eti
The Education and Training Inspectorate - Promoting Improvement

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Survey

The Provision for Key Skills in Jobskills Training Programmes

Inspected: February/March 2003

CONTENTS

PART 3

PART 4

PART 5

PART 6

A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:-

More than 90%	-	almost/nearly all
75%-90%	-	most
50%-74%	-	a majority
30%-49%	-	a significant minority
10%-29%	-	a minority
Less than 10%	-	very few/a small number.

PART 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report summarises the findings of a survey of the provision of key skills within Jobskills training programmes funded by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL). The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) carried out the survey during February and March 2003.

1.2 In 1996, The Deering Review of post-16 Education recommended that key skills should be available to all young people following both academic and work based learning programmes. They are considered vital by employers for young people and adults to work effectively in the workplace, and by Government for the success of the economy.

1.3 The main key skills are:

- communication;
- application of number;
- information technology (IT).

The wider key skills are:

- working with others;
- improving own learning and performance;
- problem solving.

1.4 Key skills qualifications are available from levels 1 to 4.

1.5 In 1995, the original specifications for the main key skills required candidates to complete a portfolio of evidence to gain accreditation. The revised specifications, implemented in September 2000, introduced an external

assessment component in addition to the portfolio requirement. As a result, trainees have to sit external tests in communications, application of number and IT in addition to presenting a portfolio of evidence in order to gain accreditation. Candidates who already had a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in mathematics or English, at grade C or above, had proxy exemption from the external test requirement for application of number or communications at level 2. From 2003, trainees on the Jobskills programmes who hold a GCSE qualification in mathematics or English are not required to achieve the key skills of communications and application of number. The wider key skills are assessed wholly through a portfolio of evidence.

1.6 Trainees who complete a portfolio of evidence are required to demonstrate that they can apply the key skills in a range of contexts. Portfolios are assessed internally and are subject to external moderation.

2. KEY SKILLS IN THE JOBSKILLS PROGRAMME

2.1 In April 1995, the then Training and Employment Agency (T&EA) introduced the Jobskills Programme. The aim of the programme is to provide young people with the opportunity to participate in a structured training programme leading to the award of a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). In June 1996, T&EA advised training organisations that modern apprenticeships (MAs) within Jobskills were to commence in seven vocational areas. Each MA comprised an occupational framework of an NVQ level 3 training programme and key skills. The number and level of key skills varies across the occupational frameworks. The present MA frameworks require the three main key skills, and a majority also require some or all of the wider key skills.

2.2 Government policy stated that all young people, whether in post 16 education or training, need a solid basis in the key skills of communication, application of number and IT if they are to compete effectively in the labour markets of the 21st century. All post-16 programmes of education and training, therefore, should include the opportunity to improve key skills in these areas. The need to include the main key skills was further emphasised by evidence from the International Adult Literacy Survey which confirmed that 24% of adults in Northern Ireland are at the lowest level of document, prose and quantitative literacy and that the unemployed are twice as likely as those in employment to

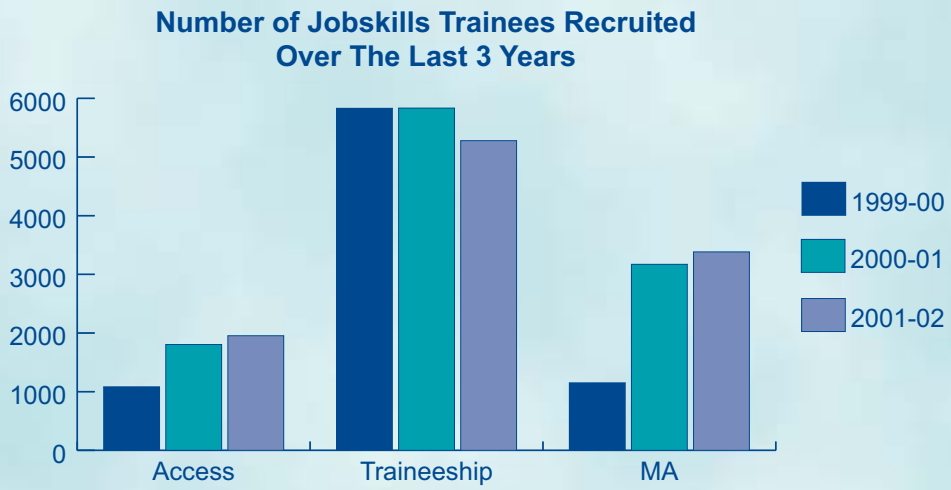
perform at this level. As a result, all young people entering Jobskills on an NVQ level 2 training programme were required from June 1996, as an interim measure, to work towards a limited number of key skills which included communications, working with others and improving own learning and performance.

2.3 In September 2001, the Traineeship Framework was introduced, which stipulated the number and level of all of the main and wider key skills to be obtained by trainees on a NVQ level 2 programme. Out of the current 43 Traineeship Frameworks, nearly half require the main key skills only, and only a small number state that all the key skills are either mandatory or recommended. A list of the Traineeship Frameworks and the MA Frameworks in operation at the time of the survey is provided in Appendices C and D respectively.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEY

3.1 In Northern Ireland, there are approximately 100 training organisations providing Jobskills training programmes across a wide range of vocational areas. In the current year, there are approximately 2,000 trainees on Access programmes, 5,300 trainees on Traineeship programmes and 3,400 trainees on MA programmes, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1



3.2 Over the last three years, construction, administration and early years care and education represent approximately 50% of the total Jobskills registrations. In contrast, IT has one of the lowest levels of recruitment at just 3% of the total registrations. Recruitment to the seven occupational areas is illustrated in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2

3.3 Since the introduction of the Traineeship Frameworks, achievement rates within Jobskills have declined. Training organisations have experienced difficulties as a result of the increased demand on young people to achieve the key skills. The most commonly cited problems by training organisations are:

- the time required to develop and assess the key skills and the impact this has on delivering the main vocational programme; most trainees attend directed training for one day per week and a significant part of this day's training is provided for the key skills;

- in a number of vocational areas a significant proportion of the trainees do not achieve the full key skills requirements within the Traineeship Framework and are therefore unable to progress appropriately to MAs under Jobskills;

- the poor retention rates, particularly in construction, as a result of the additional demands on trainees to achieve the key skills;

- the external test is regarded by most trainees as too "academic" and not relevant to their occupational training;

- the low levels of literacy and numeracy that many trainees have on entry to the programme which significantly inhibits their learning within the key skills;

- the difficulty in integrating the key skills, in particular the application of number, into the vocational training;

- the rules regarding proxy exemption from the external test are not clearly understood by trainees;

- the failure of trainees to complete the key skills required within their Framework, results in reduced output related funding (ORF).

4. SUPPORT FOR TRAINING PROVIDERS

4.1 The Key Skills Resource Centres (KSRCs) were established by the T&EA in 1996 in Belfast, Dungannon and Londonderry to provide the training and development needs of staff in training organisations who had the responsibility for the development and assessment of key skills and essential skills within the context of vocational training. In June 1996, the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education (BIFHE) was contracted by the T&EA to manage and deliver this training until June 2000. The contract was subsequently extended until September 2003. The KSRC staff provide guidance and support for training organisations through the following activities: the provision of facilities and resource materials at the three centres, a staff development programme delivered by the KSRC academic team, the ongoing development of support materials and staff accreditation in key skills. To facilitate the phasing-in of the Traineeship Frameworks in September 2001, the then Department of Higher and Further Education and Training and Employment (DHFETE) made subsidies and grants available to support staff training and the development of implementation plans for the key skills.

5. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

5.1 The purpose of the survey is to evaluate:

- the quality of provision in the main and wider key skills, with the exception of problem solving for trainees within both the Jobskills Traineeship and MA Frameworks;
- the standards and outcomes achieved by trainees in the key skills;
- how key skills achievement effects occupational competence;
- the effectiveness of the current frameworks in meeting the needs of trainees and employers;
- the effectiveness of initial assessment arrangements in identifying the needs of individual trainees.

5.2 The survey consisted of visits by teams of inspectors to a sample of 16 training organisations. A full list of the training organisations inspected is provided in Appendix A. The training organisations were selected from both the private and further education sectors. A total of 302 training sessions was inspected across the following seven occupational areas:

- administration;
- construction;
- early years care and education;
- electrical engineering;
- information technology;
- mechanical engineering;
- motor vehicle.

All of the programmes inspected were at level 2, except for installing and commissioning electrotechical systems, which is only provided at MA level. Construction, performing engineering operations and administration were inspected at MA level. A full list of the programmes inspected is given in Appendix B.

5.3 The seven occupational areas outlined above represent 72% of the approximate 12,000 trainees recruited to the present Jobskills programmes. This level of recruitment has remained the same over the last three years.

5.4 In all of the training organisations inspected, judgements were made about the quality of the training and learning, and the standards achieved in all of the main key skills, and the wider key skills with the exception of problem solving. Approximately 750 trainees were observed in directed training sessions or visited in the workplace. Discussions were held with the managers of the training organisations, members of the senior management teams, employers, key skills co-ordinators, key skills tutors, vocational tutors and trainees. In addition, inspectors examined samples of trainees' work, key skills and vocational portfolios, course evaluations and other relevant curriculum documentation. At the end of the inspection, each training organisation received oral feedback from the Reporting Inspector, and a short written report, outlining the main findings and the main areas for improvement.

