

REINSPECTION REPORT

Hair and Beauty Industry Training Limited Reinspection

19 January 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas. 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.*

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.
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**)

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.

REINSPECTION REPORT

Hair and Beauty Industry Training Limited Reinspection

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Hair and Beauty Industry Training Limited (HABIT) is a private training organisation offering apprenticeships in hairdressing and beauty therapy. The company previously traded as Sinclair's Hair and Beauty Academy and has offered work-based learning programmes since 1998. HABIT operates from a head office in Sunderland. It has two training centres, a commercial hair and beauty salon, and training centre in Sunderland, and a training centre in the centre of Newcastle.
2. The senior management team consists of the two directors, a general manager and a commercial assessment team manager who leads the assessment and internal verification team. One of the directors is a qualified hairdresser and is part of the assessment and internal verification team for the hairdressing programmes. The other director is the company secretary. The general manager is responsible for the strategic management of the company, and shares responsibility with the directors for financial control and for all the policies and procedures. HABIT employs three full-time and seven part-time trainers and assessors.
3. HABIT is funded by the Tyne and Wear Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

4. HABIT provides apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in hairdressing and beauty therapy to 100 learners. In hairdressing, there are 53 apprentices and 15 advanced apprentices. In beauty therapy, there are 31 advanced apprentices, one apprentice and one learner following a national vocational qualification (NVQ) programme at level 3. Most of the learners are employed in the Newcastle and Sunderland areas, but there are a few in Scotland, Birmingham and Manchester. Eleven vocationally qualified staff teach and assess learners on the hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes.
5. Off-the-job training, including background knowledge, practical skills training and key skills, takes place at the training centres in Newcastle and Sunderland or in the learners' workplaces. HABIT negotiates with employers and learners the most appropriate way for the training to be given. Some learners attend the training centres fortnightly and others do all the training and assessment in their salon workplace. Assessment takes place both in the training centre and at the learners' workplaces.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	9
Number of learners interviewed	16
Number of staff interviewed	16
Number of employers interviewed	10
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	20

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. At the previous inspection, in November 2004, HABIT's leadership and management, quality assurance and training in hairdressing and beauty therapy were all judged to be unsatisfactory. Equality of opportunity was satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, training in hairdressing and beauty therapy is satisfactory overall, as are HABIT's leadership and management and its arrangements for equality of opportunity. However, its quality assurance arrangements remain unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

Hairdressing & beauty therapy			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Hairdressing			
- Apprenticeships for young people	110	4	
Beauty therapy			
- Apprenticeships for young people	37	4	

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hairdressing</i> - Apprenticeships for young people	69	3
<i>Beauty therapy</i> - Apprenticeships for young people	31	4

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

7. The standard of learners' written work is satisfactory in hairdressing. Portfolios are well presented and fulfil the requirements of the awarding body. In beauty therapy, the standard and range of written work does not always meet the awarding body's requirements.

8. Hairdressing and beauty therapy learners' practical skills are satisfactory and wide ranging. Some learners are capable of performing technical tasks beyond what might be expected for their time in training.

9. Achievement rates for hairdressing apprentices are satisfactory. Of those who started in 2003-04, 34 per cent have achieved their framework and a further 21 per cent are still in learning. Nine per cent of the learners who started in 2004-05 have achieved their framework and 68 per cent are still in learning.

10. The achievement rate for key skills qualifications has significantly increased, particularly for learners who started training in 2005.

11. Retention rates have improved both on hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes since the inspection in 2004. All the learners who started the programmes in 2005-06 are still in learning.

12. **Achievement rates for advanced apprentices in beauty therapy are poor.** This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. No learners have completed an advanced apprenticeship in beauty therapy since 2002-03.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	1	4	0	5
Total	0	1	4	0	5

13. **The organisation and implementation of key skills training is good.** Since the previous inspection, HABIT has re-organised its key skills training. Learners are achieving better results in external key skills tests. Key skills are now effectively cross-referenced to the hairdressing scheme of work and lesson plans. Learners appreciate the relevance of key skills to their employment in hairdressing.

