INSPECTION REPORT

The Yorkshire College Of Beauty Therapy

06 August 2002



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 i |
| grade 3 | grade 2 |
| grade 4 | grade 3 |
| grade 5 | grade 4 |
| grade 6 | grade 5 |
| grade 7 | grade 5 |

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
- learndirect 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

Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy is a private training organisation based in Yeadon near Leeds. It was established in 1983 by its current managing director, who is also the college's principal. All the learners are either working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in beauty therapy, or for other internationally recognised specialist qualifications.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy's leadership and management are satisfactory, and the quality of work-based learning in beauty therapy is good.

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GRADES

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

| Hairdressing & beauty therapy | 2 |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Contributory grades: | |
| Work-based learning for young people | 2 |

KEY STRENGTHS

- outstanding achievement rates
- outstanding retention rates
- · good quality work placements
- effective informal quality assurance systems
- inclusive management processes

KEY WEAKNESSES

- inadequate review process
- inadequate internal verification system
- underdeveloped support strategies

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

• more formal written procedures

THE INSPECTION

1. Three inspectors spent a total of 12 days at Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy (YCBT) in August 2002. They met 18 learners, conducted 13 interviews with staff, and with nine employers, and visited six work placements. They observed two training sessions and examined 14 individual learning plans and eight learners' portfolios. They saw a range of YCBT's paperwork including policies, procedures, manuals, management information, minutes of meetings, reports from awarding bodies and data on retention and achievement rates. The self-assessment report and subsequent development plan were also considered.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

| | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | Grade 7 | Total |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Hairdressing & beauty therapy | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

- 2. YCBT is a private training organisation established in 1983. It is based in Yeadon, close to Leeds, Bradford and Harrogate. Most of the learners come from the local area. The senior management team comprises the principal and the training manager, who is also a director of the organisation. There are six other staff. They are the office manager, the internal verifier, three assessors and trainers, and one trainer who works exclusively with private, fee-paying students. The company contracts with West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide government-funded, work-based learning in beauty therapy. Learners either work towards NVQs in beauty therapy, or for other internationally recognised specialist qualifications. Some learners have progressed into higher education and careers in physiotherapy and radiography. A number of former learners have opened their own salons and now provide salon work experience for new learners with YCBT.
- 3. Leeds is the largest employment centre in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, with 440,000 working people. In May 2002, the unemployment rate in England was 3 per cent, in Yorkshire and Humberside it was 3.7 per cent, and in West Yorkshire it was 3.5 per cent. In Leeds it was 2.9 per cent, and in Bradford it was 4.9 per cent. Job growth in Leeds has been higher than in any other city outside London, and Leeds is the second largest location outside London for financial and business services employment. At the time of the 1991 census, the proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups was 6.2 per cent in England, 8.2 per cent in West Yorkshire and 15.6 per cent in Bradford. The percentage of school leavers achieving five general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above in 2001 was 47.9 per cent in England. In Yorkshire and Humberside it was 43.1 per cent, in Leeds it was 40 per cent and in Bradford, 34 per cent.

Work-based learning for young people

4. The quality of work-based learning in beauty therapy is good. Retention and achievement rates are excellent. Between 1997-98 and 2000-01, 85 per cent of learners were retained for the planned duration of their programmes, and all of those achieved their NVQs. The average rate of achievement in this area of learning among training providers inspected during 2000-01 was 38 per cent. The average retention rate was 65 per cent. The proportion of learners finding employment at the end of their training is also very high, with a range from 78 per cent to 94 per cent. Learners gain experience in good-quality work placements, with very good opportunities to develop the skills learned during off-the-job training. However, these skills are not assessed in the workplace. Many assessments rely on the simulation of activities which learners regularly experience as part of their normal work routines. Salon owners and supervisors are confident that YCBT learners receive good training, and support them in acquiring additional skills which complement this. Relationships between the college staff and employers are generally very good. Flexible arrangements are agreed to allow learners to benefit from additional activities, or to vary their attendance times for the off-the-job training.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

5. YCBT was established in 1983 by the principal and managing director to offer beauty therapy training to private students. Government-funded, work-based learning for young people was introduced three years later. The training manager has full responsibility for this side of the business, while the principal concentrates on the private-sector activity. There are now more young people at YCBT in government-funded work-based learning than there are fee-paying learners. The senior management team comprises the principal and managing director, who is responsible for finance, marketing and private contracts, and the training manager, who is responsible for the day-to-day running of work-based learning and is the other director of the company. There are three assessors and trainers, an internal verifier, a trainer for the private students and an office manager. All work-based learners are found work placements with local employers. They come to YCBT's training centre for one day a week for training and assessment. If learners come from further afield than the usual catchment area, YCBT arranges placements with employers nearer to their homes. A number of the employers are salon owners who are former YCBT learners themselves. YCBT has procedures for all its activities, though these are not all formally documented. All staff are aware of these operational processes, which have a direct impact on training and assessment. The company was accredited with Investors in People, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people, in 2001. YCBT's self-assessment report was produced in May 2002. The action plan arising from self-assessment was recorded in a book which is used to monitor improvements, and kept up to date with action taken.

