



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JANUARY 1999

REINSPECTION REPORT FEBRUARY 2000

# The Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy

## SUMMARY

The Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy offers good training in beauty therapy and related subjects. Success rates are high, with all trainees who complete the course achieving their qualification aim. The college uses good work placement companies, which appreciate the level of training provided to trainees by the college. However, no assessment takes place in the workplace. Trainees are given detailed advice on the career opportunities available to them and many of them gain employment with nationally recognised companies. The Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy has developed a quality assurance system which evaluates training effectively, although procedures need more time to be fully established. The Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy has a detailed equal opportunities policy.

**As a result of the re-inspection of The Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy, the original published report text for quality assurance, which has been re-inspected, has been replaced by new text which makes reference to the original inspection findings.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 re-inspection have been left in their original form.**

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Hair & beauty	2

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

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ 100 per cent achievement rates for past three years
- ◆ good-quality work placements
- ◆ clear, detailed equal opportunities policy
- ◆ thorough advice offered on employment opportunities
- ◆ clear and appropriate quality assurance system

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no workplace assessment
- ◆ some unestablished quality assurance systems
- ◆ underdeveloped operational plan

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy (Yorkshire College) is a privately owned company, formed in 1983. It is situated in a large well-equipped health club, which is a few miles from Leeds city centre. It also has a satellite centre, 12 miles away, which houses a library and information technology facilities. It is located in a rural setting, with residential facilities and access to the health club's state-of-the-art equipment. The college first offered work-based training in 1987 and now receives 40 per cent of its income from programmes funded by Leeds Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). The college also offers training for fee-paying students.

2. The company employs seven staff, and has 24 trainees working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3 in beauty therapy and electrical epilation. Trainees are studying on the national traineeship scheme or following other work-based schemes for young people. All trainees are employed in local salons. The training co-ordinator, who also teaches on the programmes, manages the TEC contract. All training is delivered through Yorkshire College: there is no subcontracted work. Trainees attend Yorkshire College for group training sessions, which also include fee-paying students.

3. Although the college recruits trainees nationally and internationally, most trainees live locally while attending college. The population of Leeds is 727,000. At the time of the first inspection, unemployment was low at 4.9 per cent. It is currently at 4 per cent, compared with the regional average of 5.3 per cent and national average of 4.2 per cent. In the past decade, many of the traditional industries in the locality, such as clothing and textiles, have declined to be replaced with service industries, such as finance, banking and insurance. Continued growth is projected in the service industries, with slower growth in manufacturing. The public sector is forecast to lose jobs during the next two years. In the Leeds area, there are 30,000 businesses, 70 per cent of which employ fewer than 11 people. The health and beauty industry falls into this category. In 1999, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 36.6 per cent compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. In 1998, this stood at 38 per cent, compared with the national average of 46.3 per cent. Leeds is a multiracial city. At the time of the original inspection, 5.8 per cent of the population were from minority ethnic groups. Current figures show this has increased to 6 per cent.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. Yorkshire College produced its first self-assessment report for inspection in October 1998. The report was written by two company staff: the head of government-funded training, and the newly appointed office manager. The report claimed a number of strengths, which were found to be no more than contractual compliance. Other strengths were identified by inspectors. Yorkshire College accurately identified some weaknesses, and inspectors found others. The grades awarded by inspectors for hair and beauty, equal opportunities and trainee support were the same as those given in the self-assessment report. Quality assurance was lower while the grade awarded for management of training was higher than that given by Yorkshire College. A new self-assessment report was compiled by a senior manager in preparation for reinspection. New strengths were identified, as well as those strengths which have been maintained. The weaknesses found are already being addressed by a detailed action plan. All staff are involved in working to implement the action plan.

5. During the original inspection, a team of two inspectors spent a total of six days at Yorkshire College's premises in January 1999. They met with the college principal, trainees, trainers, administration staff, training co-ordinators, managers and a TEC representative. They interviewed nine trainees, visited 42 per cent of the company's work-placements and interviewed six employers. They conducted seven interviews with staff and observed two training sessions which were both awarded a grade 2.

6. At the reinspection, a team of two inspectors spent a total of four days at Yorkshire College. They met with all college staff involved in the delivery of training. They interviewed trainees, visited 10 per cent of the company's work placements and interviewed three employers.

