



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JANUARY 1999

REINSPECTION REPORT JANUARY 2000

Greenspring Training Ltd

SUMMARY

Greenspring Training Ltd provides well-planned training in business administration and manufacturing. These subjects are taught at a pace and level to suit trainees' needs. Resources for training are good. Equipment for information technology and manufacturing is of industry standard, and staff have produced good learning materials to supplement training. Training is managed satisfactorily. At the time of the original inspection, there was no formal quality assurance system. Progress has now been made with the introduction of a clear system of quality assurance. Assessment and internal verification are rigorous. The new system is not yet comprehensive and has yet to be checked by internal audit.

As a result of the reinspection of Greenspring Training Ltd, the original published report text for quality assurance has been replaced by new text which makes reference to the original inspection findings. This summary page, the overall report introduction and the inspection findings introduction have also been amended to reflect the findings of the reinspection. All other sections of the original published report which have not been subject to full reinspection have been left in their original form.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Manufacturing	3
Business administration	3

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

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Quality assurance	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned and effectively delivered training
- ◆ effective use of initial assessment in the development of training plans
- ◆ careful assessment and selection of work placements
- ◆ good work produced by trainees
- ◆ good achievement and progression into further training and employment
- ◆ well-resourced training facilities
- ◆ good access to training for those from disadvantaged groups
- ◆ good support for trainees with learning difficulties
- ◆ effective implementation of quality assurance measures

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate arrangements for recording trainees' progress
- ◆ incompleteness of quality assurance system
- ◆ no internal audit of quality assurance procedures

INTRODUCTION

1. Greenspring Training Ltd (Greenspring Training) was established in 1982 in the grounds of Bishop Latimer Church, Winson Green, Birmingham, to provide vocational training for young people with special learning needs and for those from minority ethnic groups. In 1986, the organisation moved to its present premises, a former factory in Hockley, and started to provide occupational programmes leading to nationally recognised qualifications. Greenspring Training is a company limited by guarantee which gained charitable status in 1987. The organisation has retained its original aim of meeting the training needs of a wide range of people from disadvantaged groups in the local community. The organisation maintains a deliberate policy of 'open-door' access to training, and its client group comprises young people from a wide variety of ethnic origins, with a range of different abilities, learning difficulties and behavioural problems, and who have experienced varying levels of social exclusion. The organisation depends largely on income derived from training programmes funded through Birmingham and Solihull Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). Greenspring Training also has contracts with the Employment Service to provide training for clients on the full-time education and training and employment options of the New Deal. Greenspring Training is a small company, operating from a single site and employing 10 people to manage and teach its training programmes.

2. Vocational training is provided towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1 and 2 in business administration and information technology. Training is also provided in machining, assembly and processing skills, where trainees work towards qualifications equivalent to NVQs at levels 1 and 2. Most trainees have been identified by the TEC as having special training needs. All trainees are entitled to basic skills support during training through the Greenspring Additional Support Programme. Through its basic skills department, Greenspring Training is able to offer foundation for work programmes at prevocational level. At the time of the original inspection, 20 trainees were engaged in business administration programmes, 12 were following manufacturing courses, and there were six New Deal clients. At the time of the reinspection in January 2000, there was a total of 58 trainees, 38 of whom were training in manufacturing, while the other 20 were training in business administration. There were no New Deal clients. For many trainees, training is conducted entirely on the organisation's premises. Where possible, work experience is provided through placements with suitable employers.

3. Situated in the district of Hockley, Greenspring Training draws most of its trainees from the Handsworth ward of Birmingham. Around 65 per cent of the population in the Handsworth and Hockley districts are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups recruited by Greenspring Training has steadily increased in recent years. By 1998, almost 80 per cent of trainees were recruited from these groups. People from minority ethnic groups in

