

INSPECTION REPORT

B-Skill Limited

18 February 2002



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and in New Deal options. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learn**direct provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Inadequate provision

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

- one third or more of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas and New Deal options are judged less than satisfactory, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

B-Skill Limited is a private training company which provides training in a mixture of vocational and prevocational courses in South Tyneside and Gateshead. Its main site is in South Shields and it has recently opened a second office in Gateshead. B-Skill Limited offers training to adult and young learners in a number of occupational areas. These include, retailing and customer services, engineering, technology and manufacturing, business administration, management and professional, information and communication technology, hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, health, social care and public services. There is training provision for young people in Life Skills.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the quality of work-based learning in retail and customer services and Life Skills is unsatisfactory. B-Skill Limited's leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Equality of opportunity is provided to a satisfactory level, but the quality assurance of the programme is not.

GRADES

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

Retailing, customer service & transportation	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Foundation programmes	4
Contributory grades:	
Life Skills	4

KEY STRENGTHS

- good management style
- effective financial management systems
- clear staff roles and responsibilities
- positive action to widen participation
- particularly supportive staff
- good development of learners' job skills and confidence

KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficient analysis of learners' data
- weak target-setting
- insufficient employer involvement in training
- poor strategic management
- no clear quality assurance framework
- insufficiently critical self-assessment
- poor retention and achievement rates
- slow progress in achieving key skills qualifications

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better learning resources for all learners
- improved staff recruitment
- better initial assessments

THE INSPECTION

1. Four inspectors spent a total of 16 days at B-Skill Limited (B-Skill) in February 2002. Two areas of learning, retailing and customer services and Life Skills, were inspected. Inspectors met 16 learners, conducted 19 interviews with B-Skill staff and visited the Gateshead and South Shields centres. They met four employers, visited six work placements and observed six learning sessions or progress reviews. A total of 17 portfolios and 20 individual learning plans were examined. A range of B-Skill paperwork was examined, which included policies, procedures and manuals, management information, minutes of meetings and reports from awarding bodies. Inspectors studied B-Skill's self-assessment report, which was produced in August 2001 and the action plan which accompanied it. Data for programmes inspected are limited because the company is relatively new.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Foundation programmes	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	5
Total	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	6

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. B-Skill, a small, private training company, was established in April 2000 to provide work experience, jobsearch and training for the over-16s. They also offer employability skills training and jobsearch to learners from years 10 and 11 from a nearby secondary school. The main training centre is based in South Shields, which forms part of Tyne and Wear. There is another training centre in Gateshead. B-Skill contracts directly with Tyne and Wear Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Employment Service in three units of delivery in the Tyneside areas, South Tyneside/Gateshead, Newcastle and North Tyneside. Initially, B-Skill only provided training in industrial cleaning services, but expansion has extended this provision to modern apprenticeships, national vocational qualifications (NVQs), New Deal and training for unemployed young people and adults. A large number of B-Skill learners are over 25 years of age.

3. The Gateshead and South Tyneside area has undergone considerable economic and structural changes in the past 25 years. The traditional industries of shipbuilding, coal mining and heavy engineering have been largely replaced by growth in the service sector, for example, in hotel and catering and leisure. There are skill shortages in transport and business services. However, recent developments in the ship repair and conversion industry offer the possibility of the creation of 2000 jobs. Factors influencing the local economy include low educational achievement, high levels of unemployment and high levels of social deprivation. Unemployment in the area is higher than the national average. In September 2001, unemployment rates for South Tyneside were at 9.5 per cent, compared to 5.2 per cent in Tyne and Wear and 2.9 per cent in England. In Tyne and Wear, 42 per cent of learners achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above in 2001, which is below the national average of 47.9 per cent. The figure for Gateshead was 49.3 per cent.

Work-based learning for young people

4. The quality of on-the-job training is satisfactory. Most of the training takes place in the workplace, not in either of the two training centres. Learners speak very enthusiastically about their training and the benefits they have gained from it, but many of these benefits are linked to confidence building, work experience and the opportunities for permanent employment rather than the achievement of recognised qualifications.

5. No learners on the programmes have achieved any NVQ or key skills awards. No one has successfully completed the modern apprenticeship programme. Learners are not able to explain how they are working towards achieving these qualifications or how their portfolios are used to provide evidence for them. Assessors are not sufficiently familiar with the system for internally assessing and verifying learners' work. Retention rates for foundation modern apprentices and NVQ learners are poor.

