

INSPECTION REPORT

The British Racing School

20 May 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 Jobcentre Plus programmes. 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 funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of her majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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 Jobcentre Plus programmes 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

The British Racing School is a charity with the role of providing training in support of the horse racing industry. It operates from a head office and training centre at Newmarket in Suffolk. There are 195 foundation and 65 advanced modern apprentices following work-based learning programmes in horse care and management. The learners are employed throughout the country, many with top racehorse trainers. Learning for those following the breeding option is subcontracted to the National Stud.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Work-based learning in the land-based area of learning is good. Leadership and management are also good. Equality of opportunity and quality assurance are both satisfactory.

GRADES

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	3

Land-based provision	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- high attainment of occupational and personal skills
- extensive and productive links with industry
- well-resourced and good off-the-job training
- excellent key skills training and assessment
- comprehensive and effective pastoral care
- strong leadership and management
- self-critical culture

KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- poorly planned and reviewed on-the-job learning
- weak assessment practices

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more comprehensive initial assessment
- better accreditation of prior learning

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of six inspectors spent a total of 28 days at The British Racing School (BRS) in May 2002. Two inspectors spent their time at remote locations meeting learners in the north and south of the country. They visited 27 workplaces and interviewed 49 learners. A further three learners who are based in remote locations were interviewed by telephone. Inspectors met with 23 employers and conducted 14 interviews with BRS's staff. They observed progress reviews and assessment activities and observed and graded nine learning sessions. They also examined a range of documents including learners' files, individual learning plans, assessment documents, assessment portfolios, minutes of meetings, policies and procedures, marketing information, contracts and audit reports. The most recent self-assessment report was produced in May 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Land-based provision	0	3	4	2	0	0	0	9
Total	0	3	4	2	0	0	0	9

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. The BRS is a registered charity overseen by a board of trustees. It was set up in 1983 and is based in Newmarket. Its role is to provide training in support of the horse racing industry where there is a national skills shortage. Under the rules of racing, administered by The Jockey Club, it is mandatory for all those under the age of 19 who wish to work as stable staff in a trainer's yard to undergo training. There are an estimated 600 licensed trainers and 4,000 full-time and part-time stable staff working in the racing industry. They are based throughout the country but are mainly concentrated at Newmarket in Suffolk, Lambourn in Berkshire and Middleham in Yorkshire. The location of learners reflects this national pattern. Suffolk Learning and Skills Council (LSC) contracts with the BRS for work-based learning. There are 195 foundation and 65 advance modern apprentices. Sixty-one per cent of BRS's operating income comes from the Suffolk LSC and 23 per cent from the industry's training board who collect a training levy from the horse racing industry. The remainder comes from charitable and commercial activities.

3. The board of trustees is made up of members representing all aspects of the racing industry. This is augmented by a trainers' committee which is made up of employers from the horse racing industry in different parts of the country. BRS offers national vocational qualifications (NVQs) from the industry's training board which regulates the training and assessment process on behalf of the land-based sector. The BRS is organised into five areas covering jockey training, stable staff training, operations and management, facilities and hostel management, and financial management. The director of the BRS is supported by three senior managers, 13 full-time staff and 11 part-time staff. The operations manager oversees training support and the monitoring of learners at their place of work. All learners start as foundation modern apprentices and attend an intensive residential training course before moving into employment in the racing industry.

4. Learners' workplaces are located in mainly rural areas with lower levels of unemployment than the national average of 2.9 per cent. In October 2001, unemployment rates were 2.2 per cent in Suffolk, 1.9 per cent in North Yorkshire and less than 1 per cent in West Berkshire. Similarly, the number of people from minority ethnic groups is low when compared with the national average of 6.2 per cent. The averages are 2.2 per cent in Suffolk, less than 1 per cent in North Yorkshire and 1.6 per cent in West Berkshire. In September 2001, the proportion of school leavers starting training with the BRS who achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was significantly lower than the national average of 47.9 per cent. During the summer period when most starters are recent school leavers, around 25 per cent have achieved five or more GCSEs at grade C or above.