these districts have traditionally been among the most economically disadvantaged and socially deprived in Birmingham. Unemployment levels for Handsworth and Hockley are around 20 per cent, but the unemployment rate among males from local minority ethnic communities is estimated to be twice that. At the time of the original inspection in January 1999, unemployment in Birmingham as a whole was running at around 11 per cent, which was more than twice as high as the national unemployment rate of 5.2 per cent. By the time of the reinspection in January 2000, the national unemployment rate had fallen to 4.1 per cent, but unemployment in Birmingham as a whole had fallen even faster and stood at 7 per cent. The local area has a mixed economy, with many small privately owned businesses integrated in the local residential setting. A recent survey showed that over 300 businesses (76 per cent) in Handsworth employ fewer than 10 people. Advertised employment vacancies at the local job centre indicate that 26 per cent lie in manufacturing, 21 per cent in public administration and health and 20 per cent in banking, finance and insurance. In 1998 and 1999, the number of Birmingham school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above were 35.3 per cent and 38.1 per cent respectively, compared with the national average of 46.3 per cent and 47.9 per cent respectively.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. The company's first self-assessment report was completed in November 1998. Responsibility for its compilation was taken by the organisation's training officer. The report was completed in a relatively short period of time over two months, in response to notification of inspection. The training officer received preparatory training for self-assessment only after completion of the report. Writing this report gave managers a better understanding of the self-assessment process. Action plans were drawn up to tackle the weaknesses which had been identified, some of which had already been eliminated by the time of the first inspection. Following inspection, another action plan was produced which addressed the weaknesses identified by inspectors. Greenspring Training subsequently carried out a second self-assessment which included the drafting of an updated action plan.

5. For the first inspection, a team of three inspectors spent a total of nine days at Greenspring Training during January 1999. Inspection covered the government-funded youth training programmes for those pursuing NVQs in business administration and information technology, and the programme for those training for qualifications in manufacturing skills. All administration, management, training and assessment, apart from the on-the-job training provided in work placements, are carried out at the organisation's premises in Hockley. During inspection, there were 32 trainees engaged in off-the-job training and six on work placements. Inspectors observed five training and assessment sessions and interviewed 13 trainees. Six visits were made to trainees' work placements. Meetings were held with the manager, training officer, industrial development officer, instructors, assessors and employers. A wide range of documents was viewed, including management and quality assurance files, TEC contracts, external audit reports, records of meetings, trainees' files and work portfolios, trainees' achievement and destination data, recruitment data and staff's curricula vitae. Learning resources, equipment and accommodation were also inspected.

6. Reinspection was carried out by a team of two inspectors who spent a total of four days at Greenspring Training in January 2000. They interviewed eight trainees and seven staff and visited two work placements. They examined documents related to quality assurance, including procedures, internal and external verification reports, and other management information.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions during the original inspection

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Manufacturing		2				2
Business administration		1	1	1		3
Total	0	3	1	1	0	5

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Manufacturing

Grade 3

7. There are 12 trainees following the machining assembly and processing skills (MAPS) programme leading to NVQ equivalent qualifications at level 1 or 2. All trainees are endorsed as having special training needs. Trainees receive additional learning support as part of their programmes, including the basic skills training leading to qualification in wordpower and numberpower. Manufacturing programmes commence with off-the-job training sessions in woodworking skills or engineering. Depending on individual trainees' abilities and progress, they are placed with local employers to gain work experience and receive on-the-job training; four trainees are presently in work placements. Work-based training programmes are planned and, where appropriate, co-ordinated with centre-based training. Assessment is carried out on and off the job by Greenspring Training's instructors. Inspectors agreed with some of the judgements made in the self-assessment report, notably programme success in enabling trainees to progress to qualifications, mainstream training and employment. Inspectors identified further strengths and weaknesses to those in the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with the grade proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective and well-planned preparatory training
- ◆ careful matching of trainees to work-placement opportunities
- ◆ examples of good work produced by trainees
- ◆ good achievement and progression to further training and employment
- ◆ well-resourced training facilities

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor specification of required standards in on-the-job training
- ◆ inadequate gathering of evidence of trainees' on-the-job achievements
- ◆ lack of standardised procedures for recording trainees' progress and achievements
- ◆ absence of documented procedures for assessment
- ◆ poor implementation of internal verification

GOOD PRACTICE

Assessment of trainees throughout the preparatory phase of training is used to determine when trainees have acquired the necessary skills and confidence to start work-placement training. At this point, a two-day extended interview process is used to match trainees with employers. Following an eight-day trial period at the work placement, a full review, involving trainee and employer, is conducted to determine the success of the placement and willingness of both parties to continue with the arrangement.

