

INSPECTION REPORT

The Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy

29 September 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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 aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnndirect** 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.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Yorkshire College of Beauty Therapy (YCBT) is a private training organisation that has been providing learning in beauty therapy since 1983. Approximately 40 per cent of its income results from private training. YCBT's head office is in Yeadon, near Leeds, Bradford and Harrogate and it has recently opened a new apprenticeship training centre nearby. Most of the learners are local, but some come from as far away as Hull, with YCBT arranging accommodation if required. The senior management team comprises the principal, the training director, the training manager and the finance director. The internal verifiers also play a key role in managing the apprenticeship programme. There are four trainers and assessors, of whom two work full time and two part time. A key skills co-ordinator provides learning support. In addition, for practical salon activities in the training centre, YCBT employs four support assistants to work with the trainers. Most staff work part time at YCBT and practise part time as beauty therapists. YCBT has two qualified internal verifiers.

2. YCBT contracts with West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide government-funded, work-based learning in beauty therapy. The learners are all advanced apprentices in beauty therapy. Some learners have progressed into higher education and careers in physiotherapy and radiography. A number of former learners have opened their own salons and now provide salon work placements for new learners. Learners are generally recruited by YCBT and then apply for jobs, often with employers that have previously recruited learners from YCBT. Staff attend careers events in the local area and work with Connexions.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** YCBT's leadership and management are good, as are its arrangements for quality improvement. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Its provision in retail and commercial enterprise is good.

4. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** It is inclusive and self-critical, and involves feedback from staff, learners and employers. It identified many of the key strengths and weaknesses of most of the provision. The grades awarded in the self-assessment report matched those of the inspectors in the area of learning and in equality of opportunity, but were lower than the inspection grades for leadership and management and quality improvement. The report did not include evidence from key parts of YCBT's quality improvement processes, such as the observation of training.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** In 2002, when YCBT was previously inspected, its leadership and management and quality improvement were satisfactory. Both are now good, and the good success rates reflect the quality of the beauty therapy training.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR THE YORKSHIRE COLLEGE OF BEAUTY THERAPY:

- maintain and further improve the good overall and timely success rates
- maintain the good support for learners
- maintain the good teamwork in delivery of training
- maintain the focus on continuous improvement in training
- improve the co-ordination of the review process
- develop a literacy, numeracy and language support strategy
- continue to improve learners' and employers' understanding of equality of opportunity

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Grades awarded at inspection

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

Retail and commercial enterprise			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Beauty therapy		2	
Apprenticeships for young people	103	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. A team of two inspectors spent a total of 12 days at YCBT. Two days were spent observing induction during August. Inspectors visited YCBT's head office, the nearby training centre and five local employers. All aspects of the beauty therapy provision were reported on and graded.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	43
Number of staff interviewed	10
Number of employers interviewed	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	5
Number of visits	2

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- good communication between all parties involved in training
- good teamwork and consultative management
- many good examples of continuous improvement in training

Weaknesses

- inadequate literacy, numeracy and language support strategy

Retail and commercial enterprise

Beauty therapy

Strengths

- good overall and timely success rates
- good teaching and learning
- very good support for learners
- good management of training

Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of the progress review process

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT THE YORKSHIRE COLLEGE OF BEAUTY THERAPY:

- 'great new building!'
- 'I really like the way I do my training'
- 'we get good one-to-one training'
- 'they require high standards from us'
- 'the facilities are really good'
- 'all the extra support when we need it'
- 'we learn a lot of helpful stuff in key skills'
- 'we like the discipline'
- 'learning while getting paid!'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK THE YORKSHIRE COLLEGE OF BEAUTY THERAPY COULD IMPROVE:

- 'I'm missing out on training while waiting for a work placement'
- 'more help in finding a work placement'
- 'not enough training in my salon'
- 'I could have moved faster with my training'

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good communication between all parties involved in training
- good teamwork and consultative management
- many good examples of continuous improvement in training