Work-based learning for young people

5. Retention and achievement rates are both satisfactory. For foundation modern apprentices, achievement rates consistently exceed 50 per cent. In 2001-02, 84 per cent of advanced modern apprentices and 64 per cent of foundation modern apprentices have been retained. There are excellent key skills achievements. Since 1997, 82 per cent of foundation modern apprentices who started the programme achieved their key skills. Learners attain high levels of occupational and personal skills and make significant progress towards fulfilling their goals and potential. They quickly develop the personal skills demanded by the racing industry. These include hard work, long hours, commitment, courage, physical fitness, manners and a good standard of dress.

6. Teaching and practical training are of a high standard and staff are well qualified and highly experienced. Resources for off-the-job training meet industry specifications. Information technology (IT) is used to good effect in learning. Employers provide learners with excellent resources and are among the best in their field. Assessment practices used during off-the-job training are adequate. Assessment in the workplace is weak with poorly planned on-the-job learning and assessment. The learners' progress is effectively monitored during off-the-job training but it is weak once learners are employed. Learners and employers are highly satisfied with training. Learners benefit from comprehensive and effective pastoral support, which comes from staff at all levels within the BRS. Youth workers offer support with the development of personal skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

7. The BRS is managed by a director and a senior management team. The director reports to a board of trustees. The senior management team is made up of the director, together with the operations manager who is responsible for the training courses, resources and quality assurance, the financial controller who co-ordinates marketing and finance and the facilities manager who oversees the hostel accommodation. There are a further 13 full-time members of staff, 11 part-time and four employed as part of an external catering contract. Four of the part-time staff are self-employed as assessors and are not included in the full range of staff meetings and development. The assessors are responsible for assessments and monitoring learners in the workplace all over England and some in Wales and Scotland. The BRS was accredited with the Investors in People standard in 1995, which was successfully updated in 1998. It has a quality assurance system which has been developed to a national standard and is now being replaced with a system more tailored to meet the needs of the BRS. The BRS has an equal opportunities policy for staff and learners. Self-assessment reports were developed in 1998 and updated on a number of occasions. Development of the report to the 'Common Inspection Framework' began in August 2001. The most recent self-assessment report was produced in May 2002.

STRENGTHS

- clear strategic management
- highly productive external links
- self-critical culture
- effective recruitment strategy which promotes inclusion
- good strategies to improve retention and achievement rates
- well-used management information system

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- poor quality assurance of assessment practices
- weak strategy for managing advanced modern apprentices

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more training on key skills for assessors
- more inclusive self-assessment process
- better sharing of good practice with subcontractors
- more formal quality assurance of training

8. The BRS has a clear strategy for development which is fully endorsed and supported

by the trustees, a strength which was identified in the self-assessment report. An annual business plan clearly sets out the developments for the current year. A summary version of the business plan is given to all members of staff. Progress is monitored by the senior management team through monthly meetings and regular full staff meetings. Yard staff meet each week. Staff have well defined roles and responsibilities. A weekly diary is given to staff to ensure that they are kept fully informed of operational issues. The senior management team and a selection of senior staff were involved in the development of the self-assessment report. Although all staff are involved in an annual review of training, the BRS does not adopt a fully inclusive approach to enable everyone be involved in the self-assessment process. The director's profile is high within the industry and the BRS. Senior managers have an excellent understanding of the whole process of training, and meet every learner individually as part of the evaluation and placement process.

9. The use made of external links is excellent. Senior managers' knowledge and contacts within the racing industry ensures that industrial placements are secured for all learners on completion of their training. This knowledge is also highly productive when fund-raising for capital items. For example, the BRS has just secured funds towards a new accommodation block and the technology suite has been sponsored by a racing industry organisation. High profile personalities from the racing industry regularly accept invitations to share their experiences with learners or to award end-of-course certificates. Funds are obtained from the racing welfare charities for the provision of enhanced personal development for learners through a Life Skills programme. The programme covers subjects such as budgeting, gender issues and drug misuse. The programme assists learners making the transition from BRS to their work placements. Good links with awarding bodies and the sector skills council for land-based industries are used to improve learners' training.

