

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Business Training Enterprise**

**06 May 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
- **learnirect** 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**

## **Business Training Enterprise**

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Business Training Enterprise Ltd (BTE) is a small specialist provider of Life Skills training for young, mainly single, parents. The company was first established in April 2001 and became a limited company in September 2001. BTE is based in New Malden, Surrey, but provides training at five other training centres in Richmond, Woking, Sutton, Mitcham and Bromley. All but two of the 46 learners are on a young-mums-to-be (YMTB) programme for pregnant young women and young mothers. Two learners are following a separate Life Skills programme.

2. Senior management comprises the managing director, a non-executive director and two area managers who manage the six training centres. The managing director is responsible for the financial and strategic management of the company and its policies and procedures. The two area managers are responsible for the operational management of the company, which is overseen by the managing director. One area manager is responsible for equal opportunities.

3. BTE funds its training provision through London South Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Surrey LSC, for the Woking centre only and European Social Fund (ESF) initiatives. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in the London South area is 10.2 per cent, compared with 6.2 per cent for England as a whole. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above in the London South area was 52 per cent, compared with 47.9 per cent nationally. Unemployment in the London South area is 2.4 per cent, compared with 2.7 per cent nationally.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Foundation programmes

4. There are 46 learners on the Life Skills programme, which is run at six training centres in New Malden, Richmond, Woking, Sutton, Mitcham, and Bromley. The training programme comprises the YMTB programme and a course consisting of Life Skills only. Forty-four learners are following the YMTB programme, a structured course for pregnant young women and young mothers, which lasts for 20 weeks. Some learners leave the programme for the birth of their child and return to complete the course later. All learners are required to attend the training centres for three days each week. Learners are referred by the Connexions Service, local hospitals, midwives and health visitors, or refer themselves. The programme comprises of 12 units relating to pregnancy, childbirth, parenting and action-planning for employment or further study after the child is born. The Gloucester company who devised the YMTB programme, trained BTE's staff on its content and still carries out internal verification. The YMTB programme is externally accredited. Two learners are following the Life Skills-only programme, which is being phased out to be replaced by the new Entry to Employment (E2E) programme in August.

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Learners are interviewed and complete an initial assessment, which forms the basis of an individual learning plan. Learners then work their way through the structured programme with the support of their tutor. Learners meet on an individual basis with their tutor every four weeks to review their targets and progress.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learner interviews	21
Number of staff interviews	21
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	6
Number of partner/external agency interviews	3

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the quality of Life Skills training is satisfactory. The leadership and management of BTE is satisfactory. Equality of opportunity is good, but quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

## GRADES

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

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	4

<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Life Skills	3

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

6. Achievement rates are satisfactory. In 2001-02, 46 per cent of learners completed the learning programme and achieved the targets on their individual learning plans. So far in 2002-03, 35 per cent of learners have achieved their learning goals and a further 30 per cent are still in training. Some learners do not complete the programme due to health

problems associated with their pregnancy or their baby may arrive early. In 2001-02, 14 learners left the programme to have their baby early. In 2002-03, 31 learners have to date left early to have their baby.

7. Retention rates are satisfactory. The retention rate for 2001-02, was 51 per cent. In 2002-03 the retention rate is to date 35 per cent with 30 per cent still in training.

8. **The standard of work in portfolios is good.** Portfolio evidence is based on tasks in the YMTB workbook and additional evidence from learners' own research and personal experience. Evidence includes good written work, budgeting exercises, details on good nutrition, and craft work. Learners also produce a realistic plan for their future, indicating whether they want to progress into further study or employment. There are no additional qualifications for learners to achieve to improve their employability.

### 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
Foundation programmes	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

9. **BTE makes good use of a well-structured YMTB programme designed to meet the specific needs of the learners.** Detailed course notes are supported effectively by tutors' own materials and ideas.

10. **The acquisition of skills and knowledge by learners is good.** They gain detailed information about pregnancy and child care using the correct terminology, increased confidence to practically resolve issues concerned with housing, child care and benefits and improve their research skills. Learners also acquire good practical craft skills, better organisational skills and make good decisions about their future.

11. **Tutors and learners effectively use a wide range of learning materials and information sources.** The course workbook for learners is well presented and easy to use. All centres have many reference books, magazines, catalogues and information leaflets on a wide range of relevant topics. Learners visit specialist shops, libraries, and other community venues such as Internet cafes and young parent groups. Specialist speakers make regular and valuable contributions to the programme.