STRENGTHS

- very clear organisational structure
- inclusive management processes
- effective teamworking and good staff support system
- · comprehensive equal opportunities policy
- · effective informal quality assurance systems

WEAKNESSES

- lack of long-term strategic planning
- inadequate internal verification system
- lack of reinforcement of equal opportunities with learners and employers
- little use of promotional materials to recruit learners from under-represented groups

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more formal written procedures
- more opportunities for learners to develop computer skills

- better evaluation of the quality of training
- 6. YCBT has a very clear organisational structure. All staff are aware of their roles and their contribution to the operational effectiveness of the business. There is an organisation chart which describes the management structure, and all staff files contain detailed job descriptions and responsibilities. However, the staffing is somewhat inflexible, with a heavy reliance on specific individuals for particular roles.
- 7. The management style of YCBT is open and consultative. There are frequent staff meetings which have agendas and minutes, and there are regular, informal daily meetings. The office is shared by all staff, including the principal and the training manager. Staff feel that their views are valued, and that managers keep them well informed. All the staff were involved in the self-assessment process through discussions and staff meetings. The training manager produced the final draft report and requested the staff's views on its content. This resulted in a number of actions being identified to improve the weaknesses in the business. These are recorded in the action book which is maintained as part of the continuous improvement strategy. All suggestions for improving performance, or further developing programmes are recorded in the book, and it is used by all the staff.
- 8. There is effective team-working at YCBT, and good support for staff. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Most members of staff have been with the company for a long time, but new staff are given an effective, extended induction. This includes job shadowing for a month, and regular informal discussions about procedures, problems and development needs. There is an annual appraisal system which is linked to business development, targets for the following year and to individual needs. Staff are given considerable support to develop their professional skills and interests. The training manager conducts the appraisals, building on the staff member's self-assessment of their performance and development needs. However, some self-assessments are not complete and rely on discussion which is not adequately recorded. YCBT staff work collaboratively and are an effective team. However, the high level of informality and close understanding of each other's systems has resulted in some lapsed written procedures. There are flexible working arrangements which allow some staff to work at home for part of the week on the understanding that they will be contacted by telephone if necessary.
- 9. YCBT does not have a long-term strategic plan describing how the business will progress or achieve its targets, or what strategies and resources it will need to do so. There is a business plan, which is largely descriptive, outlining targets and operational strategies until March 2003. The staff development needed to support the business plan is recorded in YCBT's action plan book. It was difficult for inspectors to see how the business plan and the staff development plan were linked without explanation. There is no written strategy to identify the resources needed for work-based learners, and no rolling programme for the renewal of essential equipment. Much of YCBT's planning is

informal, relying on verbal communication or brief memoranda to inform staff of new developments.

- 10. YCBT has an informal approach to many of its systems. There is a particularly strong staff commitment to making things work, and to the success of the training programmes. Staff know and fully understand the systems at YCBT, and have a high level of involvement in them. The systems do work, largely because the teamwork is very effective and management is consultative. Learners do achieve their qualifications, and do remain on their programmes for the planned duration. Programmes are often completed more quickly than is usual for this area of learning, and to date 100 per cent of those who have completed their programmes have gained employment. YCBT has a wide range of written procedures and most of these are in regular use. However, some lack detail, and do not specify a responsible person, target dates for completion or specific outcomes. They rely on word-of-mouth communication rather than explicit written processes. The collection of data on learners' attendance and achievement is a labour-intensive process which relies on one or two individuals to record and collate information. There is no electronic management information system in use, although managers have recognised the need to introduce one. The data collected are used, but not everyone is aware of how, or where they are recorded.
- 11. Learners are working towards qualifications which will enable them to find employment in the beauty industry. They learn relevant treatments and applications, but there are no systems in place to enable them to learn other, wider skills which would help them in the business environment. There is a learners' common room, and time is built into programmes for the completion of formal assignments, but there are no computers for learners to use to gain information technology (IT) skills or research and word-process their assignments. All the assessed work in portfolios is hand written.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