Weaknesses

- inadequate literacy, numeracy and language support strategy

7. There is good communication between all the parties involved in training at YCBT. Employers are visited several times a year by YCBT staff who are also employers themselves. This adds credibility to YCBT's understanding of employers' needs. Contact is also maintained by telephone and by postal correspondence. YCBT writes to employers when their learners pass national vocational qualification (NVQ) units, and telephones them immediately if learners miss a day at college. Employers are consulted about the order of training and whether there are any areas that could be improved. There is a shared understanding of the standards required and employers speak very positively about the standards at YCBT and the good communication. On more than one occasion, YCBT has written to all its employers when a learner has had an accident at work, explaining the circumstances and highlighting the dangers involved. Three-monthly sets of lesson plans are given to salons in order to help them support their learners in the workplace. This was changed from one-monthly plans on the request of employers. Staff have formal monthly meetings but also communicate effectively on an informal daily basis. Memos are used to stress any particularly important changes, with staff signing to confirm that they have read the memo. Changes in staff circumstances are communicated and YCBT takes action to help maintain their roles, sometimes offering changed working patterns. There is good sharing of information on employers and learners. Staff use an issues list every week to record learners' changes in circumstances, such as moves between salons or home addresses. Monthly group discussions with learners allow staff to feed back learners' views into staff meetings, and any problems and their solutions are then fed back to the learners. Learners speak confidently to their tutors about their concerns, and there are many examples of help being given, such as work placements being changed as a result of feedback about training. Staff maintain good contact with learners' parents and guardians. There is an annual parents' day and evening, during which parents can see the work of the college and book appointments with tutors to discuss their children's progress and future progression opportunities. Letters are sent to parents if there are any problems, such as with attendance, and parents are involved if problems arise. There is good communication with outside bodies such as Connexions and key players in training and industry, including colleges of further and higher education. This is supported by policies such as the communication policy for staff.

8. There is particularly good teamwork at YCBT and effective support for staff through a consultative management style. Most members of staff have been with the provider for some time, but new staff are given an extended induction that focuses on giving them the

skills they need to support learners. The induction includes job shadowing, support in understanding procedures, and time spent identifying further development needs. The use of classroom assistants is a particularly effective way of developing new training staff in a way that allows both parties to see if they would benefit from working together. The annual staff appraisal system is linked to targets for the following year. There is an emphasis on developing teaching skills, with three members of staff beginning certificate in education courses. YCBT also intends its staff to progress to a foundation degree. Staff appreciate the support to develop their professional skills and interests. YCBT staff work collaboratively, looking at resources and identifying good practice in teaching. There are flexible working arrangements that take account of staff members' family commitments and that allow some staff to work at home for part of the week on the understanding that they will be contacted by telephone if necessary. The staff feel that their opinions are valued and taken into account when decisions need to be made. The two-roomed office in the new building is shared by all staff, including managers. All staff share the aims of delivering good training and maintaining standards in assessment. Managers keep staff well informed, and all staff are aware of their roles and their contribution to operating the business. All staff have appropriate detailed job descriptions and responsibilities. YCBT has procedures for all its activities and staff are aware of the operational processes which have a direct effect on training and assessment. The training director uses a monthly business summary to highlight issues and recommend actions. For example, this year's learners were reluctant to travel for their work placements. YCBT will overcome this next year by giving learners more information before they begin their programme about the possible need to travel. Other issues included having appropriate imagery in prospectuses to reflect the composition of the community.

9. YCBT has a satisfactory range of policies and procedures. The health and safety policy is well written and health and safety is satisfactorily managed. There are appropriate checks on new salons and annual checks thereafter. There have been improvements in the teaching of key skills, and all staff regard it as an essential element of training. The new premises will allow more use of information technology online key skills testing and in teaching. There have been big improvements in the development and use of an electronic management information system since the previous inspection. Data is being collected and used appropriately in monitoring and long-term planning. YCBT carries out appropriate business planning that meets its own needs and those of its funding bodies. The detailed strategic business planning file does not include an overview document to summarise YCBT's intentions for the next few years.