Life Skills

6. Overall, the training in Life Skills is satisfactory. The Life Skills programme is popular with all learners, many of whom have not previously enjoyed their educational experiences. A good proportion of learners find jobs, complete their training programmes. They work on assignments to improve communication, literacy, numeracy and information technology (IT) skills and they participate in outdoor activities to encourage group work and support for others. These programmes are not linked to the new adult literacy and numeracy core curriculum. Trainers for these programmes are not qualified in basic skills teaching and do not sufficiently differentiate between levels of ability. No learners are working towards externally accredited qualifications in literacy and numeracy.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

7. B-Skill is a privately owned company which was started in April 2000. It has two directors, one with responsibility for finance and the other with responsibility for marketing. The two directors share responsibility for operations. The third member of the management team is the quality assurance co-ordinator. There are 12 further members of staff, three of whom are part-time internal verifiers. In July 2001, B-Skill was accredited with the Investors in People standard, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. It also has external ISO accreditation, an international quality assurance standard, for its quality assurance system. B-Skill has policies on equal opportunities and harassment, which are given to staff and learners during their induction programme. B-Skill produced the self-assessment report used in the inspection in August 2001.

STRENGTHS

- good management style
- clear definition of staff roles and responsibilities
- effective financial management systems
- positive action to widen participation by disadvantaged groups

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient analysis of learner data
- weak target-setting
- insufficient employer involvement
- poor strategic management
- no clear quality assurance framework
- insufficiently critical self-assessment process

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better resources for all learners
- improved staff recruitment procedures
- better initial assessments

8. Internal communications are effective. Staff are aware of company procedures and have access to managers to discuss any issues with them. Managers are approachable and receptive to new ideas from staff. There is good teamwork in individual departments, although there is some reluctance to share information, ideas and resources between teams. Staff regularly discuss their workloads and targets with managers. Managers also make themselves available to learners, to provide guidance and support. The annual performance appraisals system has recently been revised. Staff

have clear roles and responsibilities which they fully understand. They have job descriptions that accurately reflect their work. The small team works flexibly, adjusting work roles to meet the business needs.

9. Financial management is good. B-Skill's operational plans are carefully designed and closely monitored. A financial report is presented to the management team meetings, ensuring that all three senior managers are fully informed on financial matters. Efficient use is made of resources. There are designated budgets for staff development, capital equipment, learning materials and external visits. There has been a significant investment in IT equipment and network facilities to give learners access to the Internet.

10. A sophisticated management database has been developed over the past 18 months. It gathers a range of data about learners, including their start dates, planned completion dates and qualification aims. The system is used to manage staff caseloads and monitor the frequency of progress reviews. However, data on learner retention and achievement rates are not collated, analysed or used as a management tool. Some of the learner retention and achievement rates data supplied to inspectors were unreliable. Managers do not have an effective monitoring system to give an overview of learners' progress. Some staff have introduced computerised monitoring systems for their own areas of learning, but these are not kept up to date and are not routinely used by managers.

11. Target-setting for staff and learners is poor. B-Skill's business plan for 2001-02 contains key objectives which are not explicit enough. It does not state how the objectives are to be achieved or by whom. Staff targets on the performance and development review summary also have insufficient detail. Quantitative staff targets relate only to numbers of learners starting the programme and the number of qualifications gained and do not include learner retention or achievement rates.

12. Managers have actively pursued the development of partnerships, for example through meetings with local networks, the Employment Service and local community groups. External partnerships are managed effectively. Managers have good knowledge of the local employment market and opportunities for work placements. But the systems for promoting learning opportunities and finding work placements are unstructured and lack a common approach. Employers are not sufficiently involved in the training process. There are no agreed workplace learning plans to link on- and off-the-job training. Employers want to be more involved in the programme, but nothing has been done about this.

13. There is poor strategic management. Staff are not kept up to date with developments in their areas of learning. Staff who deliver the Life Skills programme are unaware of the new literacy and numeracy core curriculum and staff in retailing are not familiar with the new occupational standards. Although senior managers are involved in local training networks, these are not used effectively in developing training programmes. There is no overall company training plan linked to the business plan to ensure that staff have the expertise to deliver business objectives. Most staff have

benefited from courses to improve their qualifications and expertise. However, some staff who deliver training do not hold appropriate teaching or training qualifications. The company does not employ anyone who is appropriately trained to deliver basic skills, or to support learners who have dyslexia. B-Skills responds to individual training requirements, rather than having a carefully developed strategic plan. Similarly, there is no clear strategy to implement B-Skill's equality of opportunity policy, actions are haphazard, lacking clear direction and targets.