14. **Learners are employed in good salons.** The décor and equipment reflect best industry standards and the salons use a good range of modern hair and beauty products. Many offer planned training sessions for learners alongside the day-to-day training given during normal salon activities.

15. Off-the-job training in hairdressing is satisfactory. The programmes and training sessions are well organised and clearly identify learning outcomes for hairdressing and key skills. Most groups are small and this enables the tutor to give good individual support when required. However, in beauty therapy, schemes of work and session plans do not sufficiently identify learning outcomes or focus on individual learning needs.

16. Programmes in hairdressing are taught flexibly to meet the needs of employers and learners. HABIT works with hairdressing employers to link the NVQ training with their salon's individual training plans. In some cases, this allows all the training to take place in the salon with the support of a salon assessor or visiting assessor.

17. Learners receive satisfactory vocational and pastoral support and a thorough induction. During induction, all learners have an initial assessment to determine the level of their literacy, numeracy and language skills. At the previous inspection, initial assessment was poor. It is now satisfactory.

18. Resources are satisfactory overall. There is an appropriate range of products available to enable learners to develop practical and retail skills.

19. Assessment practice in hairdressing was a weakness at the previous inspection but is now satisfactory. Logbooks are completed correctly following an assessment. Learners fully understand the assessment process and how well they are progressing.

20. There are **too few assessment opportunities in the workplace for beauty therapy learners**, and they make slow progress towards achieving their NVQ and apprenticeship frameworks. Assessors visit some learners infrequently, and although their practical skills are good, they are not being recognised through timely assessments.

Leadership and management

21. HABIT has developed and implemented **good strategies to improve operational management**. The development and management of key skills training is good. This was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection report. Good emphasis has been placed on improving learners' progress. Managers meet monthly to monitor learners' achievement and progress and plan appropriate action.

22. HABIT has developed **good networking initiatives**. It maintains good working relationships with local salons by tailoring the training provision to the meet the needs of learners and employers. HABIT has established contacts with local schools where it promotes work-based learning as a route to vocational qualifications. It has effective links with local colleges of further education and other work-based learning providers to encourage collaboration.

23. **Internal verification is weak in beauty therapy**. There has been insufficient internal verification of learners' written and portfolio work and the awarding body has withheld certification since the last external verification visit. Five learners are awaiting certification.

24. The strategy for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language, identified as a weakness at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. All new learners take an initial assessment at interview to identify their literacy and numeracy levels and to ensure that they are matched to an appropriate programme. Good staff development has taken place to ensure that trainers have the skills and confidence to support learners' literacy, numeracy and key skills needs.

25. The collection and use of management information is no longer a weakness. HABIT has installed a new management information system. Its data is now more accurate and managers are confident in its reliability. Data is used to set targets at management and training staff level. The system is at an early stage of development, but is being extended and continually updated by the new management information manager. The data provided for the reinspection is accurate.

26. Communication is satisfactory. Staff meetings take place regularly and are well attended, but are not minuted in sufficient detail to permit monitoring of whether agreed actions have been met.

27. Health and safety monitoring is satisfactory. Staff keep appropriate records and follow up identified actions. Employer records and agreements are well documented. Customer complaints are recorded and dealt with appropriately.

28. Staffing was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. HABIT now has sufficient experienced and qualified staff to deliver the training programmes. Staff training and development takes place regularly, is linked to annual appraisal and focuses on the company's priorities.

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29. Strategic and development planning are satisfactory. The plans respond to local and national LSC priorities and the company sets targets and objectives to meet them. The plans are reviewed regularly.

30. Equal opportunities policies and procedures are satisfactory and were updated in 2005. The policy is written in plain language which is easily accessible and understood by learners.

31. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities and diversity which is reinforced and monitored at their progress reviews. Any issues that are identified are responded to quickly and sensitively by HABIT's staff. The company acknowledges that staff understanding of the wider equality and diversity issues needs further development. All staff are currently attending training events as part of an LSC initiative, and further training is planned in 2006.

32. HABIT routinely collects data on learners' ethnic background, gender and disabilities. However, it recognises that it does not use this data sufficiently to monitor, analyse or compare the achievement rates of different groups or to set improvement targets.