12. **There is very good personal support for learners.** Tutors create a caring and secure environment in which learners are able to confidently discuss difficult personal issues. Learners are also well supported by their personal advisers, midwives and health visitors who help them take independent action to find a solution to their concerns. Learners also gain a lot of good support from their peers.

13. Training is satisfactory. Sessions are well prepared, well resourced and taught by tutors and experts with good subject knowledge. Learners work effectively at their own

## BUSINESS TRAINING ENTERPRISE

pace with the tutor's support. In some sessions, some learners receive more support than other learners. There is insufficient formal monitoring of learning.

**14. Training staff have an insufficient range of teaching skills.** Neither managers nor tutors have any formal teaching or training qualifications. Basic skills training and assessment is inadequate. Although all learners have an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs, no staff are qualified to teach and assess basic skills.

**15. There is insufficient formal monitoring of learners' progress.** Learners are set targets and milestones, but these are of a personal nature and do not always include the completion of any YMTB units. Learners do not always receive regular formal feedback on their progress. They do not achieve accreditation for a completed unit but have to wait for all units to be completed.

### Leadership and management

**16. Partnerships with a range of agencies have been used effectively to establish YMTB programmes at six training centres in the community.** Good referral pathways have been established through a large number of external agencies and individuals. Recruitment targets for 2002-03 have been met.

**17. Operational management is good.** Lines of accountability are clear and staff have a good understanding of their role. Induction for new staff is effective. Monthly meetings of all staff are used well to share information and resolve any issues with learners. The managing director meets with the two area managers on a weekly basis.

**18.** The day-to-day management of the Life skills programme is satisfactory. An area manager is assigned to each training centre and visits on a weekly basis. Tutors and learners are able to discuss issues and concerns with their area manager. Tutors receive good support and regular verbal feedback on their performance.

**19.** The management of resources is satisfactory. The allocation of resources is clear. A new information technology (IT) suite has been created at the New Malden training centre. Venues for the YMTB programme are easily accessible for learners. The accommodation generally provides a satisfactory learning environment and resources are appropriate.

**20.** BTE has introduced some measures to support the development of learners' skills in literacy, numeracy and language. All learners complete a diagnostic assessment and tutors are informed of the findings. Depending on the outcome, learners are issued with worksheets and some have received additional individual support. Although three tutors are undergoing training in initial assessment, none have received training on how to provide effective additional support so learners can make progress with their basic skills.

**21. The analysis of management information is inadequate.** Although some data are collected, analysis of learners' performance and the targets set for retention and achievement are based on retained learners, not those who started the training

programme. Learners' performance is not analysed by individual training centre to make comparative judgements and to establish trends in performance.

**22. There are no arrangements for the formal appraisal of staff.** Regular, informal staff performance monitoring visits take place, but formal appraisal with agreed outcomes leading to the identification of staff development needs have not been carried out. Tutors do not currently receive enough support to develop a wider range of teaching techniques and skills in classroom management.

**23. BTE has a strong ethos of equality and social inclusion and effectively promotes equality of opportunity to staff and learners.** All staff have recently had equal opportunities awareness training which been passed on effectively to learners. The equal opportunities policy has recently been rewritten and improved. Learning materials have been modified, and discussions in class structured, to reflect cultural diversity.

**24. BTE takes great care to establish the nature of the barriers to learning for the young mums-to-be and develops effective strategies to help most learners overcome them.** The range of barriers include low self-esteem, high levels of social need, health problems and negative attitudes to learning. Good use is made of a broad range of external agencies to support learners.

**25. Three training centres do not have access for learners with mobility difficulties.** If a learner cannot access a training centre, BTE will provide transport to one which can accommodate them.

**26. Although several staff have counselling qualifications and experience of working with young offenders, none has received training on how to deal with challenging behaviour.**

27. The quality assurance strategy has only been in place for 12 months. It covers key stages of the learning process, including initial assessment, production of training plans and progress reviews. It is too early to judge its effectiveness.

28. A procedure for auditing and quality assurance checks was introduced in December 2002 but the system is too new for its full impact to be assessed. There are inconsistencies in the way progress reviews are recorded and administered by tutors. Guidelines have recently been issued to tutors to ensure consistency in the use and format of lesson plans.