10. YCBT's literacy, numeracy and language support strategy is inadequate. There is no policy that details how the provider will identify and support learners with particular learning needs. There are no specialist teaching resources or strategies to offer different assessment methods to meet the needs of learners. A member of staff who specialises in key skills has the main responsibility for providing support, and this is done effectively in key skills. All learners receive an initial assessment that tests their key skills abilities and broadly identifies their literacy and numeracy levels. This is not reinforced by more specific diagnostic testing that checks areas of literacy such as punctuation or spelling. Staff plan to repeat the current key skills initial assessment with some learners after several months to see if their results improve during training. This weakness has not had a serious effect on current learners, most of whom have good standards of literacy and numeracy.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 3**

11. YCBT has a satisfactory user-friendly equal opportunities policy, aimed at learners, that is easy to understand and available as a professionally printed leaflet. It covers key topics such as discrimination and bullying, giving examples that are relevant to young people. There is an emphasis on the promotion and evaluation of equal opportunities, and learners are actively encouraged to make staff aware of any problems that they may encounter in the workplace or at YCBT. There have been examples of YCBT actively tackling bullying and harassment and supporting learners to find new employers. There is a clear message of developing the potential of all learners in their time with YCBT. A lot of relevant information has been researched to support both the promotion and the reinforcement of equal opportunities. These include resources for a project on stereotyping in employment, which is especially relevant in an industry such as beauty therapy. Career talks to mixed groups of pupils have been featured in the local press. A male member of staff goes to careers events in order to support the message that training is open to men. YCBT participated in a diversity audit funded by the LSC in 2005. A calendar of religious festivals is used in planning. There has been satisfactory staff training in equality of opportunity, with staff who attend longer external courses feeding back to their colleagues on useful aspects. The training manager is taking an advanced qualification as an equality trainer. The promotion of equality of opportunity is included in the three-year development plan. YCBT's policies are not always dated.

12. Several of the weaknesses in equality of opportunity have been dealt with since the previous inspection. Equality is now a standing agenda item, and staff reinforce learners' understanding by setting them assignments that require research. Learners have a satisfactory but basic understanding of equality of opportunity. YCBT now makes satisfactory use of data, setting targets for the participation of under-represented groups, and making year-on-year comparisons. The data is also compared with that for the local population. Although the proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups does not reflect the make up of the local population, it has improved. The parents of many Asian girls will not allow them to work in beauty therapy. There are no men in training, although ways of attracting them have been discussed several times at staff meetings. The current qualification is not the most suitable as it involves intimate body waxing. Other qualification routes have been looked at. YCBT's new recruitment literature will include a specific paragraph on opportunities for men in the beauty industry, and YCBT is also looking at short courses as a way of attracting men into the industry. Marketing material is satisfactory and is being updated to better reflect under-represented groups. YCBT is using a professional company to revamp its website and to take new photographs. YCBT has moved into new premises on the ground floor of an office block, with car parking and good physical access for learners or clients with limited mobility. The employers' salons that inspectors visited were accessible to people with limited mobility.

13. There are satisfactory appeals and complaints procedures, and they are understood by the learners. The appeals procedure for the NVQ has appropriate stages and referrals. There is a confidential complaints procedure that asks learners to say how they would like the matter resolved. Learners are confident about telephoning the college to report any incidents that take place at work. A complaints log includes the date and a brief description of the complaint, and how it has been dealt with. Most complaints have been dealt with effectively. One, to do with inappropriate behaviour by clients, resulted in new procedures that should prevent a reoccurrence of the problem.