33. Access to both of the training centres is poor for people with restricted mobility. HABIT is aware of its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It has produced a disability statement which sets out alternative arrangements to provide training and services at employers' premises. Currently, HABIT has no learners with restricted mobility.

34. HABIT has reviewed and updated its quality assurance framework. Policies and procedures are clearly written and most have a useful flow chart showing the stages at which each procedure is implemented. A quality assurance cycle has been developed, detailing when key processes should be implemented and evaluated, and it is starting to standardise working practices.

35. The process for quality assuring teaching and learning has recently been implemented. Observers' feedback to training staff is detailed and useful. It grades the session and clearly identifies the strengths and weaknesses. In addition, spot checks take place, mainly to measure compliance with the quality assurance procedures.

36. Data is used appropriately to set company targets. Retention and achievement data is checked regularly and is being used effectively to set trainers targets for their group of learners. Other data is not used effectively.

37. The self-assessment process is inclusive and involves staff, learners and employers. HABIT has identified many of the same strengths and weakness as the inspectors, but it placed insufficient emphasis on the weaknesses in the beauty therapy provision.

38. The quality improvement strategies have had insufficient effect on the beauty therapy training. HABIT has been unable to employ or keep suitably qualified staff, and

this has had a detrimental effect on beauty therapy learners' progress and their programme of training. Strategies that have improved hairdressing training and assessment have not had the same effect on the beauty therapy programme.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategies to improve operational management
- good networking initiatives

Weaknesses

- insufficiently effective quality improvement strategies in beauty therapy

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good organisation and implementation of key skills
- good workplace salons

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Beauty therapy

Strengths

- good workplace salons

Weaknesses

- poor achievement of advanced apprenticeship frameworks in beauty therapy
- insufficient opportunities for assessment in the workplace for beauty therapy learners
- weak internal verification in beauty therapy

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good strategies to improve operational management
- good networking initiatives

Weaknesses

- insufficiently effective quality improvement strategies in beauty therapy

39. HABIT has developed and implemented good strategies to improve operational management. Its development and management of key skills training was identified as a weakness by the previous inspection, but is now good. Emphasis has been placed on improving learners' progress. Managers hold monthly meetings to monitor learners' achievement and progress, and devise appropriate action plans. Weekly staff meetings with the hairdressing and beauty co-ordinators are used to discuss individual staff caseloads and learners' progress. Staff are set achievement targets for their learners, linked to the learners' planned programme end date. Detailed support is planned for learners who are not meeting their achievement targets. This is effectively monitored on a 'cause for concern' form and by a traffic light system. However, staffing problems in beauty therapy have meant that these processes have had insufficient effect on beauty therapy learners.

40. As identified by the previous inspection, HABIT has developed good networking initiatives. Staff maintain good working relationships with local salons by tailoring the training provision to the meet the needs of learners and employers. HABIT has established contacts with local schools through which it promotes work-based learning as a route to vocational qualifications. Effective links have been made with local colleges of further education and other work-based learning providers to encourage collaboration. HABIT refers applicants to these providers if its own training programmes are not suitable for them. HABIT works well with a network of employers in the industry and has gained credibility with a large national hairdressing organisation for providing good-quality hairdressing training in the Midlands, the Northeast and Scotland. It is involved in the 'aim higher programme', developed by the local work-based learning network and Sunderland University and provided through the LSC. This is intended to help new learners to develop their career aspirations and identify career opportunities and progression routes in further and higher education. Feedback from learners is very positive.

41. The strategy for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support was a weakness at the previous inspection but is now satisfactory. HABIT developed a clear, new strategy in 2005. All new learners take an initial assessment at interview to identify

their literacy and numeracy levels. If they do not meet the level needed to successfully complete the apprenticeship framework, HABIT liaises with other providers to ensure help is available and that the learners are put on to an appropriate programme. Good staff development has taken place to ensure that trainers have the skills and confidence to support learners' literacy, numeracy and key skills needs.

42. The collection and use of management information is no longer a weakness. HABIT has appointed a new management information manager and installed a new management information system. Data is now more accurate and managers are confident in its reliability. Data is used to set targets at management and training staff level. The system is at an early stage of development, but is being extended and continually updated. The data provided for the reinspection is accurate.

