

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Bexley Training Group**

**16 June 2003**



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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning 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.

## Overall judgement

Where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **Bexley Training Group**

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Bexley Training Group (BTG) was established in 1983 and is a registered charity and a non-profit making organisation. The company is limited by guarantee, and contracts with London East Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide work-based learning for young people. The organisation has two centres close to the centre of Bexleyheath, Kent. BTG employs 28 staff who are all professionally qualified as well as having relevant experience in industry or commerce. In recent months the organisation has also won a European Social Fund (ESF) contract in partnership with three other training providers to give young people on Life Skills the opportunity to gain a qualification and the opportunity to access a work placement. BTG attracts young people from the London borough of Bexley and also from the neighbouring borough of Greenwich, and places them with mainly small or medium-sized employers in Bexley and surrounding boroughs.
2. BTG provides off-the-job training on a regular basis for almost all learners and subcontracts with a local college of further education to provide training for the remainder. There are 224 learners who fall within the scope of the inspection. There are a number of smaller areas, such as construction, retailing, printing, and sport, but they had too few learners to justify inspection. Most of the construction programme has now been transferred to a local college of further education as BTG wanted to ensure that the highest possible standards are maintained.
3. In May 2003, the unemployment rate in Bexley was 2.2 per cent and in Greenwich it was 4.4 per cent, compared with 2.6 per cent nationally. The 2001 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Bexley is 8.6 per cent and in Greenwich it is 22 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally. Bexley has a growing youth population with educational achievements just short of the national averages, while in Greenwich the educational attainment is among the worst in London.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### **Engineering, technology & manufacturing**

4. There are 20 learners on motor vehicle maintenance and repair training programmes, of whom seven are advanced modern apprentices, seven are foundation modern apprentices and six are working towards a level 2 national vocational qualification (NVQ) in vehicle maintenance and repair (light vehicles). All learners are employed in local companies, some of which are main vehicle dealerships and others are small independent garages. Off-the-job training is subcontracted to a local further education college. BTG manages the programmes and carry out progress reviews, work placement monitoring and vocational assessment in the workplace.

### **Business administration, management & professional**

5. There are 74 learners on business administration courses. Twenty are on an NVQ course, of whom two are taking the accounts qualification at level 4. There are 27 foundation modern apprentices, one of whom is on the accounts programme. The remaining 27 learners are advanced modern apprentices, of whom six are in accountancy. Training takes place at BTG's training centre on four days a week where five full-time staff provide training and support on aspects of the courses. Attendance at training is tailored to suit learners and employers. The accounts learners all attend a local further education college for training. Suitable work placements are found in accounting where learners gain valuable experience. Learners are visited at work every six to eight weeks and assessments and reviews are carried out by BTG's staff. Many learners have already found employment while still completing their qualifications.

### **Hairdressing & beauty therapy**

6. BTG offers NVQs and foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in hairdressing. Learners are taking NVQs in hairdressing at levels 1 to 3 and an appropriate key skills qualification. There are 31 NVQ learners, 46 foundation modern apprentices and nine advanced modern apprentices. There are three men on the programme and one learner from a minority ethnic group. The foundation modern apprenticeship is planned to take 24 months and the advanced modern apprenticeship 36 months. Sixty per cent of learners are recruited through BTG and are employed in local salons, and 40 per cent are recruited directly by employers. There are 49 salons involved in the training. Most learners join the training programmes in July and August but learners can join at any time of the year.

### **Health, social care & public services**

7. There are 27 learners in early years care and education. Eight foundation modern apprentices are working towards the NVQ at level 2 and also take key skills at level 2 with the exception of information technology which is at level 1. One advanced modern apprentice is working towards the NVQ at level 3 and key skills at level 2. Eighteen learners are working towards NVQs only, with 10 at level 2 and eight at level 3. Learners work in nurseries, playgroups and primary schools. Learners on level 2 programmes attend BTG's centre on one day each week for off-the-job training. Level 3 learners attend the centre for half a day each week. Reviews of progress take place every eight weeks. There is one work-based assessor and three assessors based at the centre. Two of the assessors are also internal verifiers.

## Foundation programmes

8. There are 17 learners on BTG's Life Skills programme. Their programme lasts typically for 19 weeks, although some learners may stay longer. It covers a range of modules, leading towards a certificate in skills for working life. Learners are also able to work towards a Duke of Edinburgh's award and participate in a period of work experience. Learners attend the training centre in Bexley for 26 hours a week and also on one day a week while on work placement. The programme includes literacy and numeracy, as well as a range of social and Life Skills modules including practical home maintenance. The programme is primarily aimed at young people aged 16 and over who have a background of social exclusion and disaffection.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	8
Number of inspection days	32
Number of learner interviews	124
Number of staff interviews	45
Number of employer interviews	25
Number of subcontractor interviews	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2
Number of partner/external agency interviews	4
Number of visits	30

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

9. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the needs of those receiving it. More specifically, BTG's leadership and management are good, as is the approach to quality assurance and equal opportunities. Training in engineering, business administration, hairdressing, early years child care, and foundation studies is good.

## GRADES

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak*

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

## BEXLEY TRAINING GROUP

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Business administration, management & professional	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

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

Health, social care & public services	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

#### 10. The achievement and retention rates for advanced modern apprentices in engineering are good.

11. Retention rates across all business administration programmes are satisfactory and have been improving over the past two years. They are potentially good for the current year.

12. Retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices in hairdressing have been between 50 and 60 per cent consistently for several years. However, for foundation modern apprentices, they have been around 40 to 47 per cent. Retention and achievement rates for NVQ learners have been approximately 40 to 50 per cent over the past three years.

13. **Retention rates for learners on early years NVQ programmes are good**, and learners make satisfactory progress towards their NVQ. The organisation recognised that there was poor completion rates for the foundation modern apprenticeship framework during



1999 and 2000 and has provided a key skills specialist and extra resources to support learners. More learners are now completing the framework and the organisation's target of 60 per cent completion rate is now being met.

14. **Achievement levels for Life Skills learners are good.** Of the July to November 2002 group, 52 per cent achieved the full certificate of skills for working life. Of the group from September 2002 to January 2003, 86 per cent achieved the full award.

### Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	5
Health, social care & public services	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Foundation programmes	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>

15. **There is a very effective working partnership between BTG and employers in the motor vehicle sector.** Employers expressed their satisfaction with the service and support provided by BTG, and of the high standards of vocational competence and attitudes to work instilled in their modern apprentices.

16. **BTG works effectively with the subcontractors' staff** to ensure that there is good co-ordination of training in the workplace and off-the-job training, especially when learners are ready for assessment. There is good shared planning of assessment opportunities in the workplace and learners work under realistic working conditions in the subcontractor's workshops.

17. **Engineering learners have a clear understanding of their progress.** A training implementation plan has recently been introduced to supplement the regular review form to produce more focused short-term objectives.

18. **There is well-planned and effective implementation of key skills and the new technical certificate in business administration.** Learners produce a formal presentation of their key skills projects within six months of starting the course, and always well in advance of finishing the NVQ.

19. **There are good teaching and learning strategies in business administration** which start from the time the learners join the scheme. A detailed assessment is used to identify preferred learning styles and additional support needs for basic skills.

20. **Employers are fully involved in the learner's development.** Review visits are made every six to eight weeks and enable the learner, employer and assessor to identify specific areas for work experience or job-specific training.

21. **Learners' action plans in business administration are not effectively monitored.** The targets are not sufficiently structured and learners often do not refer to them until the next review. Previously set targets are not always followed up.

22. **There are good resources for practical training for most learners in hairdressing.** All salons are good with modern and commercial equipment. The salon at BTG's centre is also modern, contains equipment and furniture to commercial standards, and has a good range of modern products.

23. **There is effective teaching of key skills in hairdressing.** All learners, regardless of their programme, can work towards key skills. Achievement of key skills often coincides with the achievement of the NVQ, and occasionally learners complete the key skills before the NVQ.

24. **Internal verification takes place regularly in the training centre and in the salons.** The procedures are well planned and recorded. Comprehensive documents clearly show internal verification across all methods of assessment, for all learners, assessors and learning programmes.

25. **Many hairdressing learners at BTG have social, personal and additional learning needs and the support offered to them is outstanding.** Additional learning support is usually identified before the start of the learning programme, and other support is identified during monthly reviews.

26. **The action-planning in hairdressing is weak.** There are no specific deadlines for completion of targets. Also, the documents do not allow follow up action to be recorded, and this makes it difficult to monitor whether the targets have been met.

27. **The training for early years learners is good.** Sessions are carefully planned to take account of individual learning styles. Trainers plan small group work so that learners who have previous experience from the workplace share their knowledge with others in the group.

28. **There is very good support for early years learners.** Basic skills needs are carefully assessed when learners first start their training. Levels of basic skills are re-assessed after six months to check progress against targets and to reassess further support needs.

29. **Some assessment practice in early years is poor.** Assessment plans do not clearly identify how a learner will be assessed, and some observation reports are not sufficiently detailed to give a clear record of the learners' evidence. Some observation reports, although valid and sufficient, are not clearly referenced to the learners' skills.

30. **There is an excellent rapport between foundation learners and providers' staff.** Attendance rates are good at over 90 per cent. Learners are motivated from the start of the programme and this culture is supported and developed through a comprehensive range of teaching and learning styles throughout the entire course.

31. **Foundation learners gain maximum benefit from well-established partnerships with the local youth service.** Staff from the provider and the service work well together and share learning sessions on a regular basis. BTG also works in partnership with the local Duke of Edinburgh's award unit. Training is linked to learner's qualifications and enables them to achieve the bronze award.

32. BTG has secured funding to develop the Life Skills programme. The funding for the two-year programme has been effectively used to support a full-time member of staff whose role is to provide support as a classroom assistant. This member of staff is also the assessor for the skills section of the qualification for those learners on work experience.

33. On average, 80 per cent of foundation learners are placed in their first choice of placement, but the organisation has difficulties in securing appropriate work placements for some Life Skills learners in business administration.

### **Leadership and management**

34. **Clear strategic and operational objectives place learners firmly at the centre of the company's activities.** The management committee, senior managers and their staff are committed to providing the best possible service to learners.

35. **Open and consultative management effectively engages staff in contributing to the shared interest of helping learners.** Communication between all staff are very good, aided by clear organisational structures which staff understand. All staff have been closely involved in the self-assessment process.

36. **Day-to-day management of the learning departments is often good.** Heads of department meet productively with the quality assurance and development manager every six weeks. Resources are efficiently managed. There is sensitive use of the budget to support the improvement of existing training and to fund additional activity. Much of the learning accommodation is good, and in hairdressing the salons provide good resources for practical training.

37. **There is a clear equal opportunities policy** and equal opportunity targets within the strategic plan for the organisation. The policy outlines the support available for learners from ethnic groups, for those who have a disability, and how these issues are to be monitored. The strategic plan has defined objectives and targets relating to equality of opportunity.

38. **There have been a number of initiatives to improve participation** by ethnic minority groups and those with a disability and to overcome gender stereotyping. BTG has used links with a number of local community organisations to promote equality and inclusiveness. The links have led to presentations to minority ethnic groups and to information sharing with employers to ensure that the correct support is available for disabled or disadvantaged learners.

39. **There is insufficient continuing promotion of equality and diversity to employers and workplace supervisors.** BTG's staff have clear procedures and information for employers on the continuing promotion of health and safety and statutory insurance cover, but no equivalent information or monitoring activity for equal opportunity, diversity and inclusiveness.

40. A lot of work has been carried out to improve the company's self-assessment process and this is beginning to provide a central focus for much of the company's quality assurance work.

41. **Some key areas of the self-assessment judgements are insufficiently thorough.** For example, there are few references to learners' achievement and retention rates, or to the quality of education and training, either as background information or as strengths and weaknesses.

42. **There is a good process for the observation of teaching.** Procedures follow the approach of the inspectorate and are well planned. An overall table of grades is produced and the management team use this, and the detailed findings from observations, to identify common areas of weakness and strength.