29. Internal verification is at an early stage of development. It is carried out by the Gloucester company who devised the YMTB programme, when portfolios are completed. There is no internal assessment earlier in the training programme. The YMTB programme has only been accredited since December 2002.

**30. There is insufficient analysis of learners' feedback.** Feedback is collected from learners after four weeks on the training programme, on completion of course modules, and as part of the monthly progress reviews. Exit interviews are also conducted. There is

no process to ensure that follow-up actions are identified to bring about improvements.

**31. The scheme for the observation of tutors is ineffective.** Most tutors have been observed recently, but the observation forms provide only factual records of activities by learners and tutors. There are not enough evaluative judgements on the quality of teaching and learning.

**32.** The self-assessment report involved all staff. It is concisely written and clearly structured. It contains evaluative judgements with reference to supporting evidence. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses, but also identified others. The grade given by inspectors for foundation programmes and the contributory grade for quality assurance were lower than the grades in the self-assessment report. The overall grade for leadership and management was the same and the contributory grade for equality of opportunity was higher than the grades in the self-assessment report.

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

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- effective partnership working
- good operational management
- very effective promotion of equality of opportunity
- effective removal of barriers to learning

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate analysis of management information
- no formal staff appraisal
- insufficient staff training on challenging behaviour
- insufficient analysis of learners' feedback
- ineffective observation of teaching and learning

## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- good use of a well-structured training programme
- good acquisition of skills and knowledge by learners
- wide range of learning materials
- good personal support for learners

### **Weaknesses**

- no additional qualifications
- insufficient range of staff teaching skills
- insufficient formal monitoring of learners' progress

### **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT BUSINESS TRAINING ENTERPRISE:**

- meeting other young-mums-to-be
- improving their self-confidence to cope with the pregnancy and baby
- learning in an environment that is not like school
- the good support from tutors and outside agencies
- the portfolio of evidence which they can later use as a reference source
- exploring employment and educational possibilities to pursue after the baby is born

### **WHAT LEARNERS THINK BUSINESS TRAINING ENTERPRISE COULD IMPROVE:**

- the insufficient challenge in some units
- the delays in receiving individual attention during some group work
- the resources in two training centres, which do not have enough IT equipment or adequate seating

## **KEY CHALLENGES FOR BUSINESS TRAINING ENTERPRISE:**

- improve the range of staff teaching skills
- develop formal monitoring of learners' progress
- implement formal staff appraisal
- improve the analysis of management information data
- carry out effective observations of teaching and learning

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

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

#### **Strengths**

- effective partnership working
- good operational management
- very effective promotion of equality of opportunity
- effective removal of barriers to learning

#### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate analysis of management information
- no formal staff appraisal
- insufficient staff training on challenging behaviour
- insufficient analysis of learners' feedback
- ineffective observation of teaching and learning

33. Partnerships with a range of agencies have been used effectively to establish YMTB programmes at six training centres in the community, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Staff are fully involved in local teenage pregnancy strategy groups. Good referral pathways have been established through the Connexions service, social services, borough health promotion units, local education authorities and contact with teenage pregnancy co-ordinators, midwives, health visitors, staff at teaching hospitals and doctors' surgeries. Recruitment targets for 2002-03 have been met. A detailed strategy has been set out in the business plan for continuing these partnerships when BTE moves to the new E2E programmes in August 2003.

34. Operational management is good. BTE is appropriately structured to meet operational demands. Lines of accountability are clear and staff have a good understanding of their role in the company. All staff have an employee handbook. Induction for new staff is effective. Most tutors complete a two-week period observing training and familiarising themselves with the YMTB programme before taking up their duties. They have received training in the use of learning materials and the detailed support notes for tutors. Tutors work independently at one of the six training centres and receive good support. The monthly meetings of all staff are used well to exchange information. Detailed minutes are kept and action points identified. The managing director and two area managers, meet weekly to review overall performance. An area manager visits each training centre on a weekly basis to meet with tutors and learners and carry out quality assurance checks.