43. Communication is satisfactory. Staff meetings take place regularly and are well attended, but they are not minuted in sufficient detail to allow actions to be followed up. Most meetings do not have standard agenda items to ensure that the organisation is focusing sufficiently on key priorities. For example, the minutes of senior management meetings do not sufficiently record or discuss learners' retention and achievement rates, which are a key priority in the self-assessment development plan. Communication with employers has improved. An informative newsletter celebrates learners' achievement and a recently developed pack for employers gives good information on the apprenticeship programme, key skills, health and safety, and equal opportunities. However, the pack is new and not all the employers have received it.

44. Health and safety monitoring is satisfactory. Managers keep appropriate records and follow up identified actions. Employer records and agreements are well documented. Customer complaints are recorded and responded to appropriately.

45. Staff receive regular training and development linked to annual appraisal and focused on the company's priorities. Staffing was a weakness at the previous inspection, but HABIT now has enough experienced and qualified staff to deliver the training programmes. However, it has experienced difficulty in recruiting and keeping suitably qualified beauty therapy staff. Two new staff have recently been appointed, but they have not yet had time to improve the assessment opportunities for learners, or the internal verification processes.

46. Strategic and development planning are satisfactory. The plans respond to local and national LSC priorities and set company targets and objectives to meet them. The plans are reviewed regularly.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

47. The equal opportunities policy and procedures were updated in 2005 and are satisfactory. The policy is written in plain language which is easily accessible and understood by learners. It explains what constitutes bullying, harassment and discrimination. The policy is displayed in the training salons and all learners are given a copy at induction. It is also part of the new employer handbook.

48. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equal opportunities and diversity which is reinforced and monitored at their progress review. Any issues that are identified are responded to quickly and sensitively by HABIT's staff. The company acknowledges that staff understanding of the wider equality and diversity issues needs further development. All staff are currently attending training events as part of an LSC initiative, and further training is planned in 2006.

49. HABIT routinely collects data on learners' ethnic background, gender and disabilities. However, it recognises that it does not use this data sufficiently to monitor, analyse or compare the achievement rates of different groups, or to set improvement targets. HABIT is in the process of installing new computer software to extend its management information system so that managers can analyse equal opportunities data more effectively. The company has well-developed initiatives to market hairdressing as a career to male students in local schools. However, in 2005, it has had fewer male learners than in previous years.

50. Access to both the training centres is poor for people with restricted mobility. HABIT is aware of its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and has produced a disability statement which sets out alternative arrangements to provide training and services at employers' premises. Currently, HABIT has no learners with restricted mobility.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

51. HABIT has reviewed and updated its quality assurance framework. Policies and procedures are clearly written and most have a useful flow chart showing the stages of implementing each procedure. A quality assurance cycle has been developed to give a more systematic approach to implementing and monitoring the procedures. It details when key processes should take place and how they should be evaluated, and is starting to standardise working practices. Staff have had recent training to introduce them to the new procedures. Some of the procedures have been audited, and this has identified the inadequate recording of targets at learners' progress reviews. The practices of individual staff have been improved as a result. However, it is too soon to judge the effect of the quality assurance procedures on improving the learners' overall experience.

52. The quality improvement process for teaching and learning has recently been implemented. Observations of teaching and learning are carried out by the operational manager who line manages the trainers. She gives detailed and useful feedback to the training staff, grades the session and clearly identifies the strengths and weaknesses. In addition, there are spot checks of compliance with the quality assurance procedures. The processes are too new for any improvement trends in teaching or learning to be measured. In beauty therapy, the staff are too new to have yet been observed as part of this process.

53. The company uses data appropriately to set itself improvement targets. Retention and achievement data is now being used effectively to set trainers targets for their own

group of learners, and to measure their progress. Other data is not used effectively. For example, feedback questionnaires are analysed, but insufficient attention is paid to the weaknesses they identify. No formal action has been taken to deal with issues identified in questionnaires, to develop improvement strategies or set targets. Some of the results are reported back to employers and learners through the newsletter, but these only focus on what the company does well and not on the actions taken to implement improvements.