43. **Target-setting is in the early stages of development.** Targets are set for learners' achievement and retention rates, but they are for each department and not for each programme. This limits their value in promoting improvements.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- clear strategic and operational objectives, vigorously pursued
- strong sense of common purpose for the best interests of learners
- open and consultative management with good internal communication
- good teaching observation
- good staff development plan
- good use of external networks to promote equality and health
- well-managed approach to equality and diversity

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficiently thorough self-assessment and target-setting for improvement
- insufficient promotion of equality and diversity in the workplace

## **Engineering, technology & manufacturing**

### **Strengths**

- good retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices
- good practical training
- good communication between employer and provider
- well-managed off-the-job training

### **Weaknesses**

- some incomplete assessment documents

## **Business administration, management & professional**

### **Strengths**

- good involvement in learners' development by employers
- good planning and implementation of key skills and technical certificates
- good teaching and learning strategies
- good retention rates

### **Weaknesses**

- some weak monitoring of learners' action plans

## **Hairdressing & beauty therapy**

### **Strengths**

- effective teaching of key skills
- good resources for practical training for most learners
- strong internal verification
- outstanding support for learners

### **Weaknesses**

- weak action-planning

## **Health, social care & public services**

### **Strengths**

- very good support for individual learners
- good off-the-job training for level 2 programmes
- good retention rates for NVQ programmes

### **Weaknesses**

- some poor assessment practice

## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- good achievement and retention rates
- good additional learning opportunities through well-developed partnerships
- good use of external funding to support learning
- well-planned and managed training programmes

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient range of work placements
- insufficiently individualised numeracy support for a few learners

### **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT BEXLEY TRAINING GROUP:**

- BTG's staff are friendly, helpful and supportive and treat learners as individuals and adults
- learners comments are listened to and BTG's staff are quick to respond to problems
- small groups allow individual attention and development, and a better level of support
- some areas of learning provide individual tutorials and learners' work is checked and marked on the same day
- tutors either stay behind to ensure learners' understanding or are easily contactable by e-mail
- learners have regular, mainly weekly, contact at the training centre with their tutors

### **WHAT LEARNERS THINK BEXLEY TRAINING GROUP COULD IMPROVE:**

- increase the number of training centre sessions for learners who are not required to attend weekly
- provide more hairdressing models at the centre salon
- include more audiovisual methods in the early years training sessions
- provide a better balance of learning hours for foundation learners, with fewer at the start of the programme

## **KEY CHALLENGES FOR BEXLEY TRAINING GROUP:**

- further develop and fully establish the quality assurance systems
- introduce a more structured action-planning process for learners which focuses on clear target-setting and monitoring of progress
- develop the target-setting process throughout the organisation to ensure that it leads to continuous improvement
- maintain the improvement in framework completion
- improve teaching methodology and learning resources to reflect the diverse needs of learners in hairdressing
- maintain the offer to learners of their preferred learning style identified in initial assessment



## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### **Strengths**

- clear strategic and operational objectives, vigorously pursued
- strong sense of common purpose for the best interests of learners
- open and consultative management with good internal communication
- good teaching observation
- good staff development plan
- good use of external networks to promote equality and health
- well-managed approach to equality and diversity

#### **Weaknesses**

- insufficiently thorough self-assessment and target-setting for improvement
- insufficient promotion of equality and diversity in the workplace

44. Clear strategic and operational objectives place learners firmly at the centre of the company's activities. The management committee, senior managers and their staff are committed to providing the best possible service to learners. This sense of common interest promotes co-operative and positive working relationships at all levels in the company. Those between the chief executive, other members of the management committee and its chairman are good. The management committee establishes policy and strategy and provides the chief executive with support and appropriate challenge. The management committee is well-informed about the company's activities, especially through the detailed quarterly reports from the chief executive. The other senior managers regularly attend management committee meetings and often speak on aspects of their responsibility. Committee members attend 'awaydays' where the mission and the strategy of the company are discussed. The specialist expertise of members is well-used. For example, the chairman is able to advise on aspects of personnel management.

45. Open and consultative management effectively engages staff in contributing to the shared interest of helping learners. Communication between staff is very good and is aided by clear organisational structures which staff understand. This strength is identified in the self-assessment report. The chief executive fosters a spirit of debate and open discussion, and this is backed up by senior managers. There are monthly staff meetings, but the small size of the company allows personal contact and discussion and there are many informal meetings with managers and staff. Staff feel able to raise any problems. All staff have been closely involved in the self-assessment process. The senior management team mostly meet informally but often, and carry out a substantial review of the company's progress every six months.

46. Day-to-day management of the learning departments is often good. Heads of department meet productively with the quality assurance and development manager every six weeks. The Life Skills department is well managed and the planning and delivery of the programme is good. In engineering, the contribution of employers and off-the-job training are well managed. The business department is well managed, communications are effective and the links with employers are good. In the early years department, there is good off-the-job training for level 2 learners, and communication between BTG and work-placement providers is good. The leadership and management of hairdressing are satisfactory.

47. Resources are efficiently managed. The management committee sets a budget based on proposals from the chief executive, and it is managed centrally by the chief executive who determines operational and consumable budgets. There is sensitive use of the budget to support the improvement of existing training and to fund additional activity. For example, when the scheme of teaching observations revealed a need for teachers to use more information technology (IT) in their lessons, additional budget was made available to buy modern computers. In another case, the temporary appointment of a work-placement officer enabled permanent staff to concentrate their energies on other key aspects of the training. Much of the learning accommodation is good and in hairdressing, the salons have good resources for practical training.

48. The support and development for learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are good. There is an up-to-date and relevant basic skills policy, together with a basic skills strategy and implementation plan for 2003-04. All prospective learners have their literacy and numeracy skills tested and the additional learning support is well-planned and managed.