10. The BRS has developed good strategies to improve learners' retention and achievement rates. A series of two-day induction courses are organised for those learners with little understanding of the work involved in the racing industry. The induction course enables learners to make informed choices about their future. Current statistics indicate that 78 per cent complete the full foundation modern apprenticeship framework, compared with 75 per cent of those who did not attend the two-day course. More learners leave the course during the first few weeks than at any other time. Reasons for leaving include, severe homesickness, injury or a realisation that this type of work is not what they want to do. Occasionally a learner will be asked to leave either because they are reviewed as not suitable for the work or due to poor behaviour. An exit programme for early leavers is not currently available. BRS is proud of its achievement in offering a guarantee to learners that they will be found employment on completion of the nine weeks' training. This encourages learners to complete their training.

11. While the BRS has a successful record of managing the foundation modern apprenticeship programme, in particular the key skills element, the management of the advanced modern apprenticeship programme is weak. All learners are given a

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portfolio, which includes key skills units, at the beginning of their training programme. However, learners have no previous knowledge of developing portfolios, as this is not the method used for assessment at the foundation level. There is inadequate preparation for learners to develop their portfolios appropriately. Support and review of learners' progress in the workplace relies on the assessors, who do not have the required understanding to advise on key skills or on portfolio development. The BRS has recently created a post for an advanced training co-ordinator to oversee and manage the programme and to ensure that the team of assessors are adequately skilled to meet the learners' needs. However, this has not yet had an impact on the learners' experience.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 3**

12. The BRS has a comprehensive recruitment strategy which promotes inclusion. Research data have indicated to the BRS that the land-based sectors' workforce shows a significant under-representation of learners from minority ethnic communities, less than 1 per cent of the workforce, compared with 5 per cent nationally. In response to this, the BRS has targeted the under representation of learners from minority ethnic communities and those from inner city areas. The strategy includes participation in a number of exhibitions in large cities and at relevant trade shows and events. A series of open days for careers advisers, who still remain the largest referring agents, has been favourably received. The referral rate from careers advisers is approximately 60 per cent of learners. The BRS recognises that careers advisers are not always able to travel away from their own regional areas and has therefore visited some to give presentations. Staff also publicise good news stories in the local press and specialist journals featuring under-represented groups. Recent and current intakes of learners indicate that the BRS is starting to have some success with this strategy. A number of learners are from under-represented groups such as from inner cities or from minority ethnic backgrounds. Young people are becoming increasingly used to finding information on the Internet. The BRS has its own website and there has been a steady increase in the number of applications for training through this source. Gender differentiation in the equine industry nationally is approximately 75 to 25 per cent ratio female to male recruits. The data for the BRS are better balanced at approximately 60 to 40 per cent ratio female to male recruits. Interviews are always conducted with two members of staff, usually the director and a senior instructor to ensure fairness in the selection procedure.

13. While the BRS has undertaken extensive research to produce an equal opportunities policy which is distributed to staff and learners, there is little monitoring of equality of opportunity within the workplace. Learners are given good information about equality of opportunity during their induction programme and have a good recall of essential information. However, this is often not reinforced when they start work. The BRS director is the designated member of staff responsible for equality of opportunity. Other staff who have direct contact with learners, do not have the same level of understanding. Monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace lies with the assessors. A revised progress review form has recently been introduced which includes a section for monitoring equality of opportunity, but little useful information is recorded. Staff have insufficient understanding of this area to ensure that learners on work placements and the employing organisations are being adequately monitored. Instructors visit work placements to check that standards at work placements are appropriate.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