54. The self-assessment process is inclusive and involves staff, learners and employers. HABIT has identified many of the same strengths and weakness as the inspectors, but placed insufficient emphasis on the weaknesses in the beauty therapy provision. The self-assessment grades matched the reinspection grades, with the exception of beauty therapy and quality assurance, which were one grade too high in the self-assessment report.

55. The quality improvement strategies have had too little effect on training in beauty therapy. HABIT has been unable to recruit or keep suitably qualified staff, and this has had a detrimental effect on beauty therapy learners' progress and their programme of training. Strategies that have improved hairdressing training and assessment have had little effect on the beauty therapy programme. Internal verification arrangements are incomplete and have severely delayed some learners achieving their qualifications. Assessment opportunities for learners are poor. Staff are not sufficiently focused on setting clear measurable targets for the learners at their progress reviews. Two new members of staff have recently been recruited, but it is too soon for them to have had any effect on the experience of the current learners.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hairdressing</i> - Apprenticeships for young people	69	3
<i>Beauty therapy</i> - Apprenticeships for young people	31	4

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good organisation and implementation of key skills
- good workplace salons

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Beauty therapy

Strengths

- good workplace salons

Weaknesses

- poor achievement of advanced apprenticeship frameworks in beauty therapy
- insufficient opportunities for assessment in the workplace for beauty therapy learners
- weak internal verification in beauty therapy

Achievement and standards

56. Learners' written work is satisfactory in hairdressing. Portfolios are well presented and fulfil the requirements of the awarding body. Learners have a good understanding of how to cross-reference their evidence with the NVQ criteria, and of which evidence can also be used towards their key skills awards. In beauty therapy, the standard and range of written work does not always meet the awarding body's requirements.

57. Hairdressing and beauty therapy learners' practical skills are satisfactory and wide ranging. Some are capable of performing technical tasks beyond what might be expected for their time in training. For example, inspectors observed one hairdressing learner who has only been in training for five months capably carry out a demanding colouring technique. Similarly, in beauty therapy, some level 2 NVQ learners have

developed practical skills at an advanced level, and competently completed advanced nail treatments in their salon workplaces.

58. Achievement rates for hairdressing apprentices are satisfactory. Of the apprentices who started in 2003-04, 34 per cent have achieved their framework and a further 21 per cent are still in training. Of those who started in 2004-05, 9 per cent have achieved their framework and 68 per cent are still in learning. HABIT has recruited beauty therapy apprentices in 2005-06 for the first time since the beauty therapy framework was extended to include apprenticeships. Retention rates have improved on both hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes since the inspection in 2004. All the learners who have started programmes in 2004-05 are still in learning.

59. The achievement rate for key skills qualifications has significantly increased, particularly for those learners who started their training in 2005-06.

60. HABIT has prioritised training for hairdressing learners who have exceeded their planned time of the programme. From the 2001-02 and 2002-03 starters, all but one learner has now completed, bringing the achievement rate to 50 per cent for both years. All the learners recruited since 2004 are still in learning and most are making satisfactory progress.

61. Achievement rates for advanced apprentices in beauty therapy are poor. This was identified as a weakness by the previous inspection. No learners have completed an advanced apprenticeship in beauty therapy since 2002-03.

Quality of education and training

62. The organisation and implementation of key skills training is good. Since the previous inspection, HABIT has re-organised key skills training. Learners are now achieving better results in external key skills tests. Key skills are now effectively cross-referenced to the hairdressing scheme of work and lesson plans. Learners appreciate the relevance of key skills to their employment in hairdressing. Tutors have devised key skills exercises which link into the NVQ units. Learners are fully aware of the key skills requirements of the apprenticeship framework. Good staff training and development has taken place to improve staff knowledge and confidence about teaching key skills. Staff are now sufficiently knowledgeable about key skills to support learners, and some are preparing to take external awards. Inconsistencies and staff shortages have delayed the development of key skills teaching in the beauty therapy curriculum.

63. Learners are employed in good salons. The décor and equipment reflect best industry standards and the salons use a good range of modern hair and beauty products. Many offer planned training sessions for learners alongside the day-to-day training in normal salon activities. At the previous inspection, employers were not sufficiently involved in progress reviews. The progress review document now requires the employer's signature as an indication of their involvement. A copy of the learners' progress review document is given to the employer so that salon and NVQ assessments

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can be linked. Communication with employers has been strengthened through the recent introduction of a newsletter and an employer pack, but the file has yet to be distributed to all employers.