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### **Hair & beauty (beauty therapy)**

**Grade 2**

7. There are 24 trainees working towards NVQs in beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3. They are all employed. Theoretical knowledge and practical skills are taught during one day's college attendance each week. All assessment is also carried out at the college. Trainees spend the remainder of the week in their places of employment, where they are visited every 12 weeks by a member of college staff, who carries out progress reviews. Some strengths identified in the self-assessment report were agreed by inspectors, others were considered to be no more than

normal practice. The report was accurate in identifying some weaknesses, although inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given by the company in its self-assessment report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ company's good reputation enhances trainees' career prospects
- ◆ trainees take responsibility for accurate self-assessment
- ◆ good-quality work placements
- ◆ realistic well-resourced training centre
- ◆ 100 per cent achievement rate for past three years

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ no workplace assessment
- ◆ inadequate information from college to workplace providers

8. The college has a national reputation, which encourages employers to select it as a training centre. Retention of trainees is high, at 81 per cent. However, although reasons for leaving are known, there is no system to address this. All employers speak highly of the quality of training provided. Both employers and trainees feel that the level of discipline imposed by Yorkshire College instills in trainees a professionalism, which further enhances their career prospects. Yorkshire College maintains a high profile nationally, with regular articles in the press relating trainees' achievements. This is an effective way of drawing employers' attention to prospective future employees, and Yorkshire College has an impressive track record of past trainees employed in prestigious nationally recognised organisations. Over the past three years, all trainees completing their programme have gained employment in beauty therapy and occupationally related areas.

9. The college's accommodation is good and has been designed to create a realistic commercial environment, with a level of resources comparable with that of industry. The products used are reviewed regularly and changed to keep abreast of developments in the sector. This ensures that trainees are using materials, which are of a similar quality to those used in the industry. Teaching techniques make use of a variety of learning aids. In training sessions, trainees' understanding is checked regularly, with additional training sessions made available to those who fall behind. The college has responded to industrial requirements by making trainees commercially competent in some areas of work early in the programme. Trainees have to complete units in manicure and pedicure in the first 12 weeks of training. This enables them to be useful in the work placement at an early stage of training.

10. Although employers are informed, in general terms, of the work which trainees are carrying out at college, they do not have a training programme illustrating details of the exact training planned for the duration of the programme. This prevents them from planning, in any detail, supporting training which they may wish to offer to

trainees. Employers and trainees feel that they would benefit from a training programme illustrating what is due to be taught at college on given dates. Currently, all assessment takes place at college, meaning that opportunities to assess trainees at work are lost. This is particularly relevant because trainees regularly carry out treatments in the salon.

11. Trainees understand the assessment procedure and how they will be assessed. They are required to assess their own progress, and the results of their self-assessment are used to help to indicate their readiness for assessment. They know that they must demonstrate a level of competence in formative assessments before agreement is reached with the tutor for the completion of summative assessment. Trainees are realistic about their capabilities and consider that this system helps them to monitor and evaluate their own progress. Achievement rates are high, with all trainees who complete training achieving their qualification. These statistics have remained stable over the past three years.

## GENERIC AREAS

### Equal opportunities

### Grade 3

12. The company has an equal opportunities policy, given to employers and trainees. There is informal monitoring of statistics on trainees for gender and ethnicity. The hair and beauty industry is traditionally dominated by women, and this is reflected in the college's trainee group. The representation from minority ethnic groups in the local community is 5.8 per cent. The proportion of minority ethnic group trainees on Yorkshire College's government-funded programmes is in line with this. The company identified one strength and one weakness during self-assessment. The strength did not refer to current company practice and was not agreed by inspectors. The inspection team identified other strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the grade proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

#### STRENGTHS

- ◆ clear and detailed equal opportunities policy
- ◆ understanding of equal opportunities by staff and trainees

#### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ unclear grievance procedure for trainees
- ◆ no formal monitoring of statistics
- ◆ staff not trained in equal opportunities

13. The company's equal opportunities policy, shown to employers and trainees, is detailed and explained in easily understandable language, as well as being attractively presented in leaflet form. Equal opportunities is also referred to in the

training agreement signed by trainees at the beginning of their programme. Trainees have a basic, but accurate, understanding of equal opportunities. Although staff have an awareness of equal opportunities issues, there are no documents from meetings to demonstrate that equality is a standing item or the subject of formal discussion. Staff do not undergo training in equal opportunities, so their knowledge is not automatically regularly updated.