5.5 Prior to the inspection, the senior managers of the 16 training organisations involved in the survey completed a self-evaluation of the key skills provision in their respective organisations.

6. MAIN FINDINGS

6.1 About three-quarters of the training organisations provide discrete, timetabled sessions for the main key skills. In the remaining training organisations, the key skills' provision is only delivered within vocational contexts. In almost all training organisations, the wider key skills are delivered within the vocational context.

6.2 In a minority of training organisations, the quality of the training and learning is adversely affected by too much time being programmed for the development of the key skills, at the expense of the vocational training.

6.3 The numbers of trainees on the MA programmes are small in all vocational areas, with the exception of installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems and performing engineering operations.

6.4 Although most training organisations carry out initial assessment of the trainees' literacy and numeracy skills on entry to their programme, the results are not used sufficiently to inform individual learning plans or to plan appropriate support programmes.

6.5 Almost all trainees receive a good induction into the key skills; they have a clear understanding of the qualifications they are targeting, and assessment methods.

6.6 Relationships between the tutors responsible for co-ordinating and delivering the key skills and the trainees are almost always good.

6.7 In the majority of the training sessions, inspected there was an over-emphasis on assessment rather than the development of the trainees' literacy and numeracy skills. In these sessions, tutors employ a narrow range of training strategies, which are aimed at generating the portfolio of evidence, and insufficient attention is paid to addressing individual trainees' weaknesses in literacy or numeracy.

6.8 Across the majority of vocational programmes, a minority of trainees following a Traineeship Framework are targeting too low a level of attainment in key skills, which is not in line with their previous achievements. These trainees have at least grade C in GCSE English or mathematics, and are targeting the key skill of communication or application of number at level 1, even though they have proxy exemption from the external test at level 2.

6.9 The quality of training and learning in communication is variable across all the programme areas. Overall 10% of the sessions observed had significant strengths, 68% had more strengths than weaknesses, 20% had more weaknesses than strengths and 2% had significant weaknesses. In

administration, over 80% of the sessions observed have more strengths than weaknesses, and in construction over 50% have more weaknesses than strengths.

6.10 In a significant minority of training organisations, the vocational tutors make good use of assessment opportunities for communication occurring within the vocational programme.

6.11 The majority of vocational tutors lack the pedagogical skills necessary to develop the trainees' oral and written communication skills effectively.

6.12 In a significant minority of the training organisations inspected, the vocational training in early years care and education, using IT and motor vehicle engineering, is not used effectively to support the development of the key skill of communication; errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation are not identified adequately or corrected by vocational tutors. In these training organisations, the vocational tutors do not work closely with key skills specialists to support the development of the trainees' communication skills.

6.13 In a significant minority of training organisations, the key skills provision in early years care and education is unsatisfactory and the weaker trainees do not develop their key skills to the required standards.

6.14 The quality of training and learning in the key skill of application of number, across all the vocational programmes inspected, is variable. Overall, 11% of the sessions observed had significant strengths, 65% had more strengths than weaknesses, 12% had more weaknesses than strengths and 12% had significant weaknesses.

6.15 There is good planning and development of the trainees' skills in application of number by vocational tutors within most of the electrical installation and performing engineering operations programmes, the majority of administration programmes and a few of the IT programmes.

6.16 In a significant minority of training programmes, the quality of assessment in application of number is poor; tasks are prescriptive in nature and are not sufficiently related to the trainees' vocational programme.

6.17 In construction, 60% of training sessions in application of number were judged to be less than satisfactory.

6.18 Across all of the vocational programmes, the quality of training in the key skill of IT is mostly good; 47% of sessions observed had significant strengths, 37% had more strengths than weaknesses and 16% had more weaknesses than strengths.

6.19 In the majority of the vocational programmes, the key skill of IT is frequently well integrated into the other key skills, particularly communication.

6.20 The majority of trainees in administration, early years care and education and performing engineering operations have good opportunities to develop their IT skills in their vocational training.

6.21 Although most trainees across all the vocational programmes are developing good IT skills, a significant minority do not make sufficient use of them to improve the accuracy of their written work.

6.22 The standards achieved by trainees in the key skills vary considerably across the occupational areas. In installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems, most trainees enter the programme with at least GCSE grade C in English and mathematics and demonstrate good standards in application of number and in communication. In contrast, the majority of trainees from the occupational areas of construction and early years care and education enter the programme with low grades in GCSE English and mathematics, and the standards they achieve in application of number are poor, and poor to modest respectively in communication.

6.23 Across all the occupational areas, the standards of communication and application of number demonstrated by the trainees in their key skills portfolios are not always reflected in their vocational work.

6.24 A minority of trainees in early years care and education, construction and motor vehicle engineering have difficulty in passing the external assessment component of the key skill of application of number at the first attempt.

6.25 The external test leads to poor motivation for a significant minority of trainees.

6.26 Achievements for trainees on the MA programme in installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems and performing engineering operations are excellent in communication and application of number.

6.27 In the vocational programme of construction, achievements in almost all of the key skills are consistently poor over the last three years.

6.28 The wider key skills of improving own learning and performance and working with others are generally well integrated into the vocational units where appropriate.

6.29 Across most of the programmes inspected, employers have inadequate awareness of the main key skills and do not make sufficient use of the good opportunities that exist for trainees to have these assessed in the workplace.

6.30 Good use is made of workplace evidence in assessing the trainees in the wider key skill of working with others.

6.31 Most training organisations provide good staff development opportunities for staff involved in delivering key skills.

6.32 Most of the organisations inspected have specialist staff with suitable qualifications and experience in delivering key skills.

6.33 There is little use of information and learning technology (ILT) to develop the trainees' literacy and numeracy skills.

6.34 In the majority of training organisations inspected, there are significant weaknesses in the management of the key skills.

PART 2

7. TRAINING AND LEARNING

7.1 Across all of the training organisations inspected, the mode of delivery for the key skills varies. About three-quarters of the training organisations provide discrete, time-tabled sessions for the main key skills; in one-quarter of the training organisations the key skills provision is only delivered within vocational activities. In almost all training organisations, the wider key skills are delivered within the vocational context. Timetabled key skills sessions vary in length from one full day's training each week to one hour every two weeks. In a minority of training organisations, the provision for training and learning is adversely affected by too much time being programmed for the key skills at the expense of the vocational training.

7.2 Most training organisations carry out initial assessment of the trainees' literacy and numeracy skills on entry to the programme. The most commonly used initial assessment tools are those produced by the KSRC. In the majority of training organisations, a detailed analysis is carried out of the trainees' strengths and weaknesses in communication and application of number. However, this analysis is not used sufficiently to inform individual learning plans for key skills or to plan appropriate support programmes. Most tutors are aware of the individual strengths and weaknesses of the trainees but few use this knowledge effectively to provide appropriate support. As a result, in most training organisations, the trainees undertake the same learning and assessment programmes, irrespective of individual needs. It is only in a small number of training organisations that the results of initial assessment are analysed thoroughly to produce a key skills' action and assessment plan for individual trainees. In a small minority of training organisations, the trainees do not undergo any form of initial assessment and do not have their weaknesses in communication or application of number identified or evaluated sufficiently.

7.3 Almost all trainees receive a good induction into the key skills; they are knowledgeable about the qualifications they are targeting, and assessment methods. Two organisations have produced useful induction booklets which explain the assessment requirements for the key skills and outline in a very

positive manner the importance and benefits of them to the vocational programme. In most of the programmes inspected, there is a need to make employers more aware of the key skills and to encourage them to support the development of the key skills in the workplace.

7.4 Most organisations make effective use of proxy exemptions for external tests for their trainees. However, the difficulties in getting trainees to produce original copies of GCSE certificates results in a minority of trainees sitting external tests when they should be exempt.

7.5 The majority of trainees are well supported in their learning by having access to a wide range of text-based resources, both purchased and tutor devised. Most of these resources are adapted and contextualised by the tutor to stimulate trainees' interest and motivate them. In addition, a significant minority of training organisations provide good access to information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and the internet to allow the trainees to carry out research and develop independent learning skills. However, in the majority of training organisations inspected, trainees have poor access to good ICT and text based resources to support their learning.

7.6 The quality of support that individual trainees receive in their learning varies across training organisations. Key skills tutors work hard to provide informal support during training sessions, but in most training organisations, trainees do not have any planned formal provision for additional individual support. In a small number of training organisations, however, trainees are streamed into small groups to allow for differentiated learning and to maximise the tutor support available. A small number of trainees benefit from additional workshops which are provided for them to build their portfolio of evidence.

7.7 Most employers do not have a sufficient awareness of the importance of key skills. They do not make good use of the opportunities that exist for many trainees to have their key skills assessed in the workplace. Too much assessment takes place within the training organisations and it consists very often of simulated activities rather than actual work-based activity.