49. The self-assessment report identified that staff development is well planned and well resourced. BTG give a high priority to staff training. The core of this is the annual staff development plan, which is built around the individual needs of staff, company priorities and externally driven development needs. Good use is made of the evidence gained from teaching observations and the annual programme of staff appraisals. For example, staff training on learning styles followed the identification that this was not dealt with in many lessons. Specific weeks are allocated for staff development and staff also feel able to request specific training when necessary.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

50. BTG has a clear equal opportunities policy which includes equal opportunity targets in the strategic plan. The policy outlines the support available for learners from minority ethnic groups, for those who have a disability, and how these issues are to be monitored. The strategic plan has defined objectives and targets relating to equal opportunities which are to raise participation rates for young people from minority ethnic groups from 4 per cent to 8 per cent in the current contractual year. The plan contains a similar target to increase participation rates for young people with disabilities from 2 per cent to 5 per cent. Both these targets are actively pursued and the rate of participation

for minority ethnic learners had increased to over 6 per cent at the time of the inspection. Minority ethnic groups represent 6.7 per cent of the population in Bexley itself and BTG has made specific efforts to recruit learners from the neighbouring boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich where rates are far higher. There are currently 73 men and 187 women across all programmes. Part of this imbalance stems from the closure of the construction programmes before the inspection, but BTG recognises the situation and is taking steps to redress the balance during the summer recruitment.

51. Management of equality and diversity lies with an equal opportunities sub-committee which meets on a quarterly basis and is chaired by the quality assurance and development manager. This committee is responsible for the maintenance of the policy and procedures and for monitoring BTG's performance. Data on ethnicity and disability are collected and analysed and this has led to a number of initiatives to improve participation and to overcome gender stereotyping. Learners are introduced to equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusiveness during induction and are questioned and reminded during each review visit. BTG has a code of conduct for learners which is introduced at induction and reinforced throughout the training programme. Learners are aware of the code, the equality and diversity policies, and the steps that should be taken if they experience discrimination, bullying or harassment. There is a well-publicised complaints procedure supported by a 'cause for concern' procedure for learners who are made uncomfortable by the attitude of a supervisor.

52. BTG has reviewed their publicity to incorporate more images of minority ethnic groups or disabled learners and have used this approach to design the welcoming image on the organisation's website. BTG has used links with a number of local community organisations to promote equality and inclusiveness. In particular, schools with a high level of minority ethnic groups in neighbouring boroughs are targeted to promote BTG and to encourage higher rates of involvement. Single-sex schools have been carefully targeted to promote non-traditional careers in order to overcome gender stereotypes. The chief executive is a member of several partnership organisations in the local community, notably the board of the education business partnership and Connexions. These links have led to presentations to local minority groups and to information sharing with employers to ensure that the correct support is provided for disabled or disadvantaged learners. BTG has established a creative link with the local primary health care trust to establish one of the trust's sexual health clinics on a weekly basis at BTG's training centre. This initiative came as a response to increasing levels of pregnancy among BTG's learners and has now effectively begun to reduce these levels through testing and screening activities linked to education sessions for male and female learners.

53. There is insufficient continuing promotion of equality and diversity to employers and workplace supervisors. Information on BTG's policies and procedures is made available to employers on recruitment or work placement of a learner and BTG's staff back up this information during review meetings. BTG's staff have clear procedures and information for employers on the continuing promotion of health and safety and statutory insurance cover, but no equivalent information or monitoring activity for equal opportunity, diversity and inclusiveness.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 2

54. The self-assessment report identified that BTG has a self-critical culture. It has a clear framework and procedure for quality assurance, with separate documents detailing the various elements of quality assurance. These include self-assessment, teaching observations, internal verification, learners', staff and employers' evaluations, quality assurance reports and the monitoring of learners' retention and achievement data.

55. A lot of work has been carried out to improve the company's self-assessment process. Staff understand and are fully involved in the self-assessment process and pursue an agreed policy that self-assessment should engage all staff. Heads of learning and administration departments write their relevant sections with their teams. The improving process of self-assessment is beginning to provide a central focus for much of the company's quality assurance work. For example, the outcomes of learners', staff and employers' evaluations contributed to the report. However, some key areas of judgement are insufficiently thorough. For example, there are few references in the learning areas section of the report to learners' achievements and retention, or to the quality of education and training, either as background information or as strengths and weaknesses.

56. BTG has a valuable scheme for the observation of teaching which is now in its third year. All teachers are observed each year and the outcomes are graded. The scheme is well organised and is increasingly thorough. Procedures follow the approach of the inspectorate and an overall table of grades is produced. The management team use this, and the detailed findings from observations, to identify common areas of weakness and strength. Often, the discussion of the findings results in staff development for individuals and across the company. The observation team has been expanded and with the help of a consultant, the team has moderated their observation grades. They plan to carry out further work to expand the number of observations.

57. Although there is a development plan to accompany the self-assessment report, target-setting, as an aid to improvement or to measure improvement, is in the early stages of development. Targets are now set for learners' achievements and retention, but they are for each department and not for each programme, and this limits their value in promoting and determining improvement. When achievements are considered to be good, no targets are set and little reference is made to comparative data to determine whether targets are sufficiently challenging. The management information system is providing increasingly useful data to enable managers and staff to analyse learners' retention and achievements. Target-setting is not part of the annual scheme for the appraisal of staff.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	20	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices
- good practical training
- good communication between employer and provider
- well-managed off-the-job training

#### Weaknesses

- some incomplete assessment documents

### Achievement and standards

58. The achievement and retention rates for advanced modern apprentices are good. Most starters on advanced modern apprenticeships have progressed from the foundation modern apprenticeship. All four starters in 2000 and 2001 were retained and completed their frameworks within the planned time. All seven starters on the 2002-03 advanced modern apprenticeship programme are still in learning and have made good progress on their framework, including key skills. The retention rates for the foundation modern apprenticeship are satisfactory, at 60 per cent for the 15 learners starting in 2000 and 2001, and the two learners who started in 2002 are still in learning. The retention rate for learners on NVQ training is satisfactory.