14. The number of trainees on government-funded programmes is small, and data are easily accessible. However, although Yorkshire College's staff have a general awareness of the breakdown of gender and ethnicity on their programmes, statistics are not routinely collected or used to monitor performance and inform future planning. Yorkshire College does not make an assessment of trainees' achievements against social or cultural background. The company markets its programmes in the national and local press, and in the Yellow Pages. It does not use positive images on its marketing materials and neither is its equal opportunities statement included. The college has ramp access for wheelchair users.

15. The company has recently developed a grievance procedure for trainees, in the form of a flow chart, describing the various stages to be followed, should a trainee feel that he/she has been unfairly treated. However, the process described is not coherent and it is unclear how one stage of it follows from the previous. The company's new equal opportunities leaflet also describes the action to be taken by trainees; if they feel discriminated against. This does not accord with the information in the grievance procedure. Trainees are unsure what action they should take in the event of grievance.

### **Trainee support**

### **Grade 3**

16. Applicants to Yorkshire College are invited to a formal interview, during which their ability and interest in the occupational area are discussed. At the start of their programme, trainees attend a one-day induction, which covers a range of administrative and course-related issues. Each trainee has a tutor, responsible for training off the job and for formally reviewing their progress. Work-based supervisors also monitor and comment on trainees' performance. A series of talks on employment opportunities is arranged for trainees in the second year of their programme. The strengths claimed in the self-assessment report were confirmed. The weaknesses identified by Yorkshire College were not confirmed, but inspectors identified other weaknesses. Inspectors awarded the same grade as that given by the company in its self-assessment report.

### ***STRENGTHS***

- ◆ effective matching of trainees to work placements
- ◆ reviews examine several aspects of performance
- ◆ thorough advice offered on employment opportunities

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ lack of fully documented support for trainees
- ◆ weak targets set on review

17. Some applicants to Yorkshire College are referred by the careers service, while others contact the company directly in response to press advertisements. All are invited for a formal interview with the head of government-funded training, during which their experience and qualifications are discussed and their aptitude for a career in the beauty industry evaluated. On joining the programme, trainees attend a one-day induction, during which administrative details are discussed and information given about the NVQ and about salon placements. There is no induction for trainees who join the programme late. Yorkshire College does not have a formally documented system for initial assessment, but trainees' progress is monitored over the first three weeks of the programme, and those who experience problems with either the practical or theoretical aspects of the course are offered additional support.

18. Yorkshire College has contacts with several beauty salons in West Yorkshire and has used many of them as work placements for several years. Staff know the salons well and have a clear understanding of what they need, enabling them to make informed decisions about which trainee will fit best into each salon and to match successfully, in terms of both personality and where trainees live. Tutors want trainees to succeed and to develop appropriate personal and occupational skills. They expect high standards of trainees, as regards dress and behavior, but also provide a relaxed and supportive training environment and effective pastoral care. They liaise closely with employers to address difficulties and to help trainees to achieve their potential. Neither the additional support offered to some trainees nor all the actions or discussions about trainees' problems are recorded, meaning that a clear picture of trainees' needs and progress can not be formed.

19. The company has a review system, which examines several aspects of trainees' progress. Tutors visit salons every three months to discuss, with work-based supervisors, trainees' performance. Supervisors are also asked, at regular intervals, to complete salon-grading sheets, which describe and grade trainees' progress in a variety of professional and interpersonal areas. The information gathered is fed back to trainees during formal reviews, which take place off the job to encourage trainees to speak freely. Overall progress is discussed, areas of improvement or difficulty identified and personal targets set. However, these are general in nature, such as 'motivation seems to be lacking, hope to build up enthusiasm', with no action points to address the problem. The documents often describe a problem, rather than indicating how it might be addressed.

20. During the second year's training, the company invites people working in the beauty industry to visit the college and talk about their work. Visitors include those working on cruise liners and for airlines, as well as representatives from well-known national companies and past trainees who are now successfully running their



own businesses. The talks give trainees an idea of the employment opportunities open to them and what these entail. The company also has a comprehensive job file, which contains details of current employment vacancies.