7.8 COMMUNICATION

7.8.1 In the majority of training organisations, the vocational tutors are responsible for the development and assessment of the key skill of communication. In a significant minority of training organisations the vocational tutors make good use of assessment opportunities for communications occurring within the vocational programme to generate evidence for the communications' portfolio. The majority of vocational tutors lack the pedagogical skills necessary to develop the trainees' oral and written communication skills effectively. Appropriate emphasis is placed on achieving high standards of accuracy in the portfolio building exercises for the key skill, but these standards are not applied to the written tasks in the vocational work or in the preparation of other key skills tasks. In a significant minority of training organisations, a key skills specialist is responsible for the development and assessment of communications and provides the trainees with vocationally relevant learning activities. In a minority of cases, however, there is insufficient co-operation between the key skills specialist and the vocational tutor. As a result good opportunities that exist within the vocational training for the development and assessment of the key skill of communication are not used effectively; trainees work on discrete tasks and do not see the relevance of the key skill to their vocational programme.

7.8.2 Relationships between the tutors and the trainees are almost always good and most tutors provide good individualised support during the training sessions.

7.8.3 The quality of training and learning in communication is mixed. Figure 3 below illustrates that overall only 10% of the sessions were judged to be excellent, 68% had more strengths than weaknesses, 20% had more weaknesses than strengths and 2% had significant weaknesses. In administration, in over 80% of the sessions observed, strengths outweigh weaknesses and in contrast in construction over 50% have more weaknesses than strengths.

Figure 3

7.8.4 A common weakness across almost all of the vocational programmes inspected is an over emphasis on the assessment rather than the development of the trainees' communication skills. In these sessions, tutors employ a narrow range of training strategies, which are aimed at generating the portfolio of evidence, and insufficient attention is paid to addressing individual trainees' weaknesses in communication.

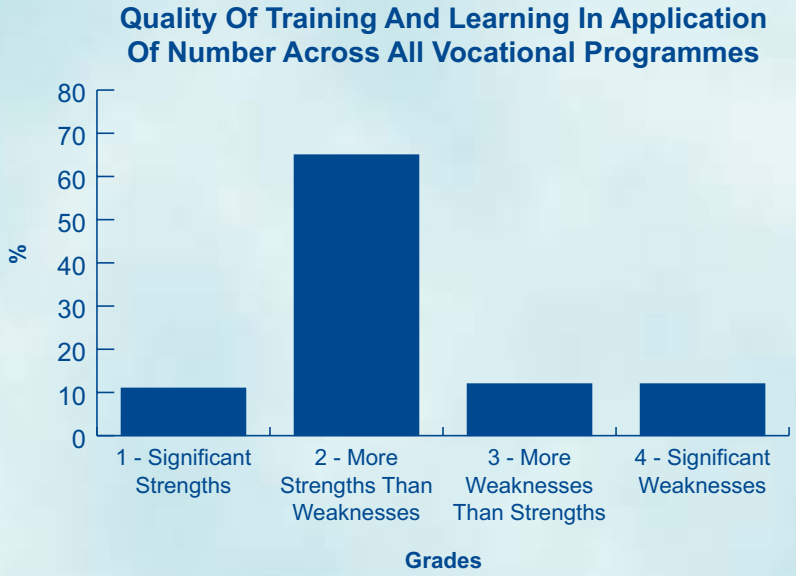
7.9 APPLICATION OF NUMBER

7.9.1 In just over half of the training organisations inspected, the key skill of application of number is developed and assessed by a key skills specialist. Application of number is regarded by most training organisations as the key skill which is the most difficult to integrate into vocational activities. There is, however, good development of application of number by vocational tutors within

most of the training organisations providing electrical installation and performing engineering operations and a few providing IT.

7.9.2 The quality of the training and learning in the key skill of application of number is variable. Across most of the vocational programmes, strengths outweigh weaknesses in the majority of training sessions observed. In a significant minority, weaknesses outweigh strengths. The following chart (Figure 4) shows that 11% of sessions had significant strengths, 65% had more strengths than weaknesses, 12% had more weaknesses than strengths and 12% had significant weaknesses.

Figure 4



7.9.3 Where the training and learning is good, trainees are engaged in challenging tasks, which are well related to their occupational area. The vocational tutor or the key skills specialist provides the trainees with good opportunities to develop their numeracy skills within vocationally relevant contexts and to an appropriate level. As a result, trainees engage well in the learning activities and see the relevance of the key skill to their chosen vocation.

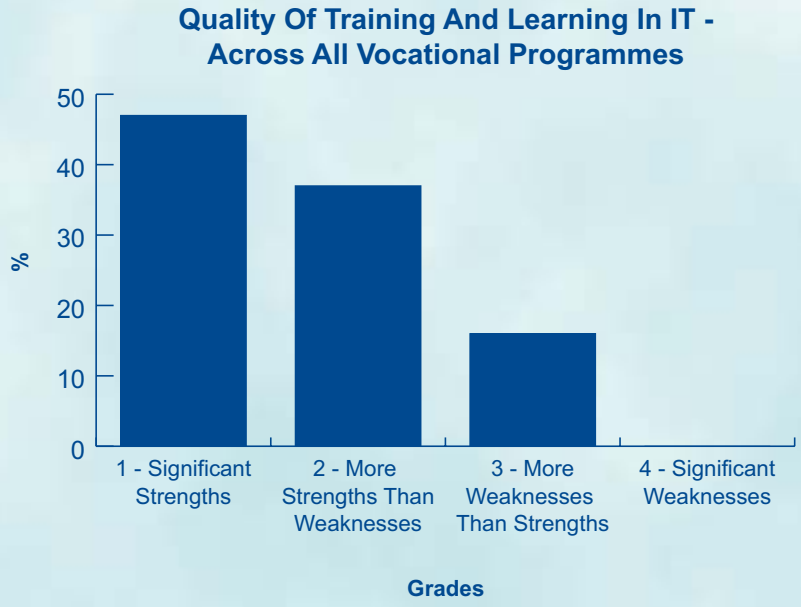
7.9.4 The weaker training sessions are characterised by an over-emphasis on the assessment of the trainees' numeracy skills. Trainees work on a narrow range of tasks, which are used to compile their portfolio of evidence; the tasks are discrete in nature and are not related to their vocational programme.

7.9.5 The quality of assessment varies significantly. Across the majority of occupational areas, assessment is well planned and enables the trainees to demonstrate competence in a vocationally relevant context. In a significant minority of programmes, however, the quality of assessment is poor; tasks are prescriptive in nature and are not sufficiently related to the trainees' vocational programme. Only a minority of trainees make good use of opportunities that occur in the workplace to provide evidence for their key skills portfolio.

7.10 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

7.10.1 The quality of training in the key skill of IT is mostly good, this is demonstrated in Figure 5. The chart shows that 47% of sessions observed had significant strengths, 37% had more strengths than weaknesses and only 16% had more weaknesses than strengths.

Figure 5



7.10.2 Across the programmes inspected, IT is generally the responsibility of a specialist key skills tutor who works closely with the vocational tutor to provide relevant learning experiences for the trainees. The IT provision is very often delivered in a block as most tutors report that trainees have better opportunities to develop their skills over a short, intensive period of training rather than during one hour per week. The key skill of IT is usually well integrated into the other key skills, particularly communication. The majority of trainees in administration,

early years care and education and performing engineering operations have good opportunities to develop their IT skills in their vocational training, in addition to the discrete provision for the key skill.

VOCATIONAL REPORTS

7.11 ADMINISTRATION

7.11.1 The quality of training and learning in the key skill of communication within the vocational programme of administration is consistently good. It is illustrated in Figure 6 below. Of the communications sessions inspected, 20% were considered excellent, 68% had more strengths than weaknesses, and 12% had more weaknesses than strengths.

Figure 6

7.11.2 In the majority of training organisations, the key skill of communication is well integrated into the vocational activities. It is, generally, developed and assessed in a relevant context by the vocational tutor, who receives appropriate support from a key skills specialist, in preparing trainees for the external test. The planning of individual sessions is effective; there is usually a good match between the work undertaken and the assessment criteria. Assessments are well planned and trainees are provided with good feedback on their performance. Administration is one of the few vocational areas where

assessment in the workplace has been used to contribute to the development of the key skills portfolio.

7.11.3 The majority of the application of number training sessions observed in the vocational area of administration are satisfactory but in significant minority weaknesses outweigh strengths. The chart below (Figure 7), shows that 58% of the sessions had more strengths than weaknesses but in 42% weaknesses outweighed strengths.

Figure 7

7.11.4 In the training sessions where the strengths outweigh the weaknesses, there is good support provided to individual trainees and the assessment activities are well integrated with those for the other main key skills. In those training organisations where weaknesses outweigh strengths tasks are discrete and do not relate well to the trainees' chosen vocational area. As a result, most assessment activities are not set in relevant contexts and trainees are not enthusiastic about the key skill. They view the training sessions as a continuation of school-based activities, which fail to motivate them.

7.11.5 In the majority of organisations inspected, trainees with appropriate GCSE grades in mathematics are not given the opportunity to target the key skill at level 2 even though they have proxy exemption from the external test at this

level. In addition, staff in a minority of organisations do not plan adequately for the needs of individual trainees; trainees with proxy exemption from the external test at level 1 spend time preparing for it with the other trainees who have to sit the test.