14. There is a self-critical culture within the BRS. Feedback on taster days is sought verbally from participants, and by formal questionnaire from parents. Evaluations are carried out with every group of learners at the end of their residential off-the-job training, and each learner meets the BRS's director for discussion and to help identify improvements. Views of workplace trainers are sought through workplace visits and by completion of a questionnaire every other year. Results from evaluations are analysed and action is taken promptly to improve performance. One criticism from workplace providers that the standard of horsemanship was not good enough, resulted in the school contracting an Olympic trainer to advise on what could be done to improve the riding sessions. Trainer and learner surveys indicate a high satisfaction rate with the training programme, and indicate that the learners are well prepared for work in the racing industry. Annual reviews of the training programmes involve all relevant staff and result in defined actions to improve provision. The self-assessment report accurately identifies many of these areas and makes realistic judgements about their impact on the quality of provision. Inspectors' grades matched all but one in the self-assessment report. The development plan identifies areas of improvement, together with challenging but realistic timescales by named people.

15. There is a clear reporting format for learner information at the school. IT is used to good effect to produce good information for staff to help identify and improve the learners' progress. Key skills progress is not currently recorded, but there are plans to include this in the next phase of development of the system. All quality assurance documents and associated forms are available on the system. This includes all lesson plans and timetables for the residential off-the-job training course, making it easy for staff to cover for an absent colleague at short notice. Reference documents from other sources such as the local LSC are also listed on the system. All quality assurance documents are checked annually by named staff responsible for their currency.

16. The assessment process is not adequately quality assured. There is no forward planning of internal verification, and no system to ensure that all learners and all NVO units are sampled by internal verifiers. Most verification takes place towards the end of the training programme, and assessment which takes place at the workplace is not internally verified. Little feedback is given to assessors on the quality of their assessments, and some verification is carried out by a second assessment of the learner rather than checking on the quality of the original decisions made by the assessor. Only the assessors who carry out assessments in the workplace are included in the verification sample. These assessors are verified at the BRS on different units from those which they assess at work placements. Some assessors are not included in standard setting activities, and, although revised quality assurance systems include a more comprehensive sampling strategy and meet the requirements of the awarding body, they are insufficient to guarantee the quality of assessment.

Good Practice

The senior manager meets with every learner individually to discuss concerns and identify improvements which can be made. He tours the school on a daily basis which allows him to build up a detailed understanding of the learners and the quality of the teaching and learning activities. Through excellent contacts with the industry and an extensive knowledge of the employers which offer work placements, he is able to closely match learners to employers.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Land-based provision

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	260	2

17. The BRS offers training leading to NVQ at level 2 in racehorse care and NVQ at level 3 in racehorse care and management. All learners are recruited as foundation modern apprentices. They progress to an advanced modern apprenticeship when they complete their foundation modern apprenticeship. There are 195 foundation and 65 advanced modern apprentices. Learners are recruited nationally through careers service referrals, careers advice days, taster days, advertisements in specialist magazines and the BRS website. Some learners are recruited directly from employers, as it is a requirement of the Jockey Club that all stable staff under the age of 19 undergo training. Learners do not need to have any experience of riding or handling horses before starting the training programme. The BRS's director and senior instructor interview all potential learners. There is a subcontractor who trains those learners who wish to follow the NVQ breeding option. Foundation modern apprentices on the riding option start their training programme with nine weeks of residential off-the-job training at the BRS. Twelve residential off-the-job training courses take place each year with regular start dates. During this time, they aim to achieve six of the nine units of the level 2 NVQ and key skills. Learners who finish the off-the-job training are guaranteed a job in the racing industry. Learners on the breeding option attend eight weeks of off-the-job training with the subcontractor and are then placed at a suitable stud.