- 12. YCBT has a detailed and comprehensive equal opportunities policy, which includes information about relevant legislation, harassment and anti-discriminatory practice. There is useful statement detailing various types of discrimination, to help learners understand more easily how they may occur in the workplace. The policy is explained to learners during their two-week induction, and their understanding is checked. Learners are given copies of the policy and told how to report any concerns or issues, and to whom. Learners are confident about telephoning the college office to report any incidents that take place at work. Two staff have received training in equality of opportunity. There have been examples of YCBT actively tackling bullying and harassment. A staff member from YCBT has given an annual talk to an Asian women's group since 1999, and YCBT has taken part in a local Asian business and training exhibition. YCBT staff have also given talks to schools and participated in an equal opportunities at work day. YCBT's premises are on the ground floor of a large health and fitness complex, with good parking facilities for learners with limited mobility. The college has successfully supported a learner who was a wheelchair user, to complete her course.
- 13. Equality of opportunity is not reinforced with learners after their induction period. They do not receive any further information to refresh or extend their understanding. In some cases, learners are unaware that the concerns they raise may relate to equality of opportunity. For example, one learner who was often left unsupervised in the workplace while her colleagues went out for breaks, was not aware that this could be an equal opportunities issue. However, any complaints raised by learners are dealt with quickly and effectively. In some cases, learners have been moved to another work placement to improve their training opportunities. Employers have a poor understanding of equality of opportunity. When work placements are set up, employers are asked to sign YCBT's equal opportunities policy and to abide by it. Many employers cannot produce copies of the policy, and not all salons have their own polices. There is no monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace. Progress reviews do not routinely include discussion of equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is not a standing agenda item at meetings, and there are few specific references to it.
- 14. Publicity and marketing material has recently been produced, but there has been no attempt to use it to promote diversity by targeting under-represented groups. There are no images of learners from under-represented groups, although YCBT has a number of learners from minority ethnic groups, and the learner of the year for 2001 was from an Asian background. No photographs of men, either as learners or clients, are included. The promotional materials are not used to target learners from groups whose participation YCBT has tried to increase, such as the local Asian community.
- 15. YCBT knows what percentage of minority ethnic learners it recruits, but it produces little data on the ethnicity of learners to help management planning or set targets for recruitment. The information is recorded for LSC contractual purposes, but is not routinely analysed to measure year-on-year performance.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

- 16. YCBT has an effective, informal quality assurance system. Policy documents and procedures are appropriate to the needs of the organisation. There are procedures that outline the key aspects of the training activities and the documents to be used. However, procedures are not always given timescales for completion. Learners' documents, such as individual learning plans, are checked and dates are recorded for any entries. There is an action-plan book which is used effectively to highlight areas for further development, planned actions, target dates and outcomes. This book is updated regularly, and it forms the basis of the business development plan. The action-plan book is available to all staff. They fully understand its purpose and use it. They apply the procedures systematically. The action-plan book clearly shows that the importance of quality assurance is acknowledged by YCBT. YCBT's document control is weak. Procedures and forms are not dated or given a version number, and it is difficult to tell which version of a policy or procedure is being used. There is no planned, regular review of the quality assurance procedures, and no audit takes place. YCBT uses coloured ink to denote changes to policy, but this does not always make the changes clear.
- 17. There is an internal verification system, but it is inadequate, and is not being applied consistently. There is no overall verification plan. The system does not adequately monitor the quality of assessment. Internal verification planning takes place monthly, and depends on the anticipated assessment activity. There is no annual planning to ensure that all assessors and units are adequately monitored. This problem was identified in a recent external verifier's report. There are some weak assessment practices which have not been identified through internal verification. For example, some assessment is of simulated activity, not carried out in a realistic working environment. The self-assessment report identified internal verification as a strength. Inspectors did not.
- 18. The quality of training is not fully monitored. The views of learners and employers are collected using questionnaires, and the information is evaluated. No formal action plans are drawn up, but any problems are dealt with immediately through the action-plan book. Feedback is given to learners where appropriate. Concerns raised by employers are usually resolved by a telephone call.
- 19. YCBT does not have a system for the observation of training. The internal verification system includes observations of teaching sessions and checking of learners' understanding, but this is not formally recorded and no recommendations are given. Peer observations take place to ensure that there is consistency in teaching methods, but they do not identify strengths or weaknesses. No guidance is given on how teaching could be improved.
- 20. There is little monitoring of the quality or effectiveness of on-the-job training. Employers do not receive feedback or guidance on the methods they use with their learners. Employers are given a range of information, including a schedule of the next month's off-the-job training. They are not given detailed information on what is expected of the on-the-job training or support they provide to help skills acquisition. Some

employers could not find the information that had been issued to them by YCBT, and they were unfamiliar with its content.