7.11.6 The majority of tutors provide good text-based resources to support the trainees in their learning.

7.11.7 The majority of the training sessions in IT are satisfactory or better for trainees in the vocational programme of administration. The chart below (Figure 8) shows that 65% of training sessions in IT have more strengths than weaknesses but a significant minority, 35% of sessions, have more weaknesses than strengths.

Figure 8

7.11.8 In the better sessions, trainees are developing a good range of IT skills in a relevant vocational context. In addition, most have good opportunities to further develop their IT skills in the workplace. Assessment is well planned and in some cases there is good integration with the other key skills, particularly communication.

7.11.9 Weaknesses in the training are characterised by an over-emphasis on assembling the evidence for the portfolio, at the expense of developing the

trainees' IT skills to enable them to work independently on suitable assessment tasks. Trainees are over-directed in the training activities devised by the tutor, and are, not encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. In addition, insufficient emphasis is paid to the standard of written communication in the work prepared for the IT portfolio; spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors are not identified or corrected sufficiently.

7.12 CONSTRUCTION

7.12.1 In just over half of the construction programmes inspected, the quality of training and learning in the key skill of communication has more weaknesses than strengths. The following chart (Figure 9) shows that 17% of the sessions in communication inspected had significant strengths, 20% had more strengths than weaknesses, 58% had more weaknesses than strengths and 5% had significant weaknesses.

Figure 9

7.12.2 In the weaker sessions, there is little or no integration of the key skill of communication into the vocational activities. As a result, trainees do not have their communication skills developed or assessed in a relevant vocational context. These trainees are not enthusiastic about developing the key skill and fail to see its relevance to their training programme. A narrow range of training strategies is employed during training sessions and these fail to stimulate,

motivate and engage the trainees in relevant learning experiences. Training sessions focus primarily on building the portfolio of evidence with insufficient regard to the development of individual trainees' written and oral communication skills. There is insufficient co-operation between the vocational and key skills specialist staff to identify learning opportunities within the vocational programme which could contribute to the development of the key skill of communication. The pace of work is too slow in these training sessions and it is unacceptable that a minority of trainees following a Traineeship Framework in construction are targeting a level of attainment in the key skill of communication which does not match their prior attainment. The trainees who have at least grade C or higher in GCSE English are targeting communication at level 1 even though they have proxy exemption from the higher level test. In contrast, in one organisation trainees are provided with differentiated learning in the training sessions. These trainees are streamed appropriately according to the results of their initial assessment and prior attainment, and those who have a proxy exemption for the level 2 external test are clearly identified and given the opportunity to complete a level 2 portfolio.

7.12.3 In the majority of sessions, there are more weaknesses than strengths in the training and learning provision for application of number. The chart below (Figure 10) shows that 15% of sessions had significant strengths, 25% had more strengths than weaknesses, 40% had more weaknesses than strengths and 20% had significant weaknesses.

Figure 10

7.12.4 The best practice is characterised by good planning to ensure that there is ongoing development of the trainees' underpinning knowledge necessary to complete the portfolio and external test requirements of the key skill. In these sessions, trainees are working in relevant vocational contexts and they are provided with challenging learning experiences. The development of their numeracy skills is well supported by the vocational tutors. Trainees with at least GCSE grade C in mathematics are entered appropriately for the key skill at level 2.

7.12.5 In the worst examples, the trainees' numeracy skills are not being developed or assessed in relevant contexts, and they fail to see the relevance of the key skill to their chosen vocational programme. The key skills specialist and the vocational tutors do not collaborate sufficiently to produce meaningful learning experiences for the trainees; tutors provide a narrow range of activities, which fail to motivate the trainees. In addition, a minority of trainees with at least a GCSE grade C in mathematics are inappropriately targeting a level 1 qualification in application of number. These trainees are not sufficiently challenged and are not enthusiastic about the key skill. In these sessions, there is no differentiated learning to cope with the different abilities and prior attainments of the trainees, and the quality of assessment is poor.

7.12.6 Provision for the key skill of IT is mostly good in construction. Figure 11 below shows that 30% of the training sessions have significant strengths whilst 70% have more strengths than weaknesses. In almost all of the organisations inspected, a key skills specialist, works well with the vocational tutor, and develops and assesses effectively the trainees' IT skills.

Figure 11

7.12.7 Trainees are provided with challenging learning activities which are relevant to their vocational programme. The pace of learning is good and in most cases trainees have good opportunities to develop the underpinning knowledge required before completing their assessments. In addition, preparation for the external test is well planned and is used effectively to consolidate the trainees' knowledge as they complete relevant practice questions at the end of each training session. In one training organisation, trainees are streamed into groups according to their prior attainments in IT and those with a proxy exemption from the level 1 external test are provided with the opportunity to take the key skill at a higher level.

7.13 EARLY YEARS CARE AND EDUCATION

7.13.1 In early years care and education 66% of the sessions observed in communication had more strengths than weaknesses, 17% had more weaknesses than strengths and 17% had significant weaknesses (see Figure 12 below).

Figure 12

7.13.2 In the best practice, the key skill is well integrated into the vocational activities and tutors make good use of the opportunities that exist within the vocational training to both develop and assess the trainees' oral and written communication skills. In a significant minority of the programmes inspected, however, the vocational training is not used effectively to support the development of the key skill of communication; errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation are not identified adequately or corrected by vocational tutors. The trainees are not encouraged sufficiently by the majority of tutors to transfer the communication skills they are acquiring in the key skills sessions to other aspects of the vocational programme. In addition, only a minority of employers provide good support to the trainees to improve their standard of literacy in workplace training. A significant minority of training organisations have inadequate provision to allow the weaker trainees to develop their key skills to the required standard. In these organisations key skills' training is only provided

once every two weeks. The time is used primarily for completion of the portfolio and intensive preparation for the external test.

7.13.3 Trainees have to target the key skill of application of number at level 2 in order to meet the requirements of the Traineeship Framework. This is a challenging task for the majority of these trainees as many have achieved low grades in GCSE mathematics. The quality of training in application of number for these trainees ranges from poor to satisfactory. The chart below (Figure 13) shows that 65% of the sessions observed had more strengths than weaknesses whilst 35% had more weaknesses than strengths.

Figure 13

7.13.4 In just under half of the training organisations inspected, the provision was not sufficient to meet the needs of the weaker trainees. For example, in one organisation there was no provision for application of number until four months after the start of the programme; in two others, trainees only receive one hour key skills tuition every two weeks. The content of the weaker training sessions is characterised by an over-emphasis on building the portfolio of evidence, assessment and on preparation for the external test. As a result, there is insufficient development of the trainees' numeracy skills. In a significant minority of the training sessions observed, the learning activities are not placed in relevant vocational contexts. The trainees, therefore, do not see the relevance

of the key skill and are not enthusiastic about developing their numeracy skills. In addition, the intensive preparation that is required for the external test reinforces the impression of studying mathematics at school, and leads to poor motivation amongst the trainees.

7.13.5 In the good practice, trainees have their level of skill clearly identified on entry to the programme, and well planned training sessions are provided to cope with the varying levels of ability and to allow them to progress in line with their previous achievements. These trainees target the level 1 external test first to allow them to build a sense of achievement before progressing to level 2 work. Tutors provide good text-based resources to support the trainees in their learning, and the development of the trainees numeracy skills is supported and enhanced through both the vocational directed training and experiences gained in the workplace.

7.13.6 The quality of training for the key skill of IT varies from poor to good; 50% of the sessions inspected have either significant strengths or have more strengths than weaknesses but half have more weaknesses than strengths (Figure 14).

Figure 14

7.13.7 In almost all of the programmes inspected, key skills specialists deliver the training. The best practice is characterised by the IT tutor working closely with the vocational tutor to identify relevant learning experiences for the trainees. Good use is also made of opportunities that occur in the workplace; for example, trainees make good use of their IT skills to design posters in schools. Trainees develop a good range of IT skills before they complete assessment tasks. The quality of assessment is good with links very often established with the other key skills. For example, there is good integration between the assessments completed for communication, application of number and IT. In contrast, poor quality training is characterised by tutors using a narrow range of training strategies to enable trainees to complete assignments for their portfolio, without giving them sufficient opportunities to develop and apply a suitable range of IT skills in relevant vocational contexts.

7.14 INSTALLING AND COMMISSIONING ELECTROTECHNICAL SYSTEMS

7.14.1 In the vocational programme of installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems, the quality of training and learning in the key skill of communication is satisfactory. The chart below (Figure 15) shows that 75% of the sessions observed had more strengths than weaknesses and 25% had more weaknesses than strengths.