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

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	51		17		15		6									
Retained*	0		11		7		0	0								
Successfully completed	0		0		4		1	17								
Still in learning	51		11		3		0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	247		209		234		173		171							
Retained*	14		89	43	113	48	94	54	117	68						
Successfully completed	14		80	38	113	48	91	53	116	68						
Still in learning	157		32	15	6	3	0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- high attainment of occupational and personal skills
- excellent off-the-job training
- good resources for training
- excellent key skills achievement for foundation modern apprentices
- comprehensive and effective pastoral care

WEAKNESSES

- ineffective progress reviews in the workplace
- poor planning of on-the-job learning
- poor assessment practices in the workplace

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of learners' prior experience
- more comprehensive initial assessment for advanced modern apprentices

18. Learners reach high levels of occupational and personal skills and make significant progress towards fulfilling their goals and potential. Many learners have no experience of horses when they start training but after the residential off-the-job training they are well prepared for the workplace. They are able to canter horses on outside gallops, have basic stable management skills and work at the standard required by the racing

industry. Achievement and retention rates are satisfactory for foundation modern apprentices, but have been low for advanced modern apprentices, although they are improving. For 2001-02, 84 per cent of advanced modern apprentices and 64 per cent of foundation modern apprentices are still in learning. On average, 74 per cent of foundation modern apprentices progress from the residential off-the-job training. The BRS grades learners at the start and end of their off-the-job training in order to gauge the improvement in their riding, horse care and personal skills. Learners are well aware of the progress they have made and are justifiably proud of their achievements. All learners who complete the residential training are guaranteed a job in the racing industry. The BRS has monitored those foundation modern apprentices who started employment a year ago, and 84 per cent are still employed within the British racing industry. Of the remainder, some have transferred to stud work and many are working in the racing industry in other European countries. Learners develop the necessary personal skills to be successful in the racing industry which demands hard work, long hours, commitment, courage, and physical fitness. The BRS ensures that learners know the importance of being punctual, having a high standard of turn-out for themselves and their horses, presenting horses correctly at evening stables and dealing politely with owners and visitors.

19. There is excellent off-the-job training which is well planned and well structured. There are lesson plans for all the training sessions, stable-management and riding sessions. Training is effectively linked to the NVQ units and frequent tests are carried out to confirm learners' knowledge and understanding. Learners receive constant and constructive help from their instructors. During the weekly progress reviews, they discuss what has gone well during the past week and targets are set for the next week. Learners are given additional individual support, particularly if they are having difficulties with the riding. Instructors are extremely supportive and have a clear understanding of learner's individual needs. Videos are used extensively to help to improve the learners' riding performance. Great attention is paid to health and safety, and learners are taught to handle thoroughbreds safely and confidently at the very start of the off-the-job training. Learners' overall progress is reviewed after four weeks and if they are not on target to achieve the necessary skills, they are allowed to restart their training with the next intake. The BRS yard is a realistic working environment, which compares favourably with many commercial racing yards. Advanced modern apprentices attend BRS for specialist courses which are tailored to learner and employer requirements. The BRS refunds the cost of travel and offers free accommodation. It also ensures that learners receive their full salary while on the training course. There is insufficient initial assessment of learners who are progressing on to the advanced modern apprenticeship.

20. There are good resources for training. Off-the-job training courses are restricted to a maximum of 16 learners. BRS has an indoor school as well as two all-weather gallops. One of the gallops is enclosed and ensures a safe transition for riders from the indoor school to outside canter work. There is an excellent range of 54 mostly thoroughbred horses, which caters for all abilities. When riding, learners are equipped with radio headsets, which allows instructors to communicate easily with learners. Extensive use is made of a specially adapted van, which allows a second instructor to video learners on

the straight gallop. There are three mechanical and three non-mechanical horse simulators. Head- and side-on digital cameras allow riders to view their performance. Staff are well qualified and have extensive experience in the racing industry. A new teaching wing was opened in April 2002 which includes the equicisor room and two classrooms. They are equipped with audio-visual teaching systems and there is a well-equipped suite of IT equipment. The BRS yard has traditional stabling and an American barn. Plans to replace the out-dated learner accommodation are at an advanced stage. On completion of the off-the-job training, learners are placed in good working environments. Many are employed by well-known trainers and work in excellent environments where there are good opportunities for learning with thoroughbred horses.