- 21. YCBT carefully monitors and records the destinations of learners who gain employment, and the reasons why learners leave early. The records include learners who have studied since 1997. Learners are followed for several years, and the information is updated at least annually.
- 22. The self-assessment report for the inspection is the third, and was produced in May 2002. Most of the report was written by one member of staff using contributions given at staff meetings and informally from other team members. YCBT did not specifically seek the views of learners or employers when compiling the report, though learners' views are regularly collected. The report is more descriptive than evaluative, and failed to identify some of the strengths and weaknesses found during the inspection. Some of the judgements over-estimated what is no more than normal practice.

Good Practice

YCBT uses a large book as an action plan for continuous improvement to record issues as they arise and outcomes as they are achieved. This is available to all staff and is a useful tool for the staff team. The book records progress towards achieving identified outcomes.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Grade 2

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Work-based learning for young people | 11 | 2 |

23. YCBT has offered training in beauty therapy to young people in Yeadon and surrounding areas for the past 10 years. Currently all learners are working to achieve level 2 or 3 NVQs. There are no learners working towards key skills awards. Learners are not employed, but have work placements in local salons. The learners are all women. Some learners are recruited to work placements by employers, who then send them to YCBT for training. Others are referred through the careers service and local schools. The programme is planned to enable most learners to complete their training in two years. Training staff give learners a two-week induction and an initial assessment. During the induction period, they attend interviews with employers and learn basic beauty therapy treatments. Learners may join the programme at any time of the year. They attend the training centre for one, two or three days each week for 48 weeks each year. The number of days' attendance each week is negotiated to suit both the work-placement provider and the learner. Learners are given background knowledge, practical training and assessment off the job. They spend the remainder of their time at work, where they receive on-the-job training for their NVQ. They are not assessed at work. There are currently no qualified work-based assessors. YCBT works with 16 work-placement providers. These range from sole traders to large high street salons, and salons in health and leisure clubs. All learners have an individual learning plan. Training staff visit the learners at work to review their progress at least every 12 weeks. Assessments are internally verified in the training centre by a qualified internal verifier. There are 11 learners, all of whom are on track to complete their qualification within the specified time. Thirteen others successfully completed their qualification early, just before the inspection, and will be transferring to level 3 NVQs in September. Many of these learners were available in their work placements for inspectors to interview.

The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

| Work-based learning for young people | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|---|------|-------------------|-----|---------|-----|----|-----|----|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|
| NVQ Training | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2001-02 2000-01 | |)-01 | 1999-2000 1998-99 | | 1997-98 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Number of starts | 30 | | 21 | | 22 | | 18 | | 16 | | | | | | | |
| Retained* | 13 | | 19 | 90 | 18 | 82 | 14 | 78 | 15 | 94 | | | | | | |
| Successfully completed | 13 | | 19 | 90 | 18 | 82 | 14 | 78 | 15 | 94 | | | | | | |
| Still in learning | 11 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 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

- outstanding achievement rates
- outstanding retention rates
- good-quality work placements
- flexible attendance patterns to meet individual needs

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate review process
- underdeveloped support strategy
- over-reliance on simulated activities

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more recording of competence demonstrated in workplace
- improved use of the employer pack

24. Most learners who start training at YCBT achieve their target qualifications. There are excellent retention and achievement rates. Since 1997, 107 learners have started programmes at YCBT, of whom 90 completed their training and 79 achieved the qualification. A further 11 learners are due to complete their NVQ very soon, and inspectors examined their portfolios of evidence. Since 1997, all the learners who completed their training have achieved the qualification. The proportion of learners who start programmes and subsequently achieve their target qualification is outstanding, and ranges from 78 per cent to 94 per cent. YCBT monitors all learners, and is able to identify why a few do not complete their training. Their reasons range from wishing to go into more specialised beauty and make-up training, to moving away from the area. Achievement and retention rates have remained consistently high over the last five years. The number of learners gaining jobs is also high. In 2000-01, 81 per cent of all

learners who started in training, gained employment. On completion of their programmes all learners, their parents and employers are invited to a graduation ceremony to celebrate their success. Parents receive good support from YCBT. They are kept informed of planned developments and changes to programmes which affect the learners. Recently they were invited to a meeting to explain the introduction of key skills and how these would be fitted into a modern apprenticeship training programme.