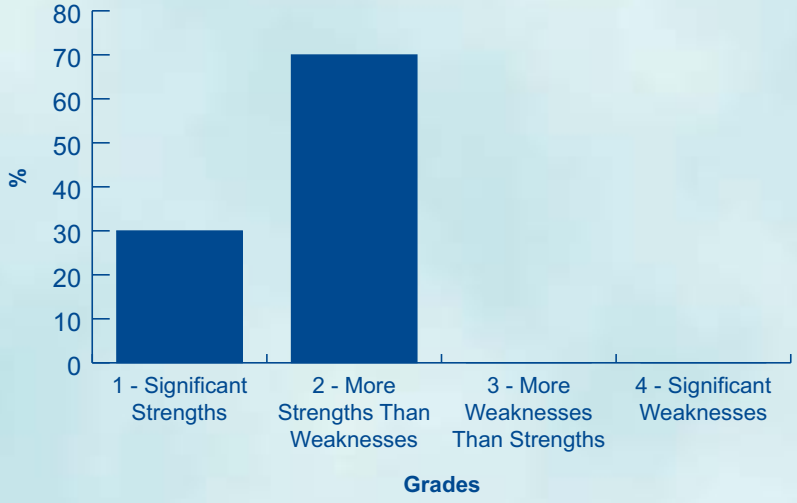
Figure 15

7.14.2 In half of the organisations inspected, a key skills specialist has responsibility for the development and assessment of the key skill; assessment is well planned and communication is well integrated into the key skill of IT. However, most of the training focuses largely on the assessment requirements for both the portfolio and the external test; trainees with weaknesses in communication do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their written communication skills. In addition, poor planning has resulted in a small number of trainees being entered for the external test when they had proxy exemption. In the remaining organisations, the vocational tutor has responsibility for the development and assessment of the key skills. In these organisations, the planning to ensure that trainees with weaknesses in communication have adequate opportunity to develop their written communication skills is weak. The majority of these vocational tutors lack sufficient expertise to develop the trainees' communication skills to an appropriate level.

7.14.3 The quality of training for the application of number is consistently good in installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems. Figure 16 shows that 30% of the sessions observed have significant strengths whilst the remaining 70% have more strengths than weaknesses.

Figure 16

Quality Of Training And Learning In Application Of Number - Installing And Commissioning Electrotechnical Systems

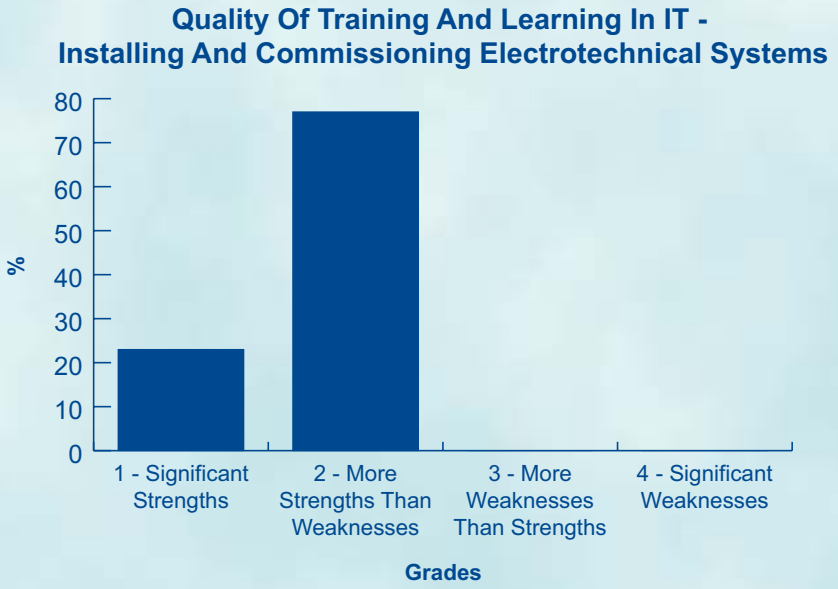


7.14.4 Effective use is made of the excellent opportunities that occur within the vocational and workplace training to develop the trainees' numeracy skills to at least level 2. The vocational training is not adversely affected by the requirement to complete application of number since the development of numeracy skills is an inherent part of the overall programme.

7.14.5 The majority of the trainees have achieved at least grade C in GCSE mathematics on entry to the programme. However, across most of the training organisations inspected, a minority of trainees were prepared for the external test even when they were exempted.

7.14.6 The quality of training and learning for the key skill of IT is satisfactory or better. Figure 17 shows that 23% of the sessions observed have significant strengths whilst 77% have more strengths than weaknesses.

Figure 17



7.14.7 In almost all of the sessions observed, trainees are provided with challenging and relevant learning tasks. The quality of assessment is good and is carried out by the tutors using well designed, vocationally relevant tasks. For example, one group of trainees prepare a letter to customers explaining the contents of an electricity bill, making use of graphics downloaded from the internet, and inserting extracts from a spreadsheet. In almost all training

organisations, key skills specialists have responsibility for the development and assessment of the key skill.

7.15 MOTOR VEHICLE ENGINEERING

7.15.1 In motor vehicle engineering approximately three-quarters of the training sessions observed in communications have more strengths than weaknesses. As can be seen from the chart below (Figure 18) 16% of the sessions observed have significant strengths, 62% have more strengths than weaknesses and 22% have more weaknesses than strengths.

Figure 18

7.15.2 Where the quality of training is good, the trainees are provided with challenging learning tasks, well related to the vocational context in which they are working. The responsibility for the development and assessment of the key skill rests with the vocational tutor or with a key skills specialist working closely with the vocational tutor. In one training organisation, the key skill of communication is well integrated into the key skill of IT; trainees make good use of ICT in building their portfolio of evidence for communications and in turn are completing one activity for their IT portfolio. Where the quality of training is poor, the key skills specialist works independently from the vocational tutor and there is little attempt at addressing individual trainees' weaknesses in communication.

The majority of vocational tutors lack the pedagogical skills necessary to develop the trainees' oral and written communication skills effectively. In addition, the good opportunities that exist within the vocational and workplace training to develop the key skills are not used effectively. In one training organisation, the standards achieved within the vocational programme are adversely affected by too much time provided for the development of the key skills, particularly the key skill of communication.

7.15.3 The quality of training in the application of number within the vocational area of motor vehicle engineering, is variable; the minority of sessions observed have more strengths than weaknesses but in the majority, planning to develop and assess the key skill in a relevant vocational context and at an appropriate level is poor. Figure 19 shows that 35% of training sessions observed had more strengths that weaknesses, but 37% had more weaknesses than strengths and 28% had significant weaknesses.

Figure 19

7.15.4 In the best practice, discrete application of number sessions are provided for small groups of trainees to enable them to benefit from good individual support, and the tutors work hard to develop the trainees' numeracy skills using challenging learning activities. They also provide good resources to support their learning.

7.15.5 Where there are weaknesses in learning, planning to integrate the key skill into the vocational area is generally poor; trainees do not see the relevance of application of number to their vocational programme and they have little enthusiasm for the discrete training sessions. In addition, the quality of assessment is poor; the tasks are too prescriptive, and not set in a relevant vocational context. Across all the organisations inspected, the good opportunities that exist within the vocational programme are not used sufficiently to develop the trainees' key skill and there is insufficient collaboration between vocational and key skills tutors to identify appropriate learning tasks for the development of the trainees' numeracy skills.

7.15.6 The quality of training for the key skill of IT in the vocational programme of motor vehicle engineering is consistently good. The chart below (Figure 20) shows that 60% of the sessions inspected have significant strengths whilst 40% have more strengths than weaknesses.

Figure 20

7.15.7 Key skills specialists provide the IT training and work closely with the vocational tutors to provide the trainees with meaningful and challenging learning experiences. As a result, most trainees are enthusiastic about their IT training. Planning, for the most part, is good and ensures that trainees develop an appropriate range of practical IT skills before they complete their portfolio of

evidence. In addition, there is a good balance between preparation for the external test and the development of IT skills. In a significant minority of sessions, however, trainees do not make sufficient use of the software facilities available to improve the accuracy of their written work.

7.16 PERFORMING ENGINEERING OPERATIONS

7.16.1 The quality of training in the key skill of communication within the vocational area of performing engineering operations is mostly satisfactory but in a minority of the sessions observed, weaknesses outweigh strengths. Figure 21 shows that 72% of sessions observed had more strengths than weaknesses but 28% had more weaknesses than strengths. In all the sessions inspected, the key skill of communication is developed and assessed by the vocational tutor and the trainees work in a relevant vocational context. There are good opportunities for the development of oral and written communication skills in the majority of programmes inspected but in a minority, the trainees' writing is restricted to making log book entries. In addition, the majority of tutors use training and assessment materials from an external agency which require the trainees to engage in tasks that lack challenge and are too prescriptive. For trainees with weaknesses in communication, the prescriptive nature of the tasks restricts the development of their written skills. In addition, the vocational tutors in a minority of organisations lack the expertise to develop the trainees' oral and written communication skills effectively; spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are not identified or corrected sufficiently in the vocational portfolios.

Figure 21

7.16.2 Trainees have good to excellent learning experiences in numeracy within directed training and workplace training. Across all the training organisations inspected, the key skill of application of number is the responsibility of the vocational tutors and is well integrated into the vocational programme. The quality of training and learning is consistently good as shown in Figure 22.

7.16.3 All of the sessions observed are either satisfactory or good; 50% have more strengths than weaknesses and 50% have significant strengths.