21. There are excellent key skills achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices. On average, 82 per cent of learners who started foundation modern apprenticeships between 1997 and 2001 achieved the required key skills. Key skills are achieved while learners attend off-the-job training where they are taught and assessed in the context of the racing industry. A specialist IT trainer teaches the IT key skills. The BRS has negotiated with the awarding body to allow the external tests to take place more frequently than the usual schedule. This has allowed learners to take the external tests during their off-the-job training, rather than having to wait several months. Pass rates for the external tests are high at 74 per cent. Learners are set practice tests each week during the off-the-job training.

22. There is comprehensive and effective pastoral care. Each nine-week course includes five evening sessions and one whole-day session on life skills from trained youth workers from a local organisation. Subjects include teamwork, drug awareness, diet, alcohol awareness, money management and sex education. BRS's instructors offer pastoral support and guidance to learners. Learners speak highly of the level of support given by their instructors. There are residential wardens on duty 24 hours a day. Kitchen staff have adopted a strong pastoral role and take a keen interest in learners' progress. The racing industry's chaplain visits once a week or more often if needed. In the workplace 92 per cent of learners have a mentor for support, advice and guidance. Learners receive a briefing on the work of the racing welfare charity during their residential training. Senior management observes the first group of riders each morning. As learners progress through off-the-job training, senior management takes a keen interest in their performance and matches them to the most appropriate employer. The success of this is demonstrated by the extremely low number of learners changing employers. There is insufficient use of learners' prior experience.

23. Progress reviews are carried out every eight weeks in the workplace, but they are ineffective. The BRS has recently made changes to the review paperwork but this has not yet resulted in an improvement in the quality of the workplace reviews. They do not review and record the learners' work since the previous review. There is confusion between the processes of review and assessment. Little use is made of target-setting and when targets are set, they are vague. Supervisors are not involved in the review process, although the assessor does have a brief discussion before leaving. Learners and

supervisors are not always given copies of the review paperwork. The progress reviews do not leave the learner with a clear record of their achievement or training targets.

24. There is poor planning of the on-the-job training and individual learning plans are not used effectively. Targets for achievement of units coincide with the end of the nine-week residential course or the end of the planned time in training. Most learners are unaware of their learning plan. They are not routinely updated and do not record any additional learning support. When learners leave the residential course, they have a poor understanding of which NVQ units they have achieved. Neither learners nor employers have copies of the NVQ standards and employers are unaware of the learners' progress. They are not able to plan the learners' work to support achievement of the NVQ. Learners' mentors have not been given the necessary training to enable them to understand the requirements of the NVQ. Many learners make slow progress towards completing their foundation framework after they have finished the residential course. Some learners take up to a year to achieve another unit of the NVQ.

25. There are poor assessment practices in the workplace. The BRS has recently introduced a new assessment strategy and this has significantly improved the standard of assessment during the residential course. Assessments at the BRS are now thorough and well recorded, but they are not yet evident in the workplace assessments. There is an over-reliance on verbal witness testimony from yard staff who may have insufficient knowledge or understanding of the NVQ standards. There are no set questions to ensure consistency of checking learner's knowledge and understanding. There is no recording of the learners' answers to questions asked during assessment. Learners do not have records of their achievements and they do not know what will be assessed at the next assessment visit. Portfolios which were examined during the inspection were below the standard expected for level 3 NVQ learners. Learners have received little training in producing portfolios and are unclear how to gather and reference evidence. There is a small number of work-based assessors but they have not received any recent updates or information on setting standards.

Good Practice

One learner had difficulties with his employer and became homeless and jobless. He rang the BRS who arranged for him to return to Newmarket and paid the cost of his travel. He was allowed to stay at the hostel free of charge for ten weeks during which time he achieved the NVQ at level 2. He was then found suitable employment and is now settled in his new job and progressing well.