## **Management of training**

## **Grade 3**

21. There are seven staff managed by the owner, with a manager who has direct responsibility for management of government-funded training. A newly appointed administrator has no involvement in the delivery of training. The head of government-funded training has responsibility for communication with employers. Currently, Yorkshire College is developing a programme for modern apprentices, which it intends to offer next year. Formal staff appraisal was introduced in response to inspection. The college's self-assessment report was not accurate in identifying strengths, and although it accurately identified two weaknesses, inspectors found others.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ high-calibre staff loyal to company
- ◆ good working relationships with external organisations

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ underdeveloped operational plan
- ◆ staff development programme not linked to formal appraisal
- ◆ little understanding of work-based training regulations among staff

22. Staff are professionally well qualified, with appropriate teaching and assessor qualifications. Staff also visit other countries, as examiners, and use their experience to improve the quality of training in all programmes. Over 50 per cent of the tutors are past students of Yorkshire College. Many members of staff have worked in the company for over 10 years; they are, therefore, clear about their individual rôles in the company. However, they have a restricted understanding of work-based training as a whole, resulting in problems, which cannot be addressed when the head of government-funded training is not available. The company has recognised this problem and has recently appointed an administrator with responsibility for assisting with the daily running of government-funded training. However, it is as yet too early to judge how this will affect the running of the organisation.

23. Owing to the effective long-standing working relationships, communication among managers and staff has, until recently, been informal and unrecorded. Many policies have been developed very recently in response to the issues raised through self-assessment or in preparation for the application of the Investors in People Standard. These policies and procedures have not been established or in use long enough to be monitored or evaluated for effectiveness. In several cases, the newly

developed systems and supportive documents are basic. Staff appraisal began in November 1998; two appraisals have taken place; as yet, there is no evidence of links to either a business plan or training objectives. The college began work on an operational plan in preparation for inspection, but this is incomplete and does not effectively address the company's future development. Two staff have been involved in its production, but other staff have a poor understanding of the company's objectives and have not agreed on personal goals to support the plan. The college holds information relating to training, for example trainees' achievements, absenteeism, and retention rates and analysis of early leavers. The information is not currently used in a systematic way. Questionnaires for trainees leaving the programme have only recently been introduced and it is too early to evaluate their effectiveness.

### Quality assurance

### Grade 3

24. At the time of the first inspection, Yorkshire College did not have formally recorded quality assurance policies or procedures, but was in the process of devising these in response to self-assessment. Policies and procedures have now been written by the head of government-funded training, in consultation with other members of staff. Feedback is collected from trainees and employers. The company meets the requirements of the TEC with which it contracts, and of its awarding body. It is working towards the Investors in People Standard. The company produced a revised self-assessment report for reinspection. Unlike the self-assessment report which was written for the first inspection, this was the result of consultation with the company's staff, trainees, and employers. Yorkshire College's staff attended a number of external training events to assist them in addressing the weaknesses identified during the first inspection and visited other companies, which had had successful Training Standards Council inspections, to share good practice. The revised self-assessment report was realistic in identifying weaknesses for the aspects of quality assurance. In claiming strengths, it itemised the major changes made in response to the first inspection. Some of these were identified by inspectors, and others were found to represent no more than contractual compliance.

During the first inspection, the following weaknesses were identified:

- ◆ quality assurance systems not fully developed or understood
- ◆ internal verification lacks formality
- ◆ lack of systematic evaluation feedback from trainees and employees
- ◆ lack of involvement in self-assessment by staff and trainees

25. On reinspection, inspectors found that all but one of the weaknesses had been satisfactorily addressed. The second weakness, concerning internal verification, has been addressed in Yorkshire College's action plan, but improvements are too new to be properly evaluated.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ clear and appropriate quality assurance system
- ◆ effective evaluation of trainees and employers' understanding of training
- ◆ rigorous action planning involving all staff

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ some unestablished quality assurance procedures
- ◆ inconsistent completion of documents

26. At the time of the first inspection, the company's quality assurance policies and procedures were at a developmental stage, and were not part of the company's day-to-day routine. Staff did not understand the concept of formal quality assurance, and had no quality assurance plan or system to guide them. There were some isolated examples of good practice which have been maintained and further developed. For example, the processes for tracking trainees' achievement have been maintained. Each trainee has an individual tracking sheet on which s/he records progress through the NVQ units. This is supplemented by an overall tracking document, kept by the tutor. The combination of these two methods ensures a clear picture of progress for all concerned. Since the inspection there have been considerable additional developments. The head of government-funded training has devised a set of procedures, covering all key aspects of the company's operations, which are readily accessible and clearly understood by all staff. Policies for health and safety, equal opportunities, appraisal, communication and grievance have been revised and updated. They are well presented and easy to follow, and are shared with staff, trainees and employers. There are now improved and standardised documents for appraisal, internal verification and trainees' progress reviews.