Figure 22

7.16.4 In the best practice, trainees are provided with challenging learning experiences well related to their vocational programme. There is good differentiation to allow trainees to progress at a pace in line with their ability and prior achievements and good individual support is provided during directed training sessions. In the majority of training organisations, staff make use of externally produced materials for the assessment of the key skill and inclusion in the portfolio. These assessment tasks, however, are at too low a level and do not reflect the challenging vocational learning activities. As a result, the majority of trainees who enter the programme with a high grade in GCSE mathematics, find these assessment tasks lack challenge.

7.16.5 The quality of the training and learning for the key skill of IT within the vocational area of performing engineering operations is consistently good. Figure 23 shows that all of the training sessions observed have more strengths than weaknesses.

Figure 23

7.16.6 Most trainees are provided with good opportunities to develop IT skills, particularly in the use of computer aided design (CAD), in their vocational training. In the majority of training organisations a key skills specialist has responsibility for the development and assessment of the trainees' IT skills and the learning activities are mostly well integrated into the vocational area. However, the quality of the assessment varies; in one training organisation, trainees who have developed a good range of IT skills are assessed on tasks which are well below their level of achievement.

7.17 USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

7.17.1 In most training organisations, the majority of sessions observed in communication have more strengths than weaknesses. In these organisations the vocational tutors develop and assess communication within relevant

vocational contexts. As can be seen from Figure 24, 20% of the sessions observed have significant strengths, 60% have more strengths than weaknesses, 10% have more weaknesses than strengths and 10% have significant weaknesses.

Figure 24

7.17.2 In the best practice, the key skill is well integrated into the vocational activities and in a small number of cases, workplace training contributes effectively to the assessment of the trainees' communication skills. In a minority of training organisations, however, the trainees are not sufficiently encouraged to apply their key skill within their vocational work even though they have demonstrated good achievements in their portfolio. These trainees make continued and persistent errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar in their vocational work particularly when using technical information technology terms. Many of these errors are not identified or corrected sufficiently by the tutors and the development of communication is considered as a separate activity from their vocational work. This is particularly poor practice in this vocational area where trainees have the availability of appropriate software tools to improve the standard of their written work.

7.17.3 The quality of training and learning is variable in application of number across the training organisations. Figure 25 shows that 65% of lessons were graded as having more strengths than weaknesses but 35% have more weaknesses than strengths.

Figure 25

7.17.4 The majority of learning assignments and assessment tasks lack challenge and are of little relevance to the vocational context in which the trainees are working. In the majority of training sessions, there is too much emphasis on portfolio building and not enough on the development and application of the trainees' numeracy skills. A minority of trainees with at least grade Cs or better in GCSE mathematics are inappropriately targeting the key skill at only level 1. This does not provide them with appropriate challenge or progression in their work.

7.17.5 Trainees in this vocational programme are not required to complete the key skill of IT.

PART 3

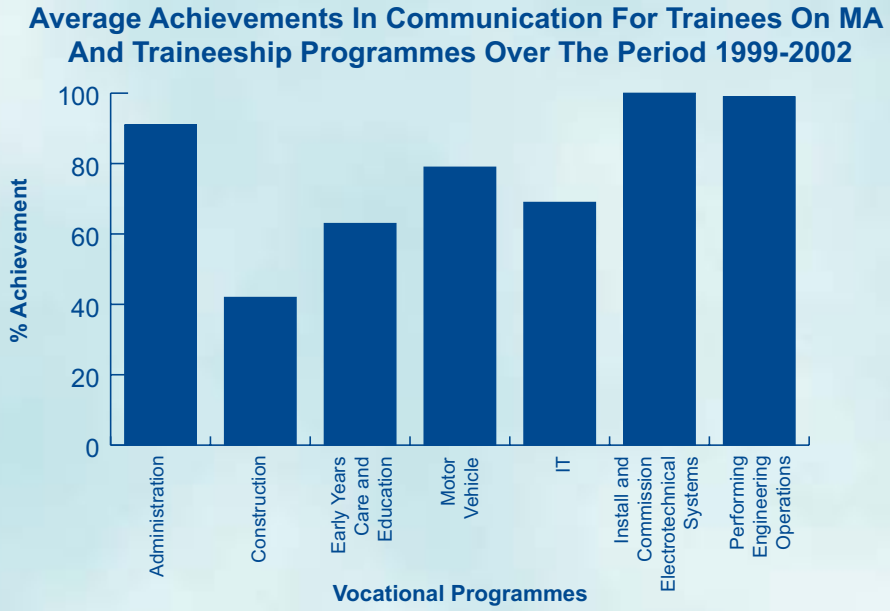
8. STANDARDS AND OUTCOMES

8.1 The standards achieved by trainees in the main key skills vary considerably across the occupational areas. In communication, trainees, in four of the seven vocational programmes inspected, achieve satisfactory or better standards. In two of the programmes, standards are modest and in the remaining programme the level of achievement in communication is poor. In contrast, in application of number, standards achieved in four of the seven vocational programmes are less than satisfactory; of these three are poor and the remaining one is modest. In three of the vocational areas, the standards in application of number are good to excellent. In four of the seven vocational programmes, the standards achieved in IT are good or better whilst in one vocational area, standards are modest and in the other standards are poor. Retention rates vary across the vocational areas. Overall they are excellent for installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems and performing engineering operations; good for administration and Using IT; satisfactory for motor vehicle engineering and early years care; and modest for construction.

8.2 Training organisations provided the Inspectorate with statistics for achievements in key skills in the vocational programmes inspected over the period 1999-2002. The following charts provide the combined average achievement figures in each of the main key skills, for trainees on MA and Traineeship programmes.

8.3 Figure 26 shows that across the vocational programmes, success levels over the last three years in communication are excellent in administration, performing engineering operations and installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems at an average of 91%, 99% and 100% respectively. Success levels are satisfactory in motor vehicle engineering at 79%, and modest in both early years care and education and IT at 63% and 69% respectively. In contrast, success levels are poor in construction at an average of 42%.

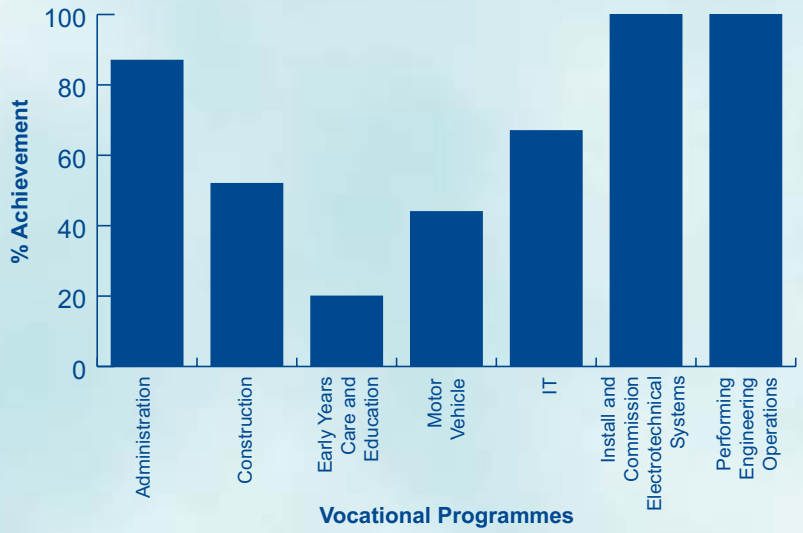
Figure 26



8.4 In the majority of Traineeship programmes inspected, the success level in application of number is generally poor. In administration, it is good at 87% and in Using IT, it is modest at 67%. The success level is poor in construction, motor vehicle engineering and early years care and education, at 52%, 44% and 20% respectively. In contrast, it is excellent in the MA programmes of installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems and performing engineering operations at 100% each. Figure 27 illustrates the overall success level in application of number for trainees on Traineeship and MA programmes.

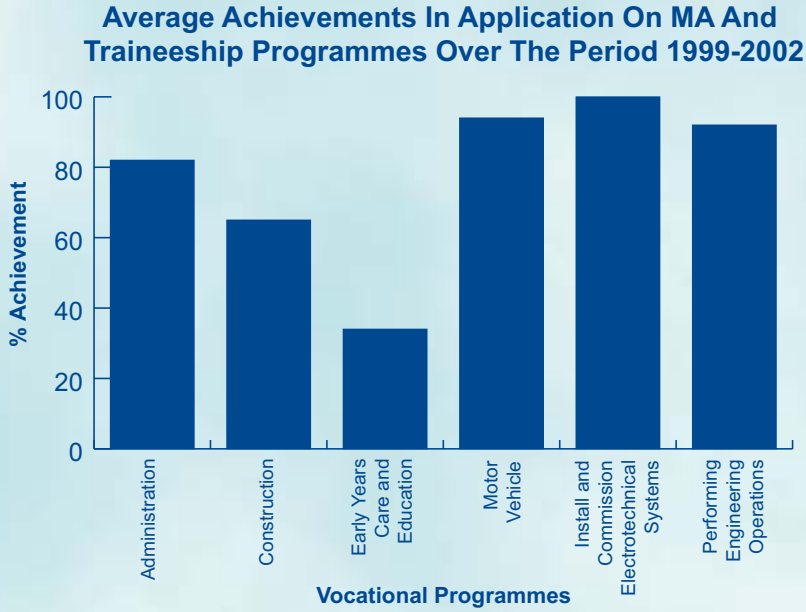
Figure 27

Average Achievements In Application of Number For Trainees On MA And Traineeship Programmes Over The Period 1999-2002



8.5 Success levels in IT are satisfactory or better in the majority of the programmes inspected. Trainees on the vocational programme of Using IT are not required to complete the IT key skill and so the following chart illustrates success levels for six vocational areas only. Figure 28 shows that achievement in IT is excellent in motor vehicle engineering, installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems and in performing engineering operations at 94%, 100% and 92% respectively. It is good in administration, at 82%, modest in construction at 65% and poor in early years care and education at 34%.