35. The management of resources is satisfactory. The managing director has full

budgetary responsibility and accounts are regularly audited. Resource needs are discussed at managers' meetings and decisions about their allocation are clear. There has been recent substantial investment in an IT suite of eight computers at the New Malden training centre. Learners attending most other training centres are provided with transport to New Malden to work on their IT-based projects. Venues for the YMTB programme are appropriate to ensure ease of access for learners. Accommodation generally provides a satisfactory learning environment and resources are adequate. Health and safety risk assessments are carried out at all the training centres. Tutors have been recruited primarily for their experience in the health and caring professions or expertise of working with young people. None of the tutors or managers has a recognised teaching qualification or assessor awards.

36. BTE has introduced some measures to support the development of learners' skills in literacy, numeracy and language. All learners complete a diagnostic assessment as part of their induction. Tutors are informed of the findings. Depending on the outcome, learners are issued with worksheets and some have received additional individual support. For example, arrangements were made for two Life Skills learners to attend a local college for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) training. Three staff are receiving training in the initial assessment of basic skills as part of the new level 2 qualification in basic skills support. However, tutors have not yet received training on how to provide the additional support required by learners to make progress with their basic skills.

37. There is inadequate analysis of management information, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. Data are collected on learners' recruitment, ethnicity, duration on programme, achievement of units and the destination of those who complete the programme. Analysis is carried out of learners' performance but this, and the targets set for retention and achievement rates, are based on retained learners and not those who started. Analysis of performance of groups of learners within designated time periods or by learners at individual training centres have not been carried out to make comparative judgements or to establish performance trends over time. Specific remedial actions have not been identified. Most staff are not aware of the targets that have been set for learners' achievement.

38. There are no arrangements for the formal appraisal of staff, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. Staff performance is monitored closely during their probationary period and regular monitoring visits take place when this is completed. Formal appraisal with agreed outcomes leading to the identification of staff development needs have not been carried out. A staff training plan for the organisation linked to new business objectives is currently being implemented. Staff have attended recent short courses in such areas as health and safety and drug and alcohol misuse. Tutors do not currently receive enough support to develop a wider range of teaching techniques and skills in class management.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

39. BTE has a strong ethos of equality and social inclusion and promotes very effectively equality of opportunity to staff and learners, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. All staff have recently had equal opportunities awareness training by an external consultant. This training has been passed on effectively to learners. The equal opportunities policy has been recently rewritten and improved. It now includes a disability and race equality statement and the company's policy on complaints, grievances and appeals. A member of staff has recently been given responsibility for equal opportunities at BTE. Data comparing the ethnicity of learners to the ethnicity of the borough in which the training takes place, has just been completed. This shows that the ethnicity of learners largely reflects the local community. Learning materials have been modified, and discussions in class have been structured, to reflect cultural diversity. In training there is good reference to equality issues which may impact on the learners, for example, the potential difficulties of getting a job when they have a young child.

40. BTE works effectively to establish the nature of the barriers to learning for the young mothers-to-be and develops effective strategies to help most learners overcome them. The range of barriers include low self-esteem, high levels of social need, health problems and negative attitudes to learning. To encourage participation, some learners attend training initially for mornings only, building up gradually to full days. The programmes are run in six training centres in the community so that learners do not have to travel long distances. One learner has her taxi fare paid. Five learners, who already have a child, are provided with childcare support so that they can attend training. BTE keeps in close contact with another learners' parents so that they can jointly encourage the learner to attend training. Good use is made of a broad range of external agencies to support learners. These include teenage pregnancy units in hospitals, a maternity helpline, counselling services, the Connexions service, youth agencies, and a range of benefit agencies. BTE are particularly supportive and responsive to learners' needs.

41. BTE operates an open and inclusive recruitment policy but does not provide staff with any training on how to deal with challenging behaviour, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. Although several staff have counselling qualifications and experience of working with young offenders, none have received training on how to deal with conflict, issues which may have led to a young person being excluded from school, or learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

42. Three training centres do not have access for learners with restricted mobility. BTE is aware of the problem. It is intended to take this into account when next moving to new premises. If a learner cannot access a training centre, BTE will provide transport to one which can accommodate them.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 4**

43. The quality assurance strategy has only been in place for 12 months. There are set procedures covering key stages of the learning process, including initial assessment, production of training plans and progress reviews. Most policies are not dated and there is no established calendar for their regular review. Learners receive a comprehensive

range of well-written quality assurance documents as part of their induction. They are provided with terms and conditions, house rules, a drugs and alcohol policy, a health and safety policy, equal opportunities policy, disciplinary and grievance, and assessment appeals procedures.