59. Key skills assessment and technical support training is subcontracted to a local college of further education. Key skills are an integral part of all the motor vehicle modern apprenticeship programmes and learners on the NVQ courses are also encouraged to take them. The key skills requirements for both modern apprenticeship frameworks are identical. There is good practical training in the workplace to support the achievement of qualifications. Learners are able to use their new practical skills to carry out a range of basic vehicle servicing and maintenance tasks to commercial standards and with minimum supervision. For example, one learner in an engine repair workshop consistently performs engine overhauls and fault diagnosis to a high standard. Other learners are able to work with minimal supervision on routine servicing tasks and vehicle preparation activities. Employers express their confidence in the ability of their learners to work to manufacturers' schedules and meet completion deadlines.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	7		3													
Retained*	0		3	100												
Successfully completed	0		3	100												
Still in learning	7		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2		5		10											
Retained*	0		3		6											
Successfully completed	0		0		4											
Still in learning	2		3		2											

\*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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	5		4		1											
Retained*	0		3		1	100										
Successfully completed	0		1		1	100										
Still in learning	4		2		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

## Quality of education and training

60. BTG takes great care in finding and selecting employers who offer good work placements. Standards of health and safety are good in the workplace and all learners observed were properly equipped with personal protective equipment and were wearing it. Employers place a high value on good work and expect their learners to work to the same standard. Employers also recognise the importance of the vocational programmes and they provide good training facilities for learners where they are able to learn new

skills and develop competence under commercial conditions. Supervisors support learners well and ensure they are given opportunities to gather evidence. If units of the NVQ cannot be covered fully in the workplace, the assessor works closely with the employer and the subcontractor to arrange alternative opportunities in the subcontractor's workshops. There is a very effective working partnership between BTG and employers in the motor vehicle sector. Employers expressed their satisfaction with the service and support provided by BTG, and of the high standards of vocational competence and attitudes to work instilled in their learners. The BTG assessor maintains his occupational competence and sector knowledge by working in the motor vehicle trade part time. He has particularly good knowledge of the work carried out by employers and he uses it effectively to the benefit of learners. All employers are given detailed information on the programmes, together with guidelines on their roles and responsibilities for supporting learners. Learners and employers have up-to-date monitoring sheets to identify progress.

61. The off-the-job training is well managed. BTG's and the subcontractor's staff work in partnership to ensure that there is good co-ordination of the workplace and off-the-job training, especially when learners are ready for assessment. There is good shared planning of assessment opportunities in the workplace and under realistic working conditions in the subcontractor's workshops. The workplace assessor has established effective links with the subcontractor's staff who are suitably experienced and qualified to teach motor vehicle subjects. The range of tools and specialist equipment in the motor vehicle workshops is satisfactory and it can be used as a realistic working environment for the assessment of NVQ units which learners cannot complete at their employer's premises.

62. The arrangements to assess learners' numeracy and literacy skills are satisfactory. The subcontractor identifies learners' needs at induction and has the resources to ensure that learners are given the support and training they need to complete their courses. BTG monitors learners' literacy and numeracy skills at the half-term course reviews and are able to use specialist support staff on an individual level to reinforce the support given by the subcontractor. BTG's assessor also monitors learners' needs throughout the programme and gives additional support when necessary. Progress reviews in the workplace are comprehensive and include short-term targets for a range of practical work to be carried out by the learners. Opportunities for evidence gathering are agreed and targets are established for future reviews. Learners have a clear understanding of their progress. A training implementation plan has recently been introduced for learners to supplement the regular review form.

63. Assessment in the workplace is carried out by the assessor from BTG and by the subcontractors' staff. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Learners and employers understand the requirements and assessments are planned as workplace opportunities occur. Supervisors are involved in assessment planning and produce witness testimony to endorse the evidence submitted by the learners. However, some assessment documents are incomplete with signatures and cross-references missing. Some learners have insufficient cross-referencing in their portfolios.



## **Leadership and management**

64. The motor vehicle programmes are well managed by BTG directly and through its subcontractor. The good working relationships between the assessor, the employers and the subcontractor contribute to the progress and achievement of learners. Internal verification is satisfactory. The workplace assessor from BTG is working towards the internal verifier qualification. Observations by internal verifiers take place regularly and there are suitable sampling arrangements. There are no female learners on the motor vehicle programmes, despite the ongoing and intensive efforts to encourage a greater participation by young women. Marketing material has been revised in an effort to attract women. Two were recruited recently, but they left the programme early because of pregnancy and decided not to return to employment.



**Business administration, management & professional****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	74	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good involvement in learners' development by employers
- good planning and implementation of key skills and technical certificates
- good teaching and learning strategies
- good retention rates

**Weaknesses**

- some weak monitoring of learners' action plans

**Achievement and standards**

65. Retention rates across all programmes are satisfactory, have been improving during the past two years, and are potentially good for the current year. For foundation modern apprentices, the retention and achievement rates are steady at around 50 per cent with the potential to rise significantly. For those learners working towards NVQs only, retention and achievement rates are improving from a satisfactory base of around 50 per cent. Data relating to advanced modern apprentices for the year 2000-2001 are unusual and do not provide a true reflection of performance. There are plausible reasons for this situation that have been validated during inspection. Data on NVQ learners for the same year are equally unusual but for different reasons, and have equally been examined and validated during inspection.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	15		18													
Retained*	0		1													
Successfully completed	0		0													
Still in learning	13		14													

\*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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	16		46		73		64		44							
Retained*	0		20		37		33	52	21	48						
Successfully completed	0		20		35		33	52	21	48						
Still in learning	14		12		1		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	13		40		14		21		46							
Retained*	0		14		7	50	4	19	21	46						
Successfully completed	0		12		7	50	4	19	20	43						
Still in learning	8		12		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

## Quality of education and training

66. Learners are making satisfactory progress with their administration qualification and have clearly presented portfolios. They are all gaining a wide range of practical skills. There is well-planned and effective implementation of key skills and the new technical certificate. At the beginning of their course, learners are given a work-related project to complete which enables them to cover all aspects of the key skills qualifications. This develops a wide range of skills, including use of the Internet, which learners are able to

use in their daily work activities. Some work is carried out in groups, with course work individual to each group. Learners deliver a formal presentation of their key skills projects within six months of starting the course, and always well in advance of finishing the NVQ. Learners are progressing well with the technical certificate, which is also taught at the start of the training programme. The information is effectively cross-referenced to the NVQ, as are the key skills.