Figure 28



VOCATIONAL REPORTS

8.6 ADMINISTRATION

8.6.1 The standards in oral and written communications achieved by trainees in administration vary from satisfactory to good. Most demonstrate good standards in the workplace; they answer telephones, deal with customers and process client enquiries. The majority are making good progress towards achieving the key skill qualification and can apply their communication skills well to all aspects of their vocational work. A few trainees demonstrate weaknesses in sentence construction, grammar and spelling in written tasks.

8.6.2 The majority of trainees have satisfactory or better numeracy skills and the standard of work produced for their key skills portfolios is generally good.

8.6.3 Most trainees are competent in using word processing, spreadsheet, database and presentation software. They are enthusiastic about their IT training and use their skills well to enhance the quality of their vocational work.

8.6.4 In administration, the average success levels in the main key skills range from good to excellent; this is illustrated in Figures 26 to 28 where 91% of

trainees achieve the key skill of communication, 87% achieve application of number and 82% achieve IT.

8.7 CONSTRUCTION

8.7.1 There is considerable variation in the standards achieved in written and oral communications by trainees in construction. The majority of MA trainees have satisfactory or better standards of written and oral communication but standards in written communication for the majority of level 2 trainees are weak. A minority of trainees in construction perform well below their level of ability; tutor expectations are low and trainees do not respond well to the learning activities. As a consequence, they make insufficient progress towards achievement of the key skills qualifications. In contrast, trainees in one training organisation, respond well to the challenging learning activities provided by the tutor and 70% of them achieve the key skill of communication at a higher level than that required under the terms of their Framework.

8.7.2 The majority of trainees demonstrate satisfactory numeracy skills that allow them to complete successfully practical tasks in both the workplace and vocational training. A minority of trainees are insufficiently challenged, however, by the application of number tasks and perform well below the level of their ability. In one organisation, however, trainees are given the opportunity to target the key skill at a level higher than that required under the Framework and 85% of them are successful.

8.7.3 The majority of trainees in construction are developing good IT skills. They respond well to the demands of the programme and most are making satisfactory or better progress towards completing the assessment requirements for the key skill.

8.7.4 The average success levels in almost all of the main key skills are consistently poor. Figures 26 to 28 show that success levels in communication and application of number are 42% and 52% respectively. In IT the success level is modest at 65%.

8.8 EARLY YEARS CARE AND EDUCATION

8.8.1 Most trainees in early years care and education achieve satisfactory or better standards of written communication in their key skills portfolio and demonstrate good oral communication skills in making presentations on topics relevant to their vocational programme. The majority achieve standards which build on their prior achievements and match their level of ability and a number of trainees report increased levels of confidence and self-esteem as a result of developing their communication skills. However, a significant minority of trainees do not apply the standards achieved in their key skills work to other areas of their vocational training; they make frequent errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation. A minority of early years care and education trainees are unable to progress to the MA programme because they fail to achieve the key skills at the level required within the Traineeship Framework.

8.8.2 Although the majority of trainees demonstrate satisfactory standards in their application of number portfolio, achievements are poor; the majority of trainees have difficulty in passing the external test component of the assessment requirements.

8.8.3 The majority of the trainees are developing good IT skills and they apply them confidently to tasks in the workplace; they can manipulate text and graphics effectively to produce attractively displayed posters and notices. One group of trainees is developing good spreadsheet skills on tasks relating to the purchase of toys for a school or nursery.

8.8.4 The average success rates in key skills for trainees in early years care and education are poor in most of the main key skills. Figures 26 to 28 show that 63% of trainees achieve communication, 20% application of number and 34% IT.

8.9 INSTALLING AND COMMISSIONING ELECTRICAL TECHNICAL SYSTEMS

8.9.1 In the vocational programme of installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems, most trainees' demonstrate standards in both oral and written communications skills that are in line with the standards required to work in industry. They complete accurately and legibly the documentation needed to

record the outcomes of electrical tasks and they demonstrate good graphical communication skills; for example circuit diagrams, block diagrams and wiring layouts are drawn and interpreted accurately. Most trainees are making good progress towards completing the assessment requirements for the key skill qualification; however, a small minority of trainees have weaknesses in spelling, grammar and punctuation and require support in this area.

8.9.2 Trainees in this programme achieve high standards in the application of number and most are able to apply their numeracy skills well to their vocational work; for example, they can use and apply a range of algebraic equations to compute current rating and power dissipation rates in a range of electrical circuits and can carry out calculations to ensure that circuits are adequate for their loading and all other constraints.

8.9.3 In addition, they are able to use their IT skills well to complete workplace tasks and the standard of work produced for their IT portfolios is mostly good.

8.9.4 Average success rates in the main key skills for trainees on the MA programme are excellent. Figures 26 to 28 show that 100% of trainees are successful in all three main key skills.

8.10 MOTOR VEHICLE ENGINEERING

8.10.1 Most motor vehicle engineering trainees demonstrate good standards of literacy in their communication portfolio and make satisfactory progress towards achievement of the key skill qualification. A minority of trainees, however, do not apply these good standards to other areas of the vocational work; they make frequent spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors in their vocational portfolios.

8.10.2 The majority of trainees in the occupational area of motor vehicle engineering achieve satisfactory standards in the application of number and make good progress towards completing the qualification. However, a significant minority of trainees have poor numeracy skills and are unable to apply the key skill effectively to tasks in the workplace, such as simple VAT calculations.

8.10.3 Across all the training organisations inspected, the standards of work produced by most motor vehicle engineering trainees in IT are generally good and in some cases excellent. Most trainees are able to work competently with text, number and graphics and to prepare multi media presentations.

8.10.4 Success rates for trainees in motor vehicle engineering in the main key skills are variable. Figures 26 to 28 show that 79% of trainees achieved communication, 44% application of number and 94% IT.

8.11 PERFORMING ENGINEERING OPERATIONS

8.11.1 In performing engineering operations, most trainees have good oral and written communication skills. They complete their log-book entries accurately and the quality of presentation of their work is of a high standard. A small number of trainees have difficulty in producing extended written documents.

8.11.2 Trainees in this programme also demonstrate good standards of numeracy in their vocational activities; they can apply number and graphical skills to a high level.

8.11.3 Most trainees, in performing engineering operations, demonstrate good IT skills in both their key skills training sessions and in their workplace and directed training; they can process product information effectively using IT equipment. In some organisations, however, trainees complete higher level tasks in their vocational training than they submit for their key skills assessment.

8.11.4 Success levels in the main key skills are consistently excellent. Figures 26 to 28 show that 99% of trainees are successful in communication, 100% in application of number and 92% in IT.

8.12 USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

8.12.1 Within the vocational programme of Using IT the standards of written communication vary considerably. Most trainees achieve good standards of literacy in their key skill portfolio and a minority can apply these skills well in the workplace; one trainee, for example, is adapting material used for a presentation into a booklet to be used by his employer for marketing purposes. A significant

minority of trainees, however, have major weaknesses in spelling and grammar which affect their ability to perform well in the workplace.

8.12.2 Most trainees demonstrate satisfactory or better numeracy skills in their key skill portfolio; the tasks undertaken by trainees in this vocational programme lack challenge and are not sufficiently integrated into the vocational area. As a result, the trainees have little opportunity to demonstrate their competence in work related tasks.

8.12.3 Success rates in the main key skills are modest for trainees on the Using IT vocational programme. Figures 26 to 28 show that 69% of trainees are successful in communication and 67% in application of number.

PART 4

9. THE WIDER KEY SKILLS

9.1 The frameworks for the vocational programmes of early years care and education, motor vehicle engineering, performing engineering operations and administration include some or all of the wider key skills in addition to the main key skills.

9.2 The wider key skills of improving own learning and performance and working with others are generally well integrated into the vocational units where appropriate. They are, in almost all cases, the responsibility of the vocational tutor who has most knowledge about the nature of the tasks the trainees carry out in their workplace training and also during directed vocational training. The quality of learning is good across the wider key skills for most trainees. In most training sessions, for the development and assessment of the wider key skills, trainees are encouraged to reflect on their own performance in working as a team member and on how they engage in new learning situations. Tutors make good use of the directed and workplace training in developing the trainees' portfolios in improving own learning and performance. Good use is also made of workplace evidence in assessing the trainees in the wider key skill of working with others. This evidence is either in the form of direct observation or witness testimonies. A small number of trainees provide good evidence in the form of digital photographs of work completed in the workplace to contribute to the development of the portfolio for working with others.