27. During the first inspection, some trainees' records were found to be incomplete or poorly maintained. Individual training plans were not fully completed, and some documents were undated. Although the new documents devised since the first inspection clearly reflect the needs of the organisation, they are still not fully or accurately completed by all staff. For example, trainees' progress reviews, when completed well, give clear information about unit achievement, short-term targets and trainees' progress in the workplace. Many, however, lack this level of detail: unit achievement is missing, and targets are either omitted or are too brief to be of value. Trainees' individual training plans are now completed more systematically than was the case at the time of the first inspection. However, they are still not all updated to reflect trainees' achievement.

28. Although, at the time of the first inspection, Yorkshire College had a system of questionnaires through which it sought feedback from trainees and employers, these were poorly devised, comprising mainly closed questions, and were not used in a systematic way to improve practice. Since then, new forms of evaluation have been

designed. These include questionnaires requesting feedback from trainees and employers, aimed at both checking understanding of the NVQ process and assessing the effectiveness of the training. Trainees are also asked, during off-the-job training sessions, to identify how their training might be improved. Their responses are discussed during staff meetings, and actions taken as appropriate. For example, some trainees complained that the late ending of off-the-job-training sessions made it difficult for them to get home because of the unreliability of public transport. The timing of sessions was changed to alleviate this problem. When issues cannot be resolved, trainees are informed and a clear explanation given. The regular staff meeting is used, amongst other things, as a forum to discuss trainees' views, and to evaluate the effectiveness of newly developed procedures.

29. Most of the recently devised quality assurance procedures are too new to evaluate their effectiveness. Although most are now in use, Yorkshire College has had neither the time, nor the opportunity, to review them fully. There is no formal system for monitoring the new procedures, or for ensuring that they will be followed. Some activities, such as the practice of tutors swapping classes from time to time to get a clearer idea of trainees' abilities, have only happened on a few occasions, so have not yet been used to establish good practice. The weakness in internal verification identified during the first inspection encompassed several issues. It was poorly planned and lacked a system for identifying whether mistakes or shortcomings had been dealt with. Internal verification records were dispensed with at the end of each year, so there was no opportunity to use them in a developmental sense to improve assessors' performance. The task of internal verification was shared by two members of staff, but was only a small part of their role. Since the first inspection, the whole system has been improved. An additional part-time member of staff has been employed who has the main responsibility for internal verification. New documents have been devised, including a job description for internal verification, a glossary of NVQ terms, and an internal verification timetable. These are all helping the planning of internal verification. However, the system is very new, and although some assessments have been observed, there has not yet been any formal internal verification of portfolios. The new internal verifier has not yet achieved the relevant qualification for this role, although she is working towards it. It is too early to say how effective the new system will be.

30. Since the first inspection, action planning has been a regular focus for staff discussion. An action plan has been written which is continually evaluated and updated in line with ongoing developments. To encourage staff to participate fully in the process, an action plan book has been produced. This contains a complete version of the action plan, which employees are encouraged to refer to and update as appropriate. Staff write down any action they have taken which constitutes progress against the action plan. This prevents duplication of effort and ensures that a clear picture of the company's progress is constantly maintained. External verifiers initially highlighted an area requiring action, but in the most recent report acknowledge that remedial action has been taken and that they have no further issues.

31. The grade given for quality assurance in the revised self-assessment is accurate. The self-assessment report usefully distinguishes between strengths which were recognised during the first inspection, and which have been maintained, and improvements to practice which have been developed since. The judgements made are largely accurate, although a number of the strengths claimed across all aspects of training represent no more than normal practice. The weaknesses are realistic, but some are stated in terms of the action which the company considers necessary to remedy them, rather than as straightforward weaknesses. This hinders clarity. The report is not written exactly to the format set out in *Raising the Standard*, as it gives separate grades for training and assessment, trainees' achievement and resources in the occupational area. The action plan, which accompanies the report, is based on the original produced in response to the first inspection, and is clearly targeted. Quality assurance procedures now incorporate self-assessment as an integral component of monitoring improvements.