with training opportunities and some employers use CT to help with their recruitment requirements. Most trainees are employed. They are interviewed by a member of CT's staff before enrolling on a training programme. A checklist is used to support the process. Every potential trainee has an initial assessment of their numeracy and literacy skills to assess their abilities before they start training. Training starts with an induction which is given by CT's trainers, usually on a one-to-one basis. Occasionally, inductions are given in small groups. Trainees are provided with a range of documents and handouts to support the induction. They also receive inductions for their NVQ programme from the relevant college curriculum area. Trainees are assigned a trainer whose responsibility it is to support them in their general progress and any personal difficulties which they may encounter during their training. All training staff are well-qualified and experienced in training and education. Inspectors agreed with the strengths identified in the self-assessment report and found additional strengths and weaknesses. The grade awarded is lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good support for recognised training needs
- ◆ frequent contact with trainers for trainees
- ◆ open access to all college facilities
- ◆ full funding of essential training materials and equipment
- ◆ good opportunities for trainees to achieve additional qualifications

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient detail and targets in some progress reviews
- ◆ inadequate initial assessment procedure

44. Good additional support is available for trainees who have identifiable additional training needs. This range of support includes specialised assessments, one-to-one tuition, additional tutorial support, drop-in centres and extra time for examinations and assessments. CT's staff negotiate and provide external support for trainees who require it. In one such case, a trainee with dyslexia achieved two modules of the NVQ at level 3, of which one was graded as a credit and the other as a distinction.

45. Trainees' progress reviews are conducted every six to eight weeks by trainers. This exceeds the TEC's requirement of one progress review every 13 weeks and

improves CT's ability to remedy training problems quickly. Trainers work closely with trainees and their employers to resolve difficulties. Trainers provide additional pastoral support to trainees who are threatened by redundancy and also to trainees who are having personal problems.

46. The trainees have access to all the facilities which are available to full-time students at the college. The college provides comprehensive learner support services which include guidance and careers counselling, job search, financial advice, help with housing difficulties and general information. In addition to these services, there is a day nursery at the college for trainees with children. Trainees who attend college part time and trainees who do not attend college at all are fully aware of the facilities available to them.

47. Trainees may require essential equipment to enable them to fully achieve the aims of their training plans. For example, in hospitality, knives, chefs' whites and textbooks are required. In hairdressing, uniforms, scissors and textbooks are essential, and in business administration and accounting, textbooks are also required. All essential training materials and equipment are provided by CT at no cost to the trainees.

48. All trainees have the opportunity to achieve additional qualifications which do not have to be related to their chosen occupational area. Many trainees have taken up this option and have either achieved or are working towards various qualifications in areas such as word-processing, text-processing, Italian cooking and supervisory management.

GOOD PRACTICE

All CT's trainees are given membership of the adjoining university's students' union as well as access to a wide range of the university's facilities and services. Trainees are aware of these facilities and value and make use of them.

49. Some of the paperwork for trainees' progress reviews, completed by trainers, workplace supervisors and trainees, has insufficient detail about trainees' achievements to date and agreed action for further development. As a result, situations often arise where further development action which has been agreed is not followed through at the next progress-review meeting.

50. Trainees' basic skills in numeracy and literacy are systematically assessed on entry to the programmes. However, occupational skills, knowledge and key skills initial assessments are not formally carried out with most of the trainees. CT is, however, in the process of implementing a key skills assessment, which is both computer based and paper based. The results of these tests will provide specific details on any additional help which trainees may need to develop their key skills. Although a positive step, this is a very recent initiative by CT.

Management of training

Grade 3

51. CT has recently relocated to Loughborough College's campus. The move has brought CT into closer contact with the college's curriculum areas. The college reporting structure also changed in August 2000, which resulted in CT becoming part of the enterprise department within corporate development. CT is managed by a training manager, who has a team of four full-time and two part-time trainers and assessors. The team is supported by two administrators. The organisation operates

in line with the policies, strategies and operational plans of the college and, as such, is part of the overall planning and target-setting process. The college has a management system which reports to the college executive. Training is provided by a range of further education colleges which operate under service level agreements with CT. CT's staff monitor training and trainees' progress in the trainees' workplaces as well as on the subcontractors' premises. Four strengths were identified in the self-assessment report, one of which was considered more appropriate to quality assurance. The others were considered by inspectors to be no more than normal practice. The one weakness identified by self-assessment did not affect the management of training. Inspectors found two additional strengths and two additional weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ particularly effective service level agreements
- ◆ good staff development programme
- ◆ effective communications network

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient up-to-date and accurate achievement data
- ◆ late introduction of key skills

52. CT has introduced particularly effective service level agreements with subcontractors and with college departments. These agreements clearly state the roles and responsibilities of each party for each stage of the training programme. The organisation asks for reports on trainees' progress to be provided each term by college tutors and also receives copies of attendance records, registrations with awarding bodies and external verifiers' reports. Subcontractors are aware of the requirements of the service level agreements and fully agree with them. CT's staff visit the subcontractors regularly to review subcontractual arrangements and are able to influence training-programme reviews if necessary.

53. College procedures are followed for staff recruitment, induction, appraisal, development, discipline and grievances. All staff have job descriptions and comprehensive staff handbooks. They also have regular and frequent personal development reviews and are regularly encouraged to identify their own training and development needs. Staff have access to the college staff development programme and are expected to continuously update their personal and occupational competence. Key skills training is identified as part of the development needs on all staff's training profiles. CT has its own yearly operational plan, which includes targets for performance and staff development. Staff within CT have access to training opportunities and have personal development plans which are fully supported by the organisation with both funding and time off for course attendance and study. Development needs are also discussed as part of the staff appraisal system. All training staff either hold or are working towards the NVQ assessors' awards.