8. Arrangements for initial assessment of trainees' abilities and aptitudes are good. Trainees' additional learning support needs and occupational preferences are identified, recorded and incorporated in a training plan. Trainees progress through an initial period of basic skills training to an off-the-job preparatory programme. This programme, in which trainees work on practical occupational skills in wood and metal goods production, is well planned. Trainees are assessed throughout this phase of training and are given good support and guidance to enable them to progress. The quality of trainees' practical work is good, and portfolios contain drawings and plans demonstrating a high standard of competence. Training is good. Information is given clearly, and trainees are able to work at a pace and level suited to their needs. Trainees enjoy training sessions and show enthusiasm and determination to succeed. Achievement and progression to mainstream training and employment, for trainees with special training needs, is good. In the past three years, 41.8 NVQs were achieved per 100 leavers. Of the 62 NVQs achieved 84 per cent were at level 2. During this time, 33 trainees (16 per cent) progressed to full-time employment.

9. There is an absence of written procedures for assessment. The MAPS programme is an assessment scheme which enables trainees to gain credit over a range of training units, through recognition of performance at work. However, present arrangements for training do not clearly specify the standards to be attained to enable accurate assessment of trainees' competencies in the workplace. There are procedures for reviewing workplace activity, but these do not make it easy to gather sufficient evidence of occupational competence for accurate work-based assessment. Procedures for internal verification are not formally documented, and routine internal verification is not carried out. Procedures for recording trainees' progress and achievements are not standardised. There is no single system or format for recording trainees' achievement. Current use of different recording procedures inhibits the effectiveness of the monitoring process and the planning of schedules for review and assessment. Resources for training are good. Training is supported by the effective use of a range of learning materials, many of which have been developed by staff in response to the learning needs of trainees. Training staff are well qualified and possess considerable industrial experience. The training centre's workshop, well resourced with equipment and adequately meeting trainees' needs, provides a stimulating environment for learning.

Business administration**Grade 3**

10. There are 20 trainees following business administration programmes leading to NVQs at levels 1 and 2. All trainees undergo initial assessment to identify appropriate levels for training. The structure and content of the programme and arrangements for assessment are explained to trainees during induction. Eight trainees receive training in administration and 12 trainees are being trained in information technology. The numbers of trainees on information technology programmes is limited to 12 by the number of workstations available. All off-the-job

training is conducted at the training centre. Where possible, trainees are provided with work placements to meet awarding bodies' requirements. Three information technology trainees are receiving on-the-job training with workplace providers. All trainees are endorsed as having special training needs. Occupational training is supplemented with literacy and numeracy support sessions from staff in the basic skills unit. Some of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report are considered by inspectors, to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors however, agreed with the overall judgements made and awarded the same grade as that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective working relationships between trainees and staff
- ◆ good standards of work in trainees' portfolios
- ◆ trainees make significant progress
- ◆ good supplementary learning materials for information technology
- ◆ good resources for information technology, reflecting industry standards

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ under-developed programme structure for work-based learning
- ◆ inadequate procedures for recording trainees' progress
- ◆ partly underdeveloped internal verification practices
- ◆ intrusion of extraneous noise into teaching rooms

11. Trainees are well supported throughout training. Trainers have a good understanding of individual trainees' additional learning needs and have established close working relationships with trainees. Trainees are satisfied with the level of support given and are encouraged to take responsibility for their training and influence its development. Trainees receive reviews of progress sessions every eight weeks; more frequently, if support needs demand it. Care is taken in the selection of workplace providers for on-the-job training. Consideration is given to each trainee's circumstances before a placement decision is made. The quality of work contained in trainees' portfolios is good. Trainees understand the training programme and the assessment process and use this knowledge effectively to gather and present clear evidence of occupational skills acquired. Trainees achieve well and make significant progress. During the contract period from April 1996 to now, over 40 per cent of trainees have progressed to further education or moved to full-time employment. During this period 60 per cent of leavers gained NVQ qualifications and 56 per cent of these NVQs were achieved by trainees endorsed as having special training needs. Thirty-three per cent of NVQs achieved were at level 2.