67. There are good teaching and learning strategies. A detailed assessment is used to identify the learners' preferred learning style and areas of basic skills with which learners may need additional help. Training staff have a good understanding of each learner's specific needs and support is given on a continuing basis. Most learners have some training in basic office skills during their initial one-week induction, and many stated that they had found it very helpful. Each time a learner attends off-the-job training, their day is planned during the group tutorial and an individual pattern of attendance is drawn up. Work is set and information is given to the learner in the style that they prefer. For example, those who like to research information on the Internet are given advice as to the most suitable sites, while those who prefer hard copy are referred to books or to centre prepared resources. Some information is taught in a more formal manner with a range of teaching methods being used. All sessions observed were satisfactory or better. Staff pay particular attention to learners' personal skills and take care to build confidence and communication levels, and use training sessions to build teamwork.

68. Employers are fully involved in the learner's development. Review visits are made every six to eight weeks and enable the learner, employer and assessor to identify specific areas for the learner to gain experience or training. All employers are given an information pack which contains specific information on equal opportunities and guidance notes on the structure of the training course. Workplace assessments are pre-arranged with employers, who additionally supply witness testimonies to support learner's statements. There is a clear internal verification process, which is easy to follow and ensures that standards are consistently adhered to. Induction and the related issues are dealt with adequately at the start of training. All learners have an in-depth skills assessment, which is used to draw up an action plan to provide additional help in areas of weakness. There is a fully qualified member of staff who works with those with more significant problems, and all staff have attended training in the new core curriculum.

69. The training premises are well maintained, bright and spacious and are easy to access. There are sufficient resources to cover all aspects of the administration frameworks. This is supported by a wide range of up-to-date computer equipment, which enables learners to use all aspects of modern technology. Staff are appropriately qualified and occupationally experienced, and there is a good ratio of trainers to learners. All learners have the chance to gain additional qualifications in associated areas such as an internationally accredited computer course.

70. Learners' action plans are not effectively monitored. Plans are agreed during workplace review visits, and tasks are set for the learner to complete at the workplace over the next six to eight weeks. The targets in the plans are not sufficiently structured and learners often do not refer to them until the next review is due. Previously set

targets are not always referred to, often over several review visits. Some files have evidence of work being monitored, but most are not dated.

### **Leadership and management**

71. The overall management of the administration programme is satisfactory. The development and introduction of the technical certificate and the revision of the key skills delivery are good. There are regular staff meetings, but there are no standing agenda items to cover health and safety or equality of opportunity. The meetings focus more on learner support, rather than retention and achievement, recruitment strategies, or specific details relating to individual progress. All staff have the opportunity to attend training to support their professional development and regular updating takes place. There is continual updating of support material for courses. There are good close working relationships between all team members and the wider management of BTG. The self-assessment report was fully discussed with all staff, and some of the areas for improvement are already being resolved.

**Hairdressing & beauty therapy****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	95	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- effective teaching of key skills
- good resources for practical training for most learners
- strong internal verification
- outstanding support for learners

**Weaknesses**

- weak action-planning

**Achievement and standards**

72. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. Retention and achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices have been between 50 and 60 per cent consistently for several years, while those for foundation modern apprentices have been around 40 to 47 per cent over the same period. Retention and achievement rates for NVQ learners has been approximately 40 to 50 per cent over the past three years. Actions are in place to improve the retention rates with a target set for an increase of 5 per cent a year. Most learners who are retained achieve the NVQ and the key skills qualifications which are an integral part of all programmes. Most learners are completing the framework within the timescale of their programme. Standards of learners' work in practical sessions are satisfactory to good with learners working confidently and to awarding body standards. Many learners have poor ability when they start and are given additional support for learning and personal problems. There is good progression for learners who have the ability to progress from Life Skills to NVQ level 1, level 1 to 2 and level 2 to 3.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			14		8		2		8							
Retained*			1		5		2	100	5	62						
Successfully completed			1		4		2	100	4	50						
Still in learning			7		2		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	30		26		28		22		30							
Retained*	0		1		13		11	50	12	40						
Successfully completed	0		1		11		10	45	11	37						
Still in learning	28		14		4		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	21		37		26		10		5							
Retained*	1		7		16		5	50	5	100						
Successfully completed	1		4		8		4	40	5	100						
Still in learning	12		21		7		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

## Quality of education and training

73. There are good resources for practical training for most learners. All salons are good with modern and commercial layouts and equipment. The salon at BTG's centre is also modern and contains commercial-standard equipment and furniture, plus a good range of modern products. The salon reflects a real working environment with a satisfactory supply of models for learners to practise on. Teachers are well qualified and have the appropriate assessment qualification. There is one internal verifier and a second is

undergoing training. Workplace salons attract clients who want high-fashion techniques which learners are able to observe and be involved in. Many salons offer additional in-house training related to manufacturers' products. In one salon, the employer arranges photo-shoots to record the practical work of staff, and learners are involved in this opportunity. BTG does not use salons which do not meet their requirements for training and working standards.

74. There is effective teaching of key skills. All learners, regardless of their programme, have the opportunity to work towards key skills. Some are an integral part of the background knowledge sessions and all projects are related to hairdressing. Learners who are on the NVQ programme and do not need key skills for a framework, build a portfolio of evidence, but are not expected to sit the external test. Key skills achievement often coincides with the achievement of the NVQ, and occasionally learners complete the key skills before the whole NVQ is achieved.

75. There are two induction programmes for learners. The first takes place in September and includes health and safety, equal opportunities and an initial screening for literacy and numeracy skills. The second is in two-day blocks over a period of two months and includes an introduction to hairdressing principles and the NVQ process and allows practical aptitude testing. BTG uses a range of initial assessment techniques to ensure that the learner is on a programme which is appropriate for their needs. Prior learning and experience is taken into account to ensure that the learner does not waste time gaining skills they already have. There is a strong internal verification process which regularly takes place in the training centre and in the salons. The procedures are well planned and recorded. Comprehensive documents clearly show internal verification across all methods of assessment, for all learners, assessors and learning programmes.