14. Employers have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity. When work placements are set up, employers are asked to sign YCBT's equal opportunities policy and to abide by it. There is limited monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace. Progress reviews routinely include discussion of equality of opportunity, but at a level that does not reinforce understanding.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

15. There are many good examples of continuous improvement in training at YCBT that include employers, staff and learners. Employers are given certificates when their learners complete units. More short courses are now available on additional subjects. Training sessions at YCBT take place on the quietest salon days, and more time is being spent on skin diagnosis at the request of employers. Learners have requested longer key skills sessions and these have been provided. There have been amendments to the scheme of work to help learners achieve units. Earlier finishing times have been introduced in winter, and learners now start a level 3 unit at the end of their first year. Staff are now given a planning day each term away from their classes. Logbooks are being made available very early on in the training programme and course workbooks have been improved to support the teaching of background knowledge. Resources have been greatly improved since the previous inspection with the move to new premises. Learners now have lockers and there is a suite of computers that will enable staff to make further improvements in teaching and allow learners to word process assignments. Classroom assistants have been successfully introduced into all practical sessions, freeing up the main tutor for more individual support, especially when several assessments are taking place. This also provides a route into teaching for future teaching staff. A dedicated member of staff for key skills, who is a man, was recruited and has been supported into the team. This has resulted in key skills being given a higher profile, with online testing and the chance for learners to take optional or higher level key skills in the year just started. There is a good focus by staff on identifying best practice in teaching. After the main staff meeting agenda has been covered, staff bring an example of best practice, something that has worked particularly well, or a request for help with something that they know learners find difficult to understand. Some ideas to improve training have been tried and rejected after evaluation. For example, YCBT tried streaming learners according to their exam results, but this did not change the time taken by learners to complete practical work, or reduce the numbers of early leavers.

16. The quality of training at YCBT is being monitored well and the results are being used to make improvements. The views of learners and employers are collected using questionnaires, and the information is evaluated. YCBT tends to use open questions that elicit useful responses. These are acted upon to improve the service to employers and learners. Feedback is given to learners where appropriate. Concerns raised by employers are usually resolved by visits or a telephone call. The training at YCBT has been altered to meet the needs of employers. The type of information received using open questions is difficult to quantify and use to show year-on-year improvements. For example, it is clear from the positive comments that all employers are happy with YCBT, but there is not a closed question that allows YCBT to say that their service is meeting the needs of employers. Similarly, there is an effective observation system that identifies how teaching could be improved, but the observations are not graded and cannot be used as a quantitative source of evidence. The system has helped YCBT identify a previous problem with poor teaching and assessment practice that was appropriately resolved. Although

YCBT collects information about additional training given by employers, such training is not subject to the observation system. Although there is no formal evaluation system, YCBT staff who carry out monitoring visits have a clear view of the quality of employers' training, and know which salons are good at it.

17. YCBT has an effective quality assurance system, with policy documents and procedures that are appropriate for a small training provider. There are procedures that outline the key aspects of the training activities, staff responsibilities and the documents to be used. Procedures and forms are not always dated or given a version number, making it difficult to tell which version of a policy or procedure is being used. This was identified at the previous inspection. Internal verification, a weakness at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. There is an overall annual verification plan on the management information system. It covers an appropriate sample of assessors, and a range of evidence across units and learners. If the main internal verifier was not there other qualified staff could easily use the system. One good aspect of the system is that every month, the computer programme flags up any actions that still need to be completed.