12. Internal verification of assessment practices is conducted frequently. However, procedures for routine internal verification are not fully developed. Present arrangements do not provide adequate levels of support for inexperienced trainers

to develop consistent procedures for identification of evidence and develop standard methods of recording assessment outcomes. Detailed recording of trainees' progress for on- and off-the-job training is poor. Records of work placement visits are not always completed. The absence of clearly prescribed procedures for recording results of review sessions has resulted in poor standardisation of trainees' progress documents. The structure of programmes for off-the-job training does not ensure full use of evidence of trainees' work-based skills. Opportunities for team-working between NVQ assessors and work placement supervisors are not always used effectively and co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training has not been maximised.

13. Additional learning materials for information technology have been developed by trainers to supplement commercially produced materials. They are entirely appropriate to trainees' needs and, thereby, give good levels of support to teaching and learning. Centre-based resources for information technology training are good. The process of self-assessment identified the need to upgrade computing facilities. Action plans have resulted in considerable recent investment in buying modern computers and software packages, reflecting industry standards. Centre-based training sessions for administration and computing are adversely affected by noise. Sounds from adjoining training rooms, offices and overhead heating equipment make communication difficult, at times. Partition walls do not extend to the ceiling and fail to create an adequate barrier to noise.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 2

14. Greenspring Training is an organisation providing services which inherently support equality of opportunity for all staff and trainees. It operates an open-door policy for recruitment of trainees, many of whom are drawn from disadvantaged groups in the community. Selection criteria for trainees' recruitment are not based on aptitude or ability tests. Offers of training places depend solely on the organisation being able to provide adequate levels of support to individual trainees. Any proposed rejection of trainees must be endorsed by the chairman of the board of directors. The organisation's mission statement includes clear reference to equality of opportunity. Its equal opportunities policy, which meets legislative requirements, is contained in the staff manual. An equal opportunities statement is contained in the trainees' charter. The self-assessment report failed to fully tackle issues about equal opportunities. Some strengths and weaknesses were not identified in the report. However, inspectors agreed with judgements made in the report and awarded the same grade as that proposed by the company.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good access to training for those from disadvantaged groups
- ◆ effective use of recruitment data to monitor performance

- ◆ selection procedures for staff and trainees promote equality of opportunity
- ◆ management procedures ensure equality of opportunity in work placements

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ policies and procedures do not fully reflect legislation on disability
- ◆ no formal review of procedures or action-planning
- ◆ inappropriate language used in some information material does not meet trainees' needs

15. The organisation has an equal opportunities policy integrated in the organisation's quality assurance document. Some equal opportunities documents have not been updated recently and do not reflect legislation about the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities issues and are fully supportive of the organisation's policies. Links with outside organisations have been used to provide staff training to raise awareness of equal opportunities issues. Visual promotion of equal opportunities, however, is not obvious, and equal opportunities materials are not displayed in the training centre. The organisation is intolerant of all forms of discrimination and makes clear statement of this in its equal opportunities code of practice 1999-2000 document. Staff act promptly and effectively to deal with any instances of discrimination or harassment.

16. The organisation has clear procedures for selection and recruitment of staff and trainees. Procedures for advertising jobs, interviewing and selection of staff ensure equality of opportunity. Applications for staff and trainees are encouraged from those with disabilities. Access to the training centre is possible for wheelchair-users, but there are no special facilities, such as accessible lavatories. Trainees with disabilities and learning difficulties are well supported. Discussion of equal opportunities is included in trainees' induction programmes. The format of some information materials produced by the organisation does not meet the needs of those with learning difficulties. Complaints procedures are included in the grievance and discipline policy. Wording of the document is not clear and is confusing to trainees, failing to give clear understanding of the various forms of discrimination and harassment.