14. Better training resources are needed. The building in South Shields is inappropriate. It is not large enough to house training areas and administrative functions. Access for those with restricted mobility is difficult. B-Skills has recognised these deficiencies in its self-assessment report and is looking for alternative premises. Learning resources are not routinely shared between staff teams. Some inappropriate resources are used when better ones are available.

15. Staff recruitment procedures are inadequate. Since April 2000, 25 members of staff have been recruited and 10 have subsequently left. There is a lack of continuity in the development of the business. The recruitment procedures are inconsistent and are not sufficiently thorough. B-Skills does not always obtain references and evidence of qualifications for newly recruited staff.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

16. B-Skill's equal opportunities officer is also one of the directors of this company. This officer is responsible for training and promotion in equal opportunities. Learners are given written information on bullying and harassment issues. Employers are required to have their own equal opportunities policies, or accept B-Skills policy. Where learning and social needs have been identified B-Skill is supportive and makes links with local agencies or funding bodies to assist learners. The public relations file shows that several learners have benefited from these links. However, one learner who has dyslexia, has not been given appropriate resources and there are no support systems.

17. There is an effective system to identify work placements which are suitable for learners with disabilities. Employers who can accommodate learners with specific disabilities are listed and work placements are matched appropriately. One learner who is profoundly deaf has obtained permanent employment this way. The main site is not appropriate for learners with mobility problems and there are no specialist teachers for learners with additional learning needs.

18. There is no overall plan which identifies how equal opportunities will be promoted. B-Skills is currently making efforts to widen participation in the training programme, by offering specialist courses, to local community groups. There is no plan or timescale involved. Equal opportunities issues are not monitored regularly and there is no use of data to develop them. Staff training is on an informal basis, they receive written updates of equal opportunities information, but this is not recorded. Learners' understanding of bullying and harassment issues is not regularly monitored.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

19. B-Skill has a quality assurance co-ordinator, but its quality assurance systems and procedures are inadequate. There is a quality assurance policy which identifies B-Skill's targets for quality assurance, but there is no clear plan to show when systems and procedures will be reviewed. Staff do not sufficiently understand quality assurance systems and their practices are not consistent throughout the training provision. Internal verification and assessment procedures are inadequate. There is no sampling plan for the internal verification of portfolios and no plan for the observation of assessments. Recommendations by an external verifier have not been implemented. A new internal verifier is developing improvements to the systems, but it is too soon to assess the effects of these measures. Learners are not sufficiently involved in building their portfolios and employers do not understand the NVQ system. Employers do not understand the relevance of NVQs to their learners and have had insufficient involvement in the planning of training. Not all assessors fully understand or apply the correct assessment procedures. Observations of assessments have taken place, but there are no formal systems for the observation of teaching and learning. Key Skills training has only recently been introduced and learners are not clear how it fits into their training. Some progress reviews are neither signed nor dated. When feedback has been given, it has not been formally recorded.

20. There is an induction period, during which learners take an initial assessment for literacy and numeracy, but there is no formal initial assessment of key skills needs or other learning needs. Many targets set for learners are vague, have no achievement dates, and expected outcomes are not specific enough. The stages in achieving the learning goals are not made clear and learners are unaware of what these goals represent. At the end of their programme, learners complete an exit questionnaire. There are no specific questions on the quality or content of courses, simply a small box in which to write comments. This is inadequate for learners whose communication skills may be poor. Responses are neither collated into statistical form, nor sufficiently analysed to help in further programme development.

21. The self-assessment report was drawn up eight months before the inspection and involved a number of staff. B-Skill failed to identify a number of weaknesses which affect learners. Some strengths and weaknesses were correctly identified, but action points in the subsequent action plan have not been completed. The action plan does not indicate when, or by whom, the improvements will be made, or how they will be measured.

Good Practice
<p><i>A member of B-Skill's staff had been formerly employed as a housing officer. When she discovered that one learner with very low self-esteem and confidence had no accommodation, she provided the expertise and support to help him find suitable housing and further assisted him in finding employment.</i></p>

AREAS OF LEARNING

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	11	4

22. There are 11 learners in the retailing and customer service area of learning. Eight are foundation modern apprentices in customer service and three are on other work-based learning for young people in retailing. Most learners are already in employment. Those who are referred from the careers service are interviewed by the assessor. Learners who are not in employment at the start of their training programme have their induction at a B-Skill training centre. Learners who are already employed, have their induction in the workplace with the assessor. One learner has progressed to an NVQ at level 2 in retailing from a Life Skills programme. There are training centres in Gateshead and South Shields, but nearly all training and assessment takes place in the workplace. There is one training officer who assesses the learners in their workplace.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	10		4													
Retained	0		0													
Successfully completed	0		0													
Still in learning	4		4													