76. Many learners at BTG have social, personal and additional learning needs, and the support offered to them is outstanding. BTG identified learner support as a strength in their self-assessment report. Additional learning support is usually identified before the start of the learning programme, while other support for learners is identified during monthly reviews. Some learners have needed help to secure employment in a salon which is appropriate to their needs, and others have needed flexible training and attention to health issues. For learners who are dyslexic, individual support has been provided. All learners are given the opportunity to attend BTG for extra training sessions at any time. Learner support is also given in the form of feedback for projects and assignments. As well as constructive comments relating to the content, learners' spelling and grammar are also monitored.

77. The action-planning is weak. The learners have a monthly review to discuss their progress and to set targets for the NVQ and key skills. However, the language used for targets is often unclear. Specific deadlines for completion of targets are rarely set. In addition, the documents for action-planning do not allow for follow-up action to be recorded, and it is difficult to monitor whether the targets have been met. This results in some action points rolling over for many months, delaying unit accreditation. There are limited learning resources for background knowledge. The textbook stock is small and some training videos are outdated.

## **Leadership and management**

78. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the hairdressing training. Systems and procedures are company wide and are followed by the curriculum team. The team developed the hairdressing section of the self-assessment report through regular weekly meetings. Targets for retention of hairdressing learners have resulted in the team agreeing and implementing actions for improvement. Quality assurance systems for assessment and internal verification are followed. The team have developed a standard approach to the delivery of background knowledge and practical lessons. Equal opportunities are discussed at learner induction and reviews and understanding is checked and corrected. Employers are aware of equal opportunities, but at a superficial level. BTG do not provide sufficient positive promotion and reinforcement of equal opportunities with employers. Teachers ensure that their specialist skills are effectively used to develop learners' practical skills and background knowledge. Teachers are able to attend continuing professional development to maintain their curriculum currency and are informed of policy/procedure changes. Good role models are used as part of BTG's hairdressing provision with many ex-learners becoming employers of new learners. One ex-learner is now qualified as a hairdressing teacher. There are good communications between BTG and the work-placement employers/supervisors.



**Health, social care & public services****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	27	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- very good support for individual learners
- good off-the-job training for level 2 programmes
- good retention rates for NVQ programmes

**Weaknesses**

- some poor assessment practice

**Achievement and standards**

79. Retention rates for learners on NVQ programmes are good and learners make satisfactory progress towards the NVQ. In 2000, there were no early leavers and in the following year, half have achieved their qualifications and the other half are still in learning. The company recognised that the completion rates for the frameworks of foundation modern apprentices were poor during 1999 and 2000 and has provided a key skills specialist and extra resources to support learners. The teaching and assessment of key skills is well organised and good use is made of evidence from the workplace. More learners are gaining frameworks and the organisation's target of 60 per cent achievement is now being met. Ten learners have progressed from NVQ level 2 to level 3, and BTG has introduced advanced modern apprenticeships for the first time in 2001-02.

80. Three of BTG's learners have moved on to university and one is studying for a degree. Employers recognise the learners' development of skills and knowledge during training. Attendance in workplaces and at the centre is closely monitored. Portfolios are well organised, although some evidence is not clearly referenced, and little use is made of IT in portfolios. Most learners have satisfactory literacy skills, although some need additional help with spelling. An additional qualification in first aid for babies is made available and is achieved by most learners.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	3		1													
Retained*	2		0	0												
Successfully completed	2		0	0												
Still in learning	1		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	8		7		11		4		2							
Retained*	0		5	71	0	0	1	25	1	50						
Successfully completed	0		4	57	0	0	1	25	1	50						
Still in learning	8		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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	18		6		9		1		9							
Retained*	0		4		9	100	1	100	5	56						
Successfully completed	0		3		9	100	0	0	5	56						
Still in learning	15		3		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

## Quality of education and training

81. The training for early years learners is good. Learners at level 2, who represent two-thirds of learners, attend the training centre for one day each week. Sessions are carefully planned to take account of identified learning styles. Trainers plan small group work so that learners with experience from a workplace share their knowledge with others in the group. A trainer has adapted the way she structures sessions to encourage learners to recall their experiences in workplaces before they start new topics. There is a

good focus in session plans on what the learners will be doing, and learners take an active part in discussion and in practical work. Learners develop good practical skills and knowledge about how to care for babies, and are confident when they report what they have learned in group activities to the whole class. Realistic dolls and other good equipment are used for the learners to practise their skills. Trainers have appropriate teaching qualifications and occupational experience and the training room is comfortable. Training for level 3 learners is satisfactory. They attend the centre for half a day each week for tutorials and to collect new assignments which they complete independently. Marked work is returned to them promptly.

82. There is very good support for learners. Basic skills needs are carefully assessed when learners first start their training. A range of relevant support is put in place, including individual coaching. One learner who has specific communication needs has spellings targeted and corrected each week. A second learner with written communication difficulties records her evidence on audiotape. Additional support with skills and knowledge evidence is given to learners who have progressed from the Life Skills programme to NVQs. Levels of basic skills are reassessed after six months to check progress towards meeting targets and to reassess further support needs. Trainers have a clear understanding of personal and employment issues which affect learners' progress. Relevant guidance is given to enable learners to get advice from specialists. There is good communication between staff at the centre and those in the workplace to monitor learners' attendance and progress. Trainers follow up absence from training promptly and effectively by informing workplace supervisors in writing. Workplace supervisors have few problems with learners, but when there are difficulties, BTG trainers respond quickly.

83. The range of courses is satisfactory. Learners who have few formal qualifications follow NVQ programmes. Learners on level 3 programmes start training at any time in the year. However, access to level 2 training is limited to September after the organisation's main recruitment drive in the summer.

84. Some assessment practice is poor. Assessment plans do not clearly identify how a learner will be assessed. Some learners do not have a clear understanding of what an assessor will be looking for during an observation. Learners are observed satisfactorily in their workplaces, but not all observation reports are sufficiently detailed to give a clear record of the learners' evidence. Some observation reports, although valid and sufficient, are not clearly referenced to the learners' skills. Good oral feedback is given after assessments, but written feedback does not clearly identify what skills or knowledge the learner has shown or what further performance evidence is needed. Learners are given written assignments for each element, even though evidence of the learner demonstrating skills in the workplace is needed. Much written evidence relates to the performance criteria and does not always clearly show learners' knowledge.