17. Recruitment, achievement and progression of trainees are routinely monitored for gender, ethnicity and special training needs. Data are analysed monthly and used effectively to measure equal opportunities performance. However, there are no formal procedures for evaluating equal opportunities performance in all aspects of provision. Analysis of data does not systematically lead to development of action plans or evaluation of improvements effected. The organisation performs well in the recruitment of trainees with special training needs. All trainees have been endorsed as having special training needs. Recruitment over the last three years has shown a steady increase in the recruitment of trainees from minority ethnic groups. The proportion has increased from 61 per cent in 1996-97 to 78 per cent, which exceeds

the local population mix. The proportion of white trainees recruited this year has fallen below those levels found in the local community. Levels of trainees from these groups have fallen to 16 per cent. Arrangements are effective to ensure equality of opportunity for trainees in work placements. Comprehensive assessments of all prospective employers are conducted by the industrial development officer. Satisfaction that employers' arrangements for health and safety and equal opportunities meet Greenspring Training's own standards is a prerequisite before trainees are placed. Work-based training agreements ensure employers' commitment to implementing equal opportunities measures, which are monitored routinely during staff visits to employers.

Trainee support

Grade 2

18. The organisation makes a clear commitment to enabling trainees to attain their potential for achievement and progression. Currently, all trainees are endorsed as having special training needs. Endorsed trainees receive career reviews at six-monthly intervals with the scheme liaison officer from the careers service. Individual training plans are completed on the first day of training and kept in trainees' files and are subject to review and amendment throughout training. All amendments are agreed on between trainees and trainers. Tracking of trainees' progress is routine, and formal reviews are conducted every four weeks. The organisation undertakes to ensure that trainees' national records of achievement are updated throughout training. Inspectors agreed with the judgements made in the self-assessment report, but judged that the organisation had overgraded its provision for trainee support. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ effective use of initial assessment in the development of training plans
- ◆ good range of specialist support for trainees with learning difficulties
- ◆ trainees given good information, guidance and impartial advice
- ◆ additional support available through effective mentoring system
- ◆ close monitoring and support for trainees preparing for on-the-job training

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no formally documented procedures for trainee support
- ◆ no structured job-search programme

19. Procedures are good for initial assessment and the interviewing of all trainees. Trainees receive basic skills assessment in literacy and numeracy to identify any support needs. Assessment is conducted by well-qualified and experienced staff in the basic skills unit. Care is taken in the development of individual training and development plans which contain clear indications of support needs. Trainees are

fully involved in the development of their training programmes, through frequent and prolonged discussion. Good use is made of taster sessions in the occupational areas before placing trainees on particular programmes. Trainees are able to sample different training options and match these experiences to their own strengths and preferences. Induction programmes for trainees last for one day and are delivered on the first day of training. They are well structured and include discussions of rights and responsibilities, health and safety and equal opportunities. Topics covered during induction are supplemented with trainees' information packs.

20. Support sessions for trainees with literacy and numeracy difficulties are well structured. Staff in the basic skills unit offer support in literacy, numeracy and information technology, giving occupationally specific support in basic skills. Good learning materials have been developed in response to individual trainees' needs. Links with outside support agencies have brought special equipment and materials to support the needs of those with disabilities and learning difficulties. Trainees with personal problems have been counselled by external agencies, offering expert guidance and advice. Trainees are well supported by training staff throughout programmes. Additional support for trainees is provided through a mentoring system. Each trainee is allocated a mentor to act as an adviser and initiate appropriate action in response to problems. Generally, difficulties and problems are dealt with effectively and promptly. However, procedures for provision of trainee support are not well documented. Trainee support is given informally, and many instances of support are not recorded. There is no written procedural framework to guide staff in the support of trainees. Evaluation of the effectiveness of trainee support systems is not conducted formally within quality assurance arrangements.