44. A procedure for auditing and quality assurance checks was introduced in December 2002. Area managers are involved in weekly checks of progress reviews, fortnightly classroom observations, and monthly checks of learning plans and portfolios of evidence. Action plans are produced, highlighting issues to be tackled by staff. An administrator has been appointed to ensure that progress reviews are completed and action points followed up. The system is too new for its impact to be assessed. However, there are inconsistencies in the way progress reviews are recorded and administered by tutors. In some cases, action points are not clear, and some learners have experienced delays in receiving copies of the completed form. Some copies are kept in learners' folders and others in their portfolios. Guidelines have recently been issued to tutors to ensure consistency in the use and format of lesson plans.

45. BTE gained formal accreditation for the YMTB programme in December 2002. Internal verification, which is carried out by the Gloucester company who devised the programme, is at an early stage of development. Some completed portfolios of evidence have been verified, but there has been no review of the earlier stages of the assessment process. Further staff training needs in the completion of feedback sheets has been identified. Assessment issues are discussed at tutors' meetings, but there are no formal arrangements for standardisation and the regular exchange of good assessment practice. In some training centres, there are insufficient opportunities for unit accreditation. Some learners have completed units awaiting final assessment.

46. There is insufficient analysis of learners' feedback, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. Feedback from learners is collected at key stages in their programme. A questionnaire is completed after four weeks, and learners' written comments are required on completion of course modules and as part of their monthly progress reviews. Exit interviews are conducted. There is insufficient analysis of this feedback information. There is no process to ensure that follow-up actions are identified to bring about improvements.

47. The scheme for the observation of tutors is ineffective, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. Most tutors have been recently observed and there have been more regular observations of the newly appointed tutors. The observation forms provide factual records of activities by learners and tutors. There are not enough evaluative judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. Suggestions for improvement are not identified and links are not made to further staff development. Records of observations are maintained but there has been no assessment of the overall performance of tutors.

48. The self-assessment report for 2002-03 is the second produced by the company. Initially drafted by the managing director, it was further developed at management team meetings and discussed at a meeting of all staff. Revisions were made in response to

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staff feedback. All staff participated in a grading exercise to confirm the final judgements. An action plan, which tackles weaknesses and identifies ways to maintain strengths, is incorporated in the revised business plan for the company. Some action points are not sufficiently detailed. The self-assessment report is concisely written and clearly structured. It contains evaluative judgements with reference to supporting evidence. Some of the strengths identified are no more than normal practice. Inspectors agreed with some of the strengths and weaknesses but also identified others. The grade given by inspectors for foundation programmes and the contributory grade for quality assurance were lower than the grades in the self-assessment report. The overall grade for leadership and management was the same and the contributory grade for equality of opportunity was higher than the grades in the self-assessment report.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Foundation programmes

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Life Skills	46	3

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

#### Strengths

- good use of a well-structured training programme
- good acquisition of skills and knowledge by learners
- wide range of learning materials
- good personal support for learners

#### Weaknesses

- no additional qualifications
- insufficient range of staff teaching skills
- insufficient formal monitoring of learners' progress

### Achievement and standards

49. Achievement rates are satisfactory. In 2001-02, 46 per cent of learners completed the programme and achieved the targets on their individual learning plans. To date in 2002-03, 35 per cent of learners have achieved their targets and a further 30 per cent are still in training. As most learners are young pregnant teenagers, some do not complete the programme due to health problems associated with their pregnancy or that their baby may arrive early. In 2001-02 and 2002-03, 14 learners and 31 learners respectively left early to have their baby. Registration is left open so learners can come back and complete the programme after the birth. In 2001-02, 29 per cent of learners went into employment or further education. Many learners have difficulties finding affordable childcare, which restricts their progression.

50. Retention is satisfactory. In 2001-2002, 51 per cent of starters were retained and in 2002-03 retention is 35 per cent, with 30 per cent still in learning.

51. The standard of work in portfolios is good. Portfolio evidence is based on tasks in the YMTB workbook and additional evidence of learners' own research. Written work contains comprehensive personal accounts and reflections. Learners produce budgets to enable them to provide nutritious meals for both mother and baby and do craft work. This includes making practical items such as baby bibs, cushions and baby books to encourage interaction with their baby. Learners also produce a realistic plan for their future, indicating whether they want to progress into further study or employment.