## **Leadership and management**

85. Early years programmes are satisfactorily managed. There is good communication between the trainers and assessors and they work together co-operatively. They monitor learners' progress thoroughly and keep clear records. Weekly team meetings are held using a standard agenda. The team wrote their section of the self-assessment report and use team meetings to regularly assess themselves against the development plan. They identify progress towards achieving targets. Trainers are effectively supported to develop their own skills and knowledge through external courses and by advice and guidance from the quality assurance manager. A week is set aside for staff training every year. The team plans to update their assessment and verification skills. Verification is carried out satisfactorily, although plans for sampling all learners, units and assessment methods are not clearly recorded.

86. Trainers are observed teaching and use the feedback to improve their own performance. Equality of opportunity is introduced during induction and most learners can recall this. There is satisfactory reinforcement of issues related to diversity during training sessions. Practical training is effectively managed and learners start work promptly. Workplace supervisors are given an induction pack which provides much of the information they need about the training programmes. Level 2 learners are advised to choose optional units about babies as most employment is in day nurseries. Learners who are placed in schools collect the evidence they need in the summer holidays when they are placed in a nursery by BTG.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	17	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good achievement and retention rates
- good additional learning opportunities through well-developed partnerships
- good use of external funding to support learning
- well-planned and managed training programmes

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient range of work placements
- insufficiently individualised numeracy support for a few learners

**Achievement and standards**

87. Achievement levels are good. For the July to November 2002 group, 52 per cent achieved the full certificate of skills for working life. Of the group from September 2002 to January 2003, 86 per cent achieved the full award. The rest of each group achieved some units towards the certificate. The current group has yet to complete the full award but is making good progress. Learners also achieve short courses such as sexual health, health and safety, and drug awareness. Retention rates are also good. Average rates show a rise from 60 per cent in 2000 to 70 per cent in 2001 and 85 per cent in 2002. Progression into employment or further training is satisfactory and consistent at 50 to 60 per cent between 2000 and 2002. In a short time, BTG's staff are able to help learners develop their personal skills such as communication and self confidence and many learners are successful in achieving competences in the workplace, often after only one or two weeks of work experience.

## BEXLEY TRAINING GROUP

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Life Skills																
	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	37		67		52		25									
Retained*	15		47	70	31	60	18	72								
Successfully completed	15		46	69	31	60	17	68								
Still in learning	17		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

## Quality of education and training

88. Learners are recruited mainly through Connexions and through good links with school pupil referral units. The induction and initial assessment process is satisfactory. A wide range of initial assessment techniques are used to identify training and support needs and possible employment options. The information is effectively communicated and used by training staff to provide a well-recorded individual learning plan. There is an excellent rapport between learners and providers' staff, and attendance rates are good at over 90 per cent. Learners are very motivated from the start of the programme and this culture is supported and developed through a comprehensive range of teaching and learning styles throughout the entire course.

89. Learners gain maximum benefit from particularly well-established partnerships with the local youth service. Staff from the provider and the service work well together and share learning sessions on a regular basis. Progress reviews are satisfactory, and opportunities to monitor progress are extended by staff being involved in the learning sessions. This ensures that learners have good levels of support for training and pastoral needs. The youth service programme lasts for approximately 12 weeks and provides the opportunity for personal development through a range of team building activities. These may include anger management, drug awareness and sexual health. Although there is no separate accreditation for this programme, the evidence is gathered and used effectively to support the certificate of skills for working life. Learners value sessions and the opportunity to attend the youth centre. BTG also works in partnership with the local education business partnership who manage the Duke of Edinburgh's award. Representatives from the award visit the provider for a half day each week to work with learners. Training is linked to the certificate of skills for working life and enables learners to achieve the bronze award. There are many examples in portfolios showing learners organising fundraising events for charity and learners show pride in their achievements. The sessions with partners are well structured and managed to ensure that learners have good support for literacy and numeracy needs while developing personal skills.

90. BTG has secured funding to develop the Life Skills programme. It is part of a network of training providers and plays a significant role in supporting partners. The funding for the two-year programme has been effectively used to support a full-time member of staff whose role it is to provide support as a classroom assistant. This member of staff is also the assessor for the skills section of the certificate of skills for working life for those learners on work experience. Learners' progress through the certificate is well recorded and monitored. Portfolios are organised and include photographic evidence, particularly of assessments in the workplace. Learners are aware of their own progress. The regular visits from the member of staff during the four-week work placement ensures that concerns from the employers or learners are dealt with promptly and effectively. Funding is also used effectively to support a part-time member of staff who has the responsibility for securing work placements for the Life Skills programme. Four work placements were visited during the inspection and all employers were very supportive and appreciated the support from providers' staff. All work placements had organised training for learners and provided corporate clothing. Learners place a high value on this and attendance and punctuality rates are extremely good. All learners had been offered employment at the end of two weeks of the four-week entitlement. On average, 80 per cent of learners are placed in their first choice of work placement, but the organisation has difficulties in securing appropriate work placements for some Life Skills learners, particularly in the area of business administration. Learners who leave their work placement are quickly found alternative work placements. When necessary, learners' time on the Life Skills programme is extended.

### **Leadership and management**

91. The Life Skills programme is well managed. Staff have appropriate expertise in working with learners and the provider works closely with Connexions to ensure that each group is balanced in terms of individual needs. There is excellent communication between staff and regular meetings ensure learners are closely monitored. BTG has developed a basic skills strategy to ensure that all staff are trained in the core curriculum and are working towards a basic skills qualification where appropriate. Teaching observation is part of the programme and is used in the organisation's training and development plan and continuous improvement strategy. One member of staff has been trained in dyslexia awareness and is used effectively to help identify areas of support for learners. Literacy and numeracy support is well managed and resources are satisfactory. Numeracy support for a few learners is insufficiently individualised, particularly when dealing with 'mental maths'. Learners are taught in one group at the same level. Language skills training is subcontracted to a local provider, and at the time of inspection only one learner was identified as needing support. The management of work experience is satisfactory for the current number of learners. Assessment and verification practice is thorough and is particularly good in the workplace.