21. Trainees have regular contact with mentors and assessors and receive relevant advice about achievements and progression. Selection of work placements is discussed among trainees, trainers and support staff, with care taken to match trainees to employers. Trainees are well supported during the initial stages of on-the-job training. A two-day placement is arranged and assessed. If successful, this is extended to two weeks and, thereafter, by mutual agreement between trainee and employer, the placement becomes permanent throughout the training programme. Trainees in work placements receive regular monthly review visits by work-placement officers. The training officer has the responsibility for reading all reviews and initiating any action required. The recording of discussions and outcomes of meetings, however, lacks rigour and is not standardised. There is a lack of clearly documented procedures for recording workplace monitoring visits. Some trainees' files do not give a clear overview of on-the-job progress or satisfaction. Support for trainees through job-search activities is neither formal nor structured. At present, job-search activities and discussions about employment are covered two months before the anticipated end of the programme; although help is available to trainees to acquire employment, there is a lack of trainee awareness of these issues.

Management of training

Grade 3

22. Greenspring Training has a clearly defined management structure which is understood by all staff. The organisation is governed by a board of unpaid directors drawn from representatives of local community groups, including employers and support agencies. Overall responsibility for management of the company and development of strategic plans lies with the centre manager. The delivery of training and assessment and internal verification arrangements is the responsibility of the quality development officer/deputy manager, who is also spearheading the development of management procedures and quality assurance systems. The placement development officer fulfils the role of liaison officer with employers and manages work-placement provision and the employment option of the New Deal programme. Greenspring Training employs 10 staff, six of whom have instructor-assessor roles. Managers and training staff are well supported by the administrative officer who takes responsibility for processing computerised management information and monitoring of performance data to meet contractual requirements. The organisation achieved the Investors in People Standard in 1996. Inspectors agreed with the judgements made in the self-assessment report and awarded the same grade as that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ staff training and development built in to management strategy
- ◆ systematic monitoring of company's performance against strategic business objectives
- ◆ monthly review sessions for all staff
- ◆ strong liaison with outside organisations

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ absence of documented operational procedures
- ◆ poor recording of meetings, identified action plans and resulting outcomes
- ◆ no formal system for staff appraisal
- ◆ dissemination of management information not fully developed

23. The organisation has a business plan, clearly setting out annual business strategies and performance targets, which is used as a working template, against which company performance is routinely monitored each month. Set targets are linked closely to TEC contract targets; over the last three years, the organisation has been successful in meeting these targets for trainees' recruitment and achievement. Business plan objectives are used to draft staff training and development plans in response to identified corporate needs. All procedures about finance administration are contained in the company's finance manual. The board of directors meets quarterly to review management and training issues. Monitoring of the company's activities culminates in the publication of an annual report

presented to the board of directors, along with the new annual business plans for board approval. Daily management procedures, however, are not well documented. Operational systems are informal and depend on understanding by staff for their effective implementation. There are frequent meetings, but no clear procedures for recording the discussions, decisions made or resulting outcome of action taken. Lines of communication are established, but are largely informal. Dissemination of information to staff is not systematic.

24. Staff clearly understand their job requirements. Roles and responsibilities are discussed with new staff at induction, and job descriptions are included in the staff manual. Induction procedures for staff are well documented, and arrangements are thorough and give good support to new staff. Staff have opportunities to review their roles and job performance at scheduled monthly individual meetings with the manager. Staff value these meetings which are used effectively to give management support to staff. Arrangements for staff training and development are well established and part of management strategy. Individual training and development plans are produced for all staff, including individual training needs, company objectives, timescales and schedules for monitoring and review. Staff development is not, however, linked to a formal staff appraisal system. Procedures for conducting routine appraisal and recording outcomes have not been developed. Present arrangements are informal and do not enable effective monitoring of staff performance or evaluation of improvement; neither do they give opportunities for formal self-appraisal. Strong links have been made with outside organisations, support agencies and employers. Management control of workplace providers is good. Through the effective use of subcontractors' agreements, good standards are maintained for trainees receiving off-site training. All subcontractors and placement providers are stringently assessed and routinely monitored, by the industrial development officer, to ensure compatibility with Greenspring Training's standards.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

25. Quality assurance is now the responsibility of the quality development officer who is also the deputy manager. Her job description contains a clear list of the responsibilities for quality assurance. A range of new measures and systems has been devised since the original inspection. Some are already fully in use, while others are still being implemented or developed.

During the first inspection, the following main weaknesses were identified.