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Tutors provide continuous informal feedback to learners on their progress.

52. There are no additional qualifications for learners to achieve to improve their employability, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. For example, learners do not do first aid, health and safety, basic food hygiene or customer care awards. Learners without GCSEs at grades A-C in English and mathematics are not entered for the national literacy and numeracy tests.

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													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	155		78													
Retained*	55		40	51												
Successfully completed	55		36	46												
Still in learning	46		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

53. BTE makes good use of a well-structured YMTB training programme designed to meet the specific needs of the learners. Detailed course notes provide tutors with clear instructions on how to plan and teach the programme. Tutors have improved and added to these with their own learning materials and ideas.

54. The acquisition of skills and knowledge by learners is good, a strength not identified in the self-assessment report. They receive detailed information about changes to their bodies during pregnancy, anatomy, the birth process, nutrition and the influence of drugs on pregnancy. A lot of emphasis is placed on using correct terminology and learners extend their vocabulary. They develop research skills and gain the confidence to practically resolve issues concerned with housing, childcare and benefits. Learners acquire good practical craft skills and the ability to plan and purchase suitable materials from specialist shops to make useful items for their baby, such as bed covers, decorated bibs, cushions and lampshades. They improve their organisational skills through writing a birth plan, making lists of items to be purchased for the baby and compiling their portfolio. Learners are given support to assess their current situation and plan their future learning and careers.

55. Tutors and learners effectively use a wide range of learning materials and

information sources. The course workbook for learners is well presented easy to use. All training centres have many reference books, magazines and catalogues on a wide range of relevant topics such as childbirth and child development. There are specialist books about pregnancy and information leaflets on contraception. For the topic on healthy eating, learners make good use of posters, recipe books and information leaflets. Learners choose their own craft materials relevant to the item they are making. Training centres also have a wide variety of general materials including coloured paper, pens, fabric, and special fabric paints. Learners make many visits to specialist baby and craft shops, libraries, and other community venues such as Internet cafes and young parent groups. Specialist speakers, such as health visitors, midwives, trainers from the local National Childbirth Trust and Connexions personal advisers all make regular contributions to the training programme.

56. There is very good personal support for learners, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Tutors create a caring and secure environment and learners are able to approach tutors and discuss difficult personal issues. Tutors are supportive and understanding and encourage learners to take independent action to find a solution to their concerns. Personal advisers from Connexions regularly review learners' progress and advise and help learners on how to obtain benefits and secure housing. Learners' midwives and health visitors visit them during the course. Learners gain a lot of support from their peers and enjoy spending time with those in a situation similar to their own.

57. All training is satisfactory. Sessions are well prepared and taught by tutors and experts with good subject knowledge. Learning materials are readily available and learners have easy access to pens, paper, reference materials and a camera to record their work. Learners work at their own pace with tutor support. In some sessions, some learners received more support than other learners. There is insufficient formal monitoring of learning. There is not enough use of direct questioning and insufficient monitoring of learners' understanding at the end of the training sessions.

58. Training staff have an insufficient range of teaching skills. Tutors have the skills and experience of working with young people and good subject knowledge. However, neither managers nor tutors have any formal teaching or training qualifications. Although all learners have an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs, no staff are qualified to teach and assess basic skills. Much of the teaching consists of individual support and some learners do not make adequate progress.

59. There is insufficient formal monitoring of learners' progress, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. Learners are set targets and milestones but these are of a personal nature and are not equally specific and measurable across all sites. Personal milestones do not always include the completion of the YMTB units. Although learners produce lots of good work for their portfolio, they do not always receive regular formal feedback on their progress. They do not achieve accreditation for a completed unit but have to wait for all units to be completed. Some learners complete the programme without their portfolios being up to the standard for accreditation. There is no ongoing internal assessment by BTE. The company who devised the programme in Gloucester carries out internal assessment when portfolios are completed.

## **Leadership and management**

60. The management of the Life skills programme is satisfactory. Each of the six training centres is managed by one of the two area managers, who visit weekly. Tutors receive good support from their line manager and receive verbal feedback on their performance. Tutors and learners are able to discuss issues and concerns with the area managers. Area managers have good links with other agencies and services in the community, such as Connexions, doctors' surgeries, health visitors and midwives. Staff attend regular team meetings during which good practice is shared and difficulties and issues arising for learners are resolved.