- 25. The off-the-job training inspectors observed, ranged from satisfactory to very good. In the background knowledge session, learners were attentive throughout, and the tutor showed good knowledge of the subject area. Learners' practical skills are of a high standard. There is evidence of good planning for training, and a comprehensive scheme of work is in place. This standardises the off-the-job training for all learners. Attendance and punctuality is very good at the training centre.
- 26. All learners have access to training at work. This reinforces and supports the off-the-job training. There is also good-quality additional training at work for most learners. Employers send learners on many external courses. Learners receive certificates for the courses, which can help them in seeking employment. All the salons visited during inspection stock a wide range of professional and retail products. Some salons offer learners a chance to observe laser and medical treatments, for example laser hair removal. This gives learners a wide experience of treatments available in the beauty therapy and associated industries. Many of the workplace supervisors initially trained at YCBT. Most work-based supervisors are very satisfied with the standards of work which learners achieve while in training at YCBT.
- 27. Learners may choose from a variety of attendance options. YCBT offers attendance on one or two days a week for work-based learners, and evening courses for learners who can no longer attend the work-based learning programme. A negotiated attendance pattern is chosen to match the learners' needs with those of the salon supervisors.
- 28. The initial assessment procedure is not standardised to ensure consistency. YCBT assesses potential learners' suitability for beauty work through an interview, and during their induction. There is no formal assessment of their ability, or of whether they have any additional needs, and no formal strategy for supporting learners with additional needs. If additional needs have been identified, they are not well documented. When support is given, its effectiveness is seldom monitored. Learners with dyslexia have access to specialist support at an external institution. There are no partnerships with other specialist agencies. A new diagnostic test has been introduced to assess learners' individual needs, but it is too soon to judge its effectiveness. The results of the test have not been shared with the learners.
- 29. Individual learning plans are completed for all learners and kept up to date. The targets for NVQ units are generally realistic and achievable. These are renegotiated where necessary. However, some targets are not sufficiently detailed or specific to encourage learners to progress. Any additional qualifications or training that learners

undertake with their employer are recorded on the learning plan. The information on individual learning plans is not always shared with employers. YCBT sends monthly letters to inform employers of planned off-the-job training. This allows employers to coordinate the training at work with that at YCBT. YCBT provides an employers' pack which contains essential information for work-placement supervisors. This is not effectively used by employers, or kept in salons for reference.

- 30. The learners have a 12-weekly review which takes place off the job. The focus of the review is on learners' progress, and their experiences at work and at YCBT. Employers are not routinely involved. Neither they nor the learners get copies of the completed review paperwork. Employers regularly comment on learners' performance on the salon liaison sheet. This information is not used in the review. There is little or no following up of previous review targets. Little consideration is given to the workbased element of learning. Although detailed progress records are kept by YCBT staff, this information is not used to measure progress or set future targets.
- 31. YCBT staff are all qualified assessors and internal verifiers. They keep records of their own professional updating, and carry out a period of industrial placement each year. This allows them to ensure that learners' training and assessment has industrial relevance. No assessment was observed during the inspection. Documentary evidence was inspected and learners' portfolios are satisfactory. However, there is too much reliance on the use of simulation for some units of the NVQ. Learners simulate reception work off the job, although many carry out this task every day at work. This also applies to other tasks which learners experience in their working environment. There are no qualified work-based assessors and there is no evidence from the workplace in portfolios. Employers are not involved in the assessment of learners' skills. Written work is marked by assessors with comments on performance. Often the comments are brief and do not adequately tell the learner what they need to do to improve. Although learners should be assessed in a commercial environment so far as is possible, some assessments are carried out on non-paying clients.
- 32. The practical training room is of a good standard. There are sufficient products and equipment to enable assessment to take place. There are, however, only eight treatment couches for each group of 16 learners. Learners practise on each other, or wait to use resources for work on clients or assessments. The background knowledge training room is good. There is a wide range of books, videos and other resources. Learners have a common room where they may work independently, but they have no access to computers or the Internet for research.

Good Practice

At the end of the first year of training, a review of the year's work takes place with the learner. This identifies areas for improvement and recognises achievements. Parents are encouraged to attend these reviews and work with YCBT to encourage the learners' progress in year two of the course.

Poor Practice

In one practical off-the-job training session, insufficient attention was paid to health and safety and hygiene. None of the learners washed their hands before or after treatments on clients, and a sharps' bin for the disposal of sharps and biohazardous material was left with an open lid under a beauty therapy treatment couch.