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02															
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	12															
Retained	0															
Successfully completed	0															
Still in learning	3															

STRENGTHS

- particularly supportive staff
- positive effect on learners' job skills and confidence

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates
- slow progress in achieving key skills qualifications
- some poor assessment practices
- ineffective progress reviews

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more comprehensive internal verification strategy
- further information on NVQs for employers

23. B-Skill staff have a flexible and individual approach to training. The assessor visits learners at least every two weeks. Visits are made at times to suit employers and learners and can be arranged to fit in with shift patterns. Employers have good communications with B-Skill staff. Staff are aware of the need to overcome problems that may prevent young people from learning, and approach pastoral issues professionally and with tact. Staff also deal firmly, but supportively, with problems such as poor attendance.

24. Employers consider that the training programmes have improved learners' job skills and confidence. Learners feel more able to do their jobs as a result of their training and feel more confident in their roles.

25. Learners' retention and achievement rates are poor. Of the 14 learners that started on foundation modern apprenticeship programmes, 60 per cent have left before completing the programme and no learner has achieved a qualification. Of the 12 learners that started on NVQ training, 75 per cent have left early and no qualifications have been achieved.

26. There is an initial assessment of learners' basic skills, but insufficient assessment for the vocational qualification and none for key skills training. Learners are making slow progress towards their key skills qualifications. Training in key skills is introduced towards the end of learners' programmes. It is not included from the outset as an integral part of vocational training. Staff have started to identify how learners could

develop key skills through aspects of their work, but evidence that has been produced so far has not been accredited. Some learners are nearing the end of their training programmes with most of the key skills units still outstanding. There is no internal verification strategy for key skills units.

27. There are some poor assessment practices. Most learners do not understand how to build their portfolios. The assessor puts learners' evidence into their portfolios and cross-reference it against the NVQ requirements. Learners do not know where evidence is in their portfolios, or how it has been used. Learners are not sufficiently involved in working towards their qualifications and do not complete work on their own, they wait to be told what to do by the assessor. Some evidence in portfolios has not been signed and dated by the assessor or the learner. There is not enough assessment in the workplace, there is no use of witness testimonies from learners' supervisors, colleagues or managers. A lot of evidence of learners' competences based on their everyday work has not been collected. Learners can use handouts and question packs to demonstrate their background knowledge for the NVQ. Further handouts and projects to support key skills training are being developed.

28. Progress reviews take place every four weeks, but are not effective. The reviews cannot be used to measure progress against individual learning plans, as everything in the plans has the same target date, the end date of the training programme. The learners' individual learning plans are not updated to take account of their progress and achievements. Many targets recorded on progress review forms lack detail and there is no evidence of any follow-up on these targets during subsequent progress reviews. Short-term targets are set during assessments, so learners are clear what they need to do between assessment visits. There are NVQ monitoring sheets in some portfolios, but not all of these are updated and it is difficult to see what the learner has actually completed towards their NVQ. Learners are unsure how much of their NVQ they have completed, what they will be completing next and when they will finish their programmes. Employers are not involved in progress reviews. They do not usually sign the progress review forms, or record any comments regarding the learner's progress. Employers do not have sufficient information about their learners' NVQs. The progress reviews do not re-emphasise equality of opportunity.

29. There is a general internal verification strategy, but not one for key skills. The internal verifier samples portfolios, but these verifications do not keep to the dates on the sampling plan. Observations of assessment take place, but there is no plan to show what will be observed and when.

Poor Practice

A learner working in a supervisory position as a team leader has only just had an initial assessment for her NVQ, despite being on a foundation modern apprenticeship for over nine months. The assessment shows that a higher level of NVQ would have been more appropriate. She had no initial assessment of her key skills abilities and has recently scored 100 per cent in mock key skills assessments.

Foundation programmes**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Life Skills	24	4

30. The Life Skills programme at B-Skill South Shields training centre has been operating since 2000 and currently has 24 learners. They are referred by their careers officer who carries out some initial assessment activities and prepares an individual development plan. Most learners have difficult personal circumstances and other severe barriers to further training, such as poor literacy and numeracy skills. Their basic skills are assessed at the start of the programme. Basic skills support needs are identified and attendance at workshops is optional. Learners have an initial half-day induction with B-Skills and a further induction to the Life Skills programme to help them understand the programme and settle in. The core elements of the programme require learners to attend three days a week, which includes a half-day for additional activities. B-Skills offers internal certification in confidence building, motivation and communication skills. External accreditation is available for some health and safety, IT and community life-saving awards. Formal progress reviews take place every four weeks with additional reviews and action-planning as necessary. Two tutors and an assistant are responsible for the Life Skills programmes.