18. The self-assessment process is satisfactory but is not the key driver in quality improvement. A self-assessment report and an associated quality improvement plan are written annually. The report for the inspection was produced in November 2005 and updated in June 2006. It was mainly written by one senior member of staff using contributions given informally and at staff meetings. The views of learners and employers were collected through surveys, group discussions and monitoring visits. Some of the report is too descriptive and not sufficiently evaluative. Some statistics quoted in the report are inaccurate as they are not based on success rates. The report did not identify all the strengths and weaknesses found during the inspection. Some of the judgements matched those of the inspectors, but with a different emphasis. The self-assessment grades matched those of the previous inspection report, despite the fact that there had been a number of improvements. Inspectors' grades matched those in the self-assessment report for the area of learning and equality of opportunity, but were higher for leadership and management and quality improvement.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Retail and commercial enterprise

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Beauty therapy		2
Apprenticeships for young people	103	2

19. YCBT started its apprenticeship programme in 1983. There are 103 advanced apprentices at present, on a programme that is planned to last for two years. In the first year, learners work towards an NVQ and key skills at level 2, and in the second year they work towards an NVQ at level 3. All NVQ assessment is carried out off the job at the training centre. YCBT recruits learners and helps them find salon placements. All learners are employed and spend one day each week at the training centre and four days in the workplace. The senior management team consists of the training director, the training manager and the finance director. The training director is responsible for the management and co-ordination of training programmes. The training manager, who reports to the training director, is responsible for the co-ordination of salon work placements. YCBT works with approximately 100 salons. There are four trainers and assessors, of whom two work full time and two part time. In addition, for practical salon activities in the training centre, YCBT employs four support assistants to work with the trainers. Two staff carry out internal verification.

Beauty therapy

Strengths

- good overall and timely success rates
- good teaching and learning
- very good support for learners
- good management of training

Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of the progress review process

Achievement and standards

20. Overall and timely success rates on the advanced apprenticeship programme are good. Overall success rates have averaged approximately 70 per cent in the three years from 2003 to 2006. Timely success rates mirror this trend and both rates significantly exceed national averages. Most learners who stay on the programme achieve a full advanced apprenticeship framework. Only 3 per cent of leavers in 2006 failed to do so, and they achieved NVQs at levels 2 and 3 only.

21. Learners develop good skills, confidence and a professional attitude early in the programme, and they use these effectively in their workplaces. Employers are notified every time their learners achieve a unit, and many learners start working on paying clients

in their salon within six months of starting the programme. The standard of learners' written work and portfolios is satisfactory.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	35	74	52	74	34
		timely	35	74	42	74	25
	2004-05	overall	25	84	66	68	58
		timely	25	84	58	68	50

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk).

The quality of provision

22. Teaching and learning are good. Approximately 70 per cent of the lessons inspectors observed were good or better, and none was unsatisfactory. The more experienced tutors provide outstanding training for learners. Background knowledge sessions are particularly well planned and taught. Innovative use of resources and teaching aids enable learners to grasp very complex subjects quickly. For example, in an anatomy and physiology session, tutors used bundles of nylon tights tied together around pieces of elastic, to demonstrate to learners the layers of a voluntary muscle and its muscle fibres. Each layer was peeled back to show the anatomical structure of a voluntary muscle. Learners quickly understood the concept, and their learning and understanding were very effectively checked. In practical sessions, learners work very professionally and competently, practising their new skills. Tutors constantly reinforce professional standards and effectively link practical activities to industry standards and requirements. In the best sessions, health and safety are continually reinforced, and tutors take every opportunity to link learners' background knowledge to their practical work. However, in one practical salon, breaches of health and safety were not corrected by the tutor. Key skills teaching is good, with all learners having timetabled teaching slots on their training day. Learners enjoy this aspect of their training. Learners' written work is marked appropriately, in line with awarding body requirements. However, tutors do not correct spelling errors, and learners often repeat them in subsequent pieces of work.

23. Learners receive very good individual support and their needs are well catered for. Tutors provide individual and group coaching, outside normal training hours, to help learners improve their practical skills and their background knowledge. Two learners with medical conditions have specially adapted timetables to meet their needs. They receive good support from tutors to maximise their learning and training opportunities. Work placements are carefully matched to the needs of each learner. YCBT's staff are skilled at supporting learners in their work placements. They visit them frequently and respond quickly to meet learners' and employers' needs. When necessary, learners change salon placements until they are settled and confident in their work environment. Staff identify learners whose behaviour or standard of work is a cause for concern. They quickly take action to support the learners to improve their performance. Parents and guardians are kept well informed of learners' progress and any issues that arise.