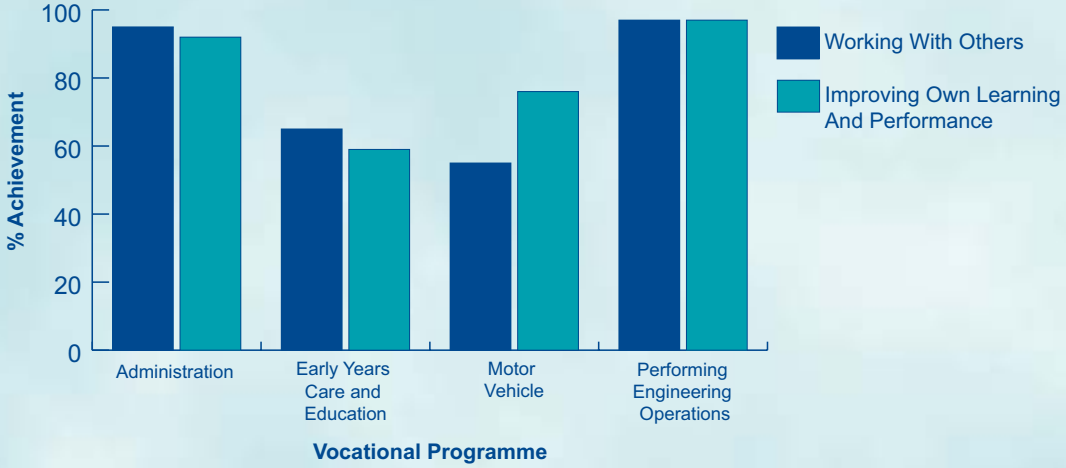
9.3 A minority of trainees are asked to complete additional tasks in directed training to generate evidence for the key skill of working with others. This is time consuming and unnecessary because they have good opportunities to develop this key skill during their workplace training.

9.4 Employers are content with the standards achieved by most trainees in the wider key skills in the workplace. A significant minority of trainees, however, make frequent errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation when recording the evidence for their wider key skills portfolios.

9.5 The two wider key skills which have been targeted by most trainees over the last three years are working with others and improving own learning and performance. Figure 29 shows the average achievement figures for trainees on MA and Traineeship programmes from 1999 to 2002 in these key skills.

Figure 29

Average Achievement In Working With Others And Improving Own Learning And Performance For Trainees On MA And Traineeship Programmes, As Shown In Their Frameworks, Over The Period 1999-2002



9.6 Success levels are excellent in the wider key skills for trainees in administration and performing engineering operations; in administration, 95% and 92% of trainees achieved working with others and improving own learning and performance respectively. In performing engineering operations, 97% of trainees achieved both of the wider key skills. Success levels in these key skills are variable across the other vocational programmes; they are satisfactory in motor vehicle engineering for improving own learning and performance with 76% of trainees successful, but poor for working with others with only 55% of trainees successful, and they are modest in early years care and education where 65% of trainees achieve working with others and approximately 60% improving own learning and performance.

PART 5

10. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

10.1 In the majority of training organisations inspected, there are significant weaknesses in the management of the key skills. Although most have appointed a key skills co-ordinator to manage the provision of key skills across the vocational programmes, they do not review and evaluate the provision effectively to identify weaknesses and areas for improvement. In reviewing and evaluating the provision for key skills, management teams in most of the organisations inspected, do not focus sufficiently on developing effective training and learning strategies to meet the needs of individual trainees. This is reflected in most of the self-evaluation reports provided by the training organisations for the inspection.

10.2 In contrast, in a minority of training organisations, the key skills are well managed and co-ordinated. As a result, learning experiences provided for the trainees are set in relevant vocational contexts and are delivered and assessed appropriately in the workplace. In these organisations, employers co-operate with the staff to devise suitable training plans that provide realistic opportunities for trainees to develop their key skills.

10.3 Most organisations provide good staff development opportunities for staff involved in key skills. This staff development includes in-house training by key skills co-ordinators, training events organised by the KSRC and training days provided by the various awarding bodies. In a small number of organisations, trainees' progress in the key skills has been impeded by frequent staff changes.

10.4 Most training organisations inspected have key skills specialist staff with suitable qualifications and experience. In these organisations, the key skills staff hold a Key Skills Practitioner's Award or some other relevant qualification. The majority of vocational staff are delivering key skills with little expertise or confidence and they lack the pedagogical skills, and in some cases, the written communication skills, necessary to effect real improvement in the standards of the trainees' literacy.

10.5 The majority of trainees have access to a wide range of text-based resources, both purchased and tutor devised. In the majority of cases, these resources are adapted and contextualised by the tutor to stimulate interest amongst the trainees. However, only a minority of trainees have good access to ICT equipment and the internet, which they use for independent learning. This inhibits trainees' learning across all the key skills. In all the programmes inspected, there is little effective use of ILT to develop the trainees' literacy and numeracy skills.

PART 6

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The provision of training and learning in the key skills across all the training organisations has some strengths which can be built upon. However, there are many areas for improvement that need to be addressed immediately if the training organisations are to be effective and efficient in meeting the needs of trainees, and in responding to local circumstances.

11.2 The main strengths include:

- the good induction arrangements for the key skills provision;
- the good relationships that exist between the tutors responsible for key skills and the trainees;
- the good quality of training and learning in IT across most of the vocational programmes;
- the excellent success rates in communication for trainees in administration, performing engineering operations and installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems;
- the excellent success rates in application of number by trainees in installing and commissioning electrotechnical systems and performing engineering operations;
- the satisfactory or better success rates in IT across the majority of vocational programmes;
- the good integration of the wider key skills, into vocational activities where appropriate;
- the good staff development opportunities provided for tutors involved in delivering the key skills, in almost all training organisations.

11.3 The main areas for improvement are:

- the effective development of the trainees' communication and application of number skills in most vocational areas, using appropriate training and learning strategies;
- the over-emphasis on assessment rather than the development of the trainees' competencies in the key skills;
- the poor assessment for application of number in a significant minority of vocational programmes;
- the need to target the appropriate level of key skills qualifications based on trainees' previous achievements;
- the initial assessment to inform individual training plans;
- the lack of training in relevant vocational contexts;
- the less than satisfactory success rates in application of number on the majority of vocational programmes;
- the retention rates in construction;
- the employers' awareness of the key skills, and the opportunities provided for the trainees to have them developed and assessed effectively in the workplace;
- the lack of progression from Traineeships to MAs because of the poor success by trainees in the key skills;
- the competence of the majority of vocational tutors to develop the trainees' communication skills;
- the significant weaknesses in the management of the key skills in most training organisations.

APPENDIX A

The following training organisations were visited and included as part of the survey:

Armagh College of Further Education

Belfast College of Training and Education Ltd

Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education

Customised Training Services

East Down Institute of Further and Higher Education

Fermanagh Training Ltd

Hugh J O'Boyle

Joblink, Coleraine

Larne Skills Development Ltd

Lisburn Institute of Further and Higher Education

Network Personnel

Omagh College

Southern ITEC Ltd

Strabane Training Services

Workforce Training Services Ltd

Short Bros PLC

APPENDIX B

The following programmes were inspected as part of the survey

NVQ Level 2 in Early Years Care and Education

NVQ Level 2 in Using Information Technology

NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Administration

NVQ Level 2 in Light Vehicle Motor Repair

NVQ Level 2 in Light Vehicle Body Repair

NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Performing Engineering Operations

NVQ Level 3 in Installing and Commissioning Electrotechnical Systems

NVQ Level 2 in Painting and Decorating

NVQ Level 2 in Wood Occupations

NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Trowel Occupations

APPENDIX C

Traineeship Framework as at the time of the survey:

	Key Skill and Level
Administration	AON1, C2, IT2, IL2, WO2
Early Years Care & Education	AON2, C2, IT1, WO2, IL2, PS2
Information Technology	AON1, C2
Construction Industry	AON1, C1, IT1
Motor Vehicle Industry	AON2, C2, IT1, IL2, WO2, PS2
Electrical Engineering	AON2, C2, IT2, IL2, WO2
Mechanical Engineering	AON2, C2, IT1, IL2, WO2

Key:

AON = Application of Number

C = Communication

IT = Information Technology

IL = Improve own Learning and Performance

WO = Working with Others

PS = Problem Solving

APPENDIX D

Modern Apprenticeship Framework at the time of the survey:

Administration	C3, AON2, IT3
Construction	C2, IT1, AON2, IL2
Early Years Care and Education	C2, AON2, IT2, WO2, IL2
Mechanical Engineering	C2, AON2, IT2, WO2, IL2
Information Technology	C2, AON2
Electrical Engineering	C2, AON2, IT1
Motor Vehicle	AON2, C2, IT1, IL2, WO2, PS2

Key:

AON	=	Application of Number
C	=	Communication
IT	=	Information Technology
IL	=	Improve own Learning and Performance
WO	=	Working with Others
PS	=	Problem Solving

Copies of this report may be obtained from the Inspection Services Branch, Department of Education, Rathgael House, 43 Balloo Road, Bangor, Co Down BT19 7PR. A copy is also available on the DE website: www.deni.gov.uk