STRENGTHS

- particularly effective staff support for learners
- good development of learners' skills and confidence

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate target-setting for learners
- inadequate training materials
- unclear learning objectives
- no work experience for learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater emphasis on recording achievement
- more effective use of individual learning plans

31. The Life Skills programme lasts for 19 weeks and allows for learners to attend 16 hours a week to suit individual needs. They work on a programme of colour-coded awards with varying degrees of difficulty. These are designed to focus on personal and social skills, jobsearch and to improve attendance, timekeeping and behaviour. Learners are awarded £10 vouchers on completion of a colour award, or they can accumulate points that can be used for group social activities. As part of the training programme they can participate in a wide range of outdoor activities.

32. Learners work in small groups with three members of staff available to help. Staff give a good level of support to individual learners and encourage them to work together. The staff work well as a team and are well aware of all the issues and problems that learners face. Personal issues are dealt with swiftly to ensure that learners have a stable environment and are able to continue with their training programme. Learners appreciate the support and respond well to the staff.

33. Learners enjoy their time on the Life Skills programme and their new social, communication and computer skills help to improve confidence and self-esteem. A number of learners have noticed improvements in their communication skills and confidence and are now able to work better in a team. This was particularly evident when learners, who had previously been unable to interact well with others, participated in group discussions and confidently talked through a project of their choice from prepared handouts. They were also able to answer questions from other learners. Learners with no previous computer experience can now use computers and have regular periods to use the Internet to research information for projects and job prospects.

34. In the year 2000-01, 62 per cent of learners gained a job, completed the programme or progressed to further learning. Although 19 per cent of learners went into employment, only one learner went into employment with further training.

35. Progress reviews are carried out regularly with learners. However, a number of reviews contain general and vague comments. Short-term targets for key objectives such as attendance and behaviour are sometimes vague and lacking in detail. In particular, progress reviews do not specify the stages that learners need to achieve for the next targets, or the timescales within which they must be achieved. Learners are given copies of the progress reviews, but do not use the identified targets to review their own progress. Individual development plans are common to all learners who have similar learning targets. Progress reviews are updated on learning plans, but do not always include information on the achievement of awards. Some support needs are not well recorded or specific enough. Comments on learning plans state that learners will be given more individual basic skills support, but there are no indications as to how or when this support will be delivered or completed.

36. Almost all training materials, including those for basic skills, are designed by staff.

Some worksheets contain words and ideas which are too difficult for learners to understand. Others contain inappropriate language for learners, particularly those used for interview techniques. These handouts do not prepare learners adequately for job interviews. A number of learners have been identified through initial assessment as having additional support needs, including those for dyslexia, but there is no specialist trainer or resources to deal with these needs. Overall, training materials lack specific learning objectives and do not clearly state the aims for learners with these learning difficulties. Basic skills training is usually limited to specific sessions and is not integrated with other activities of the training programme. Learners are given a number of written exercises in reading, punctuation, spelling and working with numbers. These skills are not applied to real-life situations or to skills needed in the workplace. Learners do not have the opportunity to practise them and are not aware if they have made any progress. Opportunities to use computers to support developments in literacy and numeracy have not been recognised. There are few good books and learning materials relevant to employment. Although staff have teaching qualifications, no member of staff on the Life Skills programme has any qualifications in teaching basic skills.

37. Learners do not understand what they must do in order to achieve each colour award. They work on a range of tasks involving group interaction, discussions, setting targets and jobsearch activities. The learning objectives for each award are not clear. As a result, learners are uncertain about the aims of each award and the progression between different colour awards. Some are working on more than one colour award with insufficient understanding of the differences between them. They do not understand how they will be assessed. There is currently no system in place to record and monitor learners' overall achievements for the colour awards and short courses. Achievements for completion of colour awards are clearly indicated on wall charts, but other achievements relating to health and safety courses or IT units are not included.

38. There are no links with employers to offer short-term or extended work experience. As a result there are no learners currently on work placement. They are not given the opportunity to develop work-related skills in the workplace. This weakness was recognised in the self-assessment report.

Good Practice

One learner with extreme personal difficulties had no change of clothing. B-Skill provided funds and also took the learner shopping for clothes, so that the learner could continue with training.