24. Learning resources are good. A new site has been refurbished to provide new accommodation dedicated to work-based learning provision. Salons are clean and well equipped. The background knowledge training room has an interactive whiteboard and 16 computer workstations. However, the staff are not yet all confident in using this equipment. Handouts and workbooks are presented well, although some contain minor spelling errors.

25. Learners' literacy and numeracy needs are appropriately met. Most learners hold general certificates of secondary education in English and mathematics, and none currently has language support needs. However, YCBT has no strategy for how it would support learners with additional literacy, numeracy and language needs.

26. Learners receive good information, advice and guidance throughout their programme. At interview, careful account is taken of the learners' enthusiasm and understanding of careers in beauty therapy. Learners are given guidance throughout the programme on various aspects of their training. All learners have an exit review at the end of their programme to discuss their future career goals and learning. They are helped to produce curriculum vitae to support them in job applications if they choose not to stay at their work placement. Career guidance is good. Well-known, national beauty therapy employers visit the college to give career talks and interview learners who are interested in pursuing a career with them. In 2004 and 2005, between 90 per cent and 95 per cent of learners progressed to full-time careers in the industry, and the remainder entered higher education.

27. There is insufficient co-ordination of the review process. Progress reviews that involve the employers take place in the salons every eight weeks, and there are further reviews at the training academy every 12 weeks. Learners' reviews do not sufficiently take into account individual learning goals. Whole units are set as targets. There are no short- or medium-term time-bound targets to help learners achieve specific aspects of each unit. Most learners have the same target dates for unit completion. Learners' achievement is effectively recorded when they complete each aspect of their programme. However, no target dates are set to help encourage that achievement. The more able learners are not motivated to complete work earlier than the anticipated unit completion date. The workplace reviews focus on training that has taken place in the workplace, and information from the training centre review is not used in the salon review. Employers do not receive a copy of either review document. Employers say they would like more detailed information of learners' progress.

Leadership and management

28. The training is managed well. Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Internal communication and team working are very good. All staff attend a range of meetings that keep them fully informed of developments and encourage them to contribute to and share good practice. Learners' progress is managed effectively. Staff have a good understanding of learners' progress, and discuss and record it at meetings. Staff are well qualified and have good, current, commercial skills which they demonstrate effectively to learners. Training that supports business objectives is fully funded by the provider. In 2005, YCBT's focus was on training all its teaching staff to achieve higher-level teaching qualifications. All tutors now hold teaching qualifications. Members of staff, and learners who have completed their programme, are being encouraged to

participate in a new foundation degree in beauty therapy. All staff work regularly in the beauty therapy industry and one is a salon owner. This keeps their skills current and increases their credibility with learners and salon owners. Communication with employers is good and great emphasis is placed on developing and maintaining good working relationships. All employers have the mobile telephone number of the work-placement officers and can contact them during and out of office hours. Regular contact is maintained with employers.

29. Learners have a basic understanding of equality and diversity. Aspects of equal opportunities are considered at progress reviews, but the recording of the discussion is often weak.

30. Quality improvement activities have led to positive changes in the way the programme is taught. Monthly best practice meetings are used effectively to share new ideas that improve teaching and learning and standardise practice. Teaching assistants have been recruited to support tutors in practical sessions, allowing the tutor more time for assessment activities, while ensuring that all learners have appropriate support and help. Key skills teaching has improved. Online testing has been introduced and formal key skills sessions are part of the training day. Learners are well motivated and enjoy the sessions. Internal verification is thorough. The sample plan is appropriate, and the electronic records are well managed. The system alerts the internal verifiers to revisit areas that need further action, and identifies verification activities on a monthly basis.