54. Communications have improved considerably since CT moved to the college campus. Staff now have easier access both to departments and to trainees on campus. Trainers have frequent discussions about trainees' progress and welfare. All staff have access to information updates from the college's intranet and also receive a college newsletter. There are frequent staff meetings and CT's staff also attend regular full college meetings with the principal. The training manager attends meetings regularly with, for example, the careers service and the Leicestershire training providers' forum, as well as college liaison meetings. CT's management also meets frequently with the TEC to review contracts and has regular meetings with the college and the subcontractors' staff to review progress in areas such as recruitment and retention rates.

55. The organisation has recently been integrated into the college's computer network, which has led to considerable problems regarding data on occupations, retention rates, achievements of qualifications and individual training plans. Data were available up to September 2000. However, some trainees had completed their training since this date and information on those trainees was not available.

56. The teaching of key skills varies considerably across all occupational areas. Key skills are not yet taught as part of trainees' programmes, despite the fact that they are mandatory. Some trainees are in the latter stages of their modern apprenticeships and, although they have collected evidence for key skills, it has not been assessed or integrated into their portfolios. Some comparison of NVQ evidence against key skills has been carried out, but for many trainees, key skills are added only at the end of their programmes. This has resulted in delayed progress by trainees and a prolonged time in training.

Quality assurance

Grade 2

57. CT operates within Loughborough College's quality assurance framework and uses the college's systems and procedures for recruitment, appraisals, disciplinary procedures and complaints. All quality assurance paperwork is accessible to staff on the college intranet. Full contractual compliance was achieved for health and safety checks on work placements at the last audit. Trainees' opinions are gathered at initial interview, while they are on their programmes and when they leave. Trainees also have other opportunities to take part in college-wide surveys. Complaints and issues raised by trainees are dealt with promptly and recorded. CT has taken part in the college's annual self-assessment cycle against the FEFC inspection framework and, more recently, has produced its own self-assessment report, measured against both *Raising the Standard* and action plans for work-based training. This was clear and easy to follow. Four strengths were identified in the self-assessment report, three of which inspectors agreed with and one of which was considered to be no more than normal practice. The one weakness identified through self-assessment was agreed with by inspectors, who identified an additional weakness. The inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ particularly good analysis of recruitment data
- ◆ particularly effective internal verification
- ◆ good use of trainees' feedback for continuous improvement

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no overall quality assurance plan for work-based training
- ◆ insufficient sharing of good practice

58. CT has a quality assurance file with written procedures to cover trainees' recruitment, interviews, initial assessment, and progress reviews, and monitoring and production of statistical reports. The college has a quality assurance cycle and an internal inspection calendar. The manager at CT is part of the college's internal inspection team and frequently takes part in quality assurance team meetings, development programmes and action-planning. The internal inspection cycle includes observations of teaching and learning across the college's curriculum areas, which can include work-based trainees if they are attending day-release sessions. Data are systematically gathered concerning entry to the training programmes. The information gathered is very closely analysed and compared to local community and equivalent college training statistics. The results are used to improve training and recruitment. For example, data gathered on the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups showed a significantly smaller proportion in work-based training than in other college curriculum areas and led to bids for additional funding to finance marketing to under-represented minority ethnic groups.

59. CT uses the college's very good quality assurance system for internal verification. In addition, there are five members of staff with internal verifiers' qualifications. Within the engineering department, there is a particularly well-developed system of procedures for quality assuring the registration, assessment, review and verification of trainees' NVQ programmes. There is also systematic observation of assessment practices and a clear and thorough sampling plan which exceeds the requirements of the awarding body. CT ensures that it receives copies of all its subcontractors' external verification reports and follows through any issues raised in action plans. For example, an action point from the accounts external verifier resulted in the temporary suspension of postal certification rights. CT followed up these actions to ensure that an assessor completed their assessors' qualification by the deadline set and that postal verification was reinstated.

60. Trainees' feedback is systematically gathered and analysed. Trainees' comments are noted and acted on promptly. For example, most trainees on one of the training programmes consistently criticised the quality and content of their off-the-job training at college. This feedback resulted in the manager and trainers carrying out classroom observations which confirmed the trainees' concerns and

led to a change of tutor. More recent feedback shows that trainees feel that there has been a considerable improvement.

61. CT is included in the college's quality assurance cycle and development process. There are many examples of good quality assurance arrangements within the college and within CT itself. For example, there are procedures for the regular production of reports to the TEC and to the college's quality assurance managers. Progress reviews are rigorously monitored by the administrators. There has been an audit of all individual training plans to ensure the quality of training at CT.

62. Despite the many examples of good quality assurance arrangements, however, there is no overall plan within CT to ensure systematic quality assurance. For example, there are no review dates on the operational plan or service level agreements, and while each process has its own individual cycle procedures there is no single plan to close all of the quality loops.

63. Inspectors found many examples of good practice at CT, which staff teams regularly share within their own departments. However, there were also several examples of good practice which is not shared across the occupational areas. In hairdressing, training materials are suitable for dyslexic trainees and produced on coloured paper and in large print. However, inspectors did not see this good practice repeated elsewhere. In the engineering department, staff have produced an excellent set of quality assurance procedures which have not been shared with other colleagues.

64. Since CT has been regularly involved in the production of self-assessment reports for FEFC inspections, the process of self-assessment for continuous improvement is now well established. The work-based training self-assessment report was clear and well presented, and inspectors found the information very helpful. All staff were involved in its production. In general, the grades given were accurate: six grades were agreed with by inspectors and a lower grade was awarded in three areas.