64. Off-the-job training in hairdressing is satisfactory. The programmes and training sessions are well organised and clearly identify learning outcomes for hairdressing and key skills. Most groups are small and this enables the tutor to give good individual support when required. However, in beauty therapy, schemes of work and session plans do not sufficiently identify learning outcomes or focus on individual learning needs.

65. Programmes in hairdressing are taught flexibly to meet the needs of employers and learners. HABIT works with hairdressing employers to link the NVQ training with their salon's individual training plans. In some cases this allows all the training to take place in the salon with the support of a salon assessor or visiting assessor. One learner's individual learning plan was adjusted to take into account her prior experience, and she was able to complete the advanced apprenticeship and technical certificate in 15 months. In beauty therapy, co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is not sufficiently linked to the needs of the learner and employer.

66. Learners receive satisfactory vocational and pastoral support. Induction is thorough and includes an initial assessment to determine the level of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills. The previous inspection identified that initial assessment was poor. It is now is satisfactory. If learners need additional support, HABIT liaises with other providers to ensure help is available and that the learner is matched to an appropriate programme. Learners can discuss problems with supportive staff. Since the previous inspection, HABIT has improved how it monitors learners' progress. A monthly case conference is held to identify learners at risk of failing to complete their training. Extra support is provided to help learners achieve the targets identified on their learning and assessment plans. HABIT's paperwork has recently been improved to give tutors and managers more detail of learners' progress. Learners report how useful the changes are in keeping them focused on the work ahead, but it is too early to identify their effectiveness in helping learners achieve full frameworks.

67. Resources are satisfactory overall. There is an appropriate range of products available to enable learners to develop practical and retail skills. At the Sunderland training centre, resources are good. However, in the Newcastle training centre parts of the hairdressing salon are cramped making it suitable only for small groups. The previous inspection reported that there were insufficient beauty therapy resources to meet the national standards. The level of resources has improved and is now satisfactory. However, the equipment in the beauty therapy salon is poorly laid out and learners' movement is restricted during practical training sessions.

68. Assessment practice was a weakness at the previous inspection but is now satisfactory in hairdressing. Learners are set assessment targets during their progress reviews and in the recently introduced learning and assessment plan. Individual learning plans are amended as assessments are completed. Logbooks are completed correctly after assessments. Learners fully understand the assessment process and how well they

are progressing.

69. There are insufficient opportunities for beauty therapy learners to be assessed in the workplace. They are making slow progress towards achieving their NVQs and apprenticeship frameworks. Some learners are seldom visited by their assessors. Learners' practical skills are good, but are not being recognised through timely assessments. The skills they gain in the workplace are not being acknowledged when trainers plan off-the-job training.

Leadership and management

70. Communication is satisfactory. There are regular meetings and staff work well together. Two new staff joined the team as beauty therapy co-ordinator and internal verifier four weeks before the reinspection. Staff and senior managers monitor learners' progress. All staff are set targets for learners' progress, review visits and assessments. Staff and learners have a satisfactory awareness of equality and diversity issues.

71. Internal verification of hairdressing programmes is satisfactory. A sampling plan adequately covers all aspects of the provision. The hairdressing internal verification system is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the awarding body. Standardisation of assessment practice by the hairdressing verifiers is satisfactory. The self-assessment report identified many of the same strengths and weaknesses as the inspectors. Many changes have been made since the previous inspection, most noticeably in improved paperwork and in recording systems and procedures, but it is too early to be able to fully measure their effectiveness.

72. In beauty therapy, internal verification is weak. There has been insufficient internal verification, particularly of learners' written and portfolio work, and the awarding body has withheld certification since the previous external verification visit. This has delayed final certification and framework achievement for five learners. One of the newly appointed beauty therapy staff is an experienced internal verifier, but has not yet had sufficient time to effect any significant improvements to the internal verification process. There is insufficient emphasis in the development plan on improving weaknesses in beauty therapy.