- ◆ no central framework for quality assurance
- ◆ no formal procedures for review or evaluation of training and assessment
- ◆ poor monitoring of quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ quality assurance arrangements do not ensure consistency in the quality of provision
- ◆ underdeveloped procedures for sharing good practice

26. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and all the new weaknesses identified in Greenspring Training's new self-assessment report. They also identified an additional weakness. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ clearly documented quality assurance procedures
- ◆ good use of feedback from trainees
- ◆ effective implementation of quality assurance measures

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ incompleteness of quality assurance system
- ◆ no internal audit of quality assurance procedures

GOOD PRACTICE

This is an example of the successful use of the quality assurance 'cycle' of continual testing and improvement. Greenspring Training monitored the effectiveness of its publicity materials and discovered that many people in the local community, for whom English was not their first language, found their brochure hard to understand. Staff redesigned the brochure, replacing many English words with pictures. The brochure was then relaunched. Greenspring Training continued to monitor the effectiveness of its publicity materials and was able to show that enquiries and recruitment both increased following the changes to the brochure.

27. Greenspring Training has made considerable progress towards the setting up of a formal quality assurance system and the lack of a framework or procedures has been adequately addressed. Since the first inspection, a central quality assurance system has been devised containing clearly written guidelines on procedures to be implemented, the use of performance criteria, and methods for the collation, analysis and use of data. A copy of the guidelines is contained in each staff member's individual staff handbook. Each staff handbook contains a comprehensive list of actions to be taken, together with timescales, details of who is responsible and explanatory notes and comments. Every member of staff is aware of who is responsible for what. The staff understand the procedures, find them workable and are supportive of them. The procedures cover a wide range of training-related activities, including recruitment, arrangements for trainees with additional learning needs, attendance, initial assessment of basic skills, assessment and internal verification.

28. Procedures for assessment and verification are well documented, and staff responsibilities are clear and well understood. Staff meet monthly to discuss assessment issues. Informal procedures for training and assessment implemented by staff make a significant contribution to the quality of trainees' learning experience. Feedback is sought from trainees, and the organisation has introduced a general questionnaire for trainees who have completed training. Results are formally evaluated and used to generate action plans which are implemented. Another questionnaire, which is used when trainees have completed a particular phase of their training, invites them to comment on the effectiveness of their trainer. This system has just finished its trial in one occupational area and is now being implemented across the company. There is a growing standardisation of procedures among departments which share a common manual specifying the forms and systems to be used. Monthly meetings, chaired by the quality development officer, provide a means of sharing good practice across the organisation. For example, an

effective system of assessment which was developed in one department has since been shared and developed with others and is now recognised as an example of good practice by the external verifier.

29. As a result of action planning following self-assessment, staff changes have been made, new roles have been devised, staff appraisal has been improved and changes to recruitment practices have led to a significant increase in the number of trainees. In addition, monitoring of attendance has led to a new signing-in system more appropriate for the trainees, some of whom have difficulty reading the time. Attendance rates have substantially improved. Many practical advances have also been made since the last inspection as a result of the action plan. For example, a new heating system has been installed to keep trainees warm in the winter. Performance information gathered throughout the year is analysed and conclusions are included in the annual report which is presented to the board of directors. Each trainee's performance is monitored on a monthly basis and the pattern of their training is adjusted as necessary in order to help them achieve their target qualification.

30. While substantial progress has been made towards the implementation of effective quality assurance systems there are still gaps. For instance, individual staff continue to develop their own systems without reference to the quality development officer. Document control is weak, and some documents are undated. The system to monitor the use of lesson plans, aims and objectives is not yet effective. Forms and questionnaires that have been developed are still undergoing refinement and revision.

31. There is no internal audit procedure to check whether staff are following the new quality assurance procedures. There is an action plan to introduce one, but it has not yet been implemented. Significant progress has been made in its planning and a draft procedure has been written and is now ready to be evaluated.

32. The self-assessment report produced prior to the reinspection accurately assessed the progress made in addressing previously identified weaknesses. The action plans developed as a result of self-assessment were well drafted and have been effectively implemented.