

# London College of Beauty Therapy

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Inspection date

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## Background information

### Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

#### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)), reports from the inspectorates' monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Hairdressing and beauty therapy
- Customer service

## Description of the provider

1. London College of Beauty Therapy (LCBT) was founded in 1995 as a specialist independent college, initially offering full-time beauty therapy courses through a partnership with a local further education college. Since 2004, LCBT has had its' own contract for further education (FE) funded and work-based learning provision through London Central LSC.
2. LCBT has two sites, both close to Oxford Street, in Central London, with three commercial salons open six days and four evenings a week. The company is solely owned by the chief executive officer. LCBT has 84 full-time and six part-time staff, 43 of these are engaged in direct training and/or assessment. The beauty therapy industry has low proportions of men and minority ethnic workers.
3. At the time of inspection, LCBT had 504 beauty therapy learners on FE funded courses and 163 customer service apprentices. The beauty therapy learners attend LCBT from a wide geographical area, across London and the home counties. Apprentices are employed by a range of beauty product retailers or health clubs across the United Kingdom. LCBT has two Train to Gain learners taking a diploma in retail beauty consultancy. Too few Train to Gain learners were on programme to be inspected. LCBT has also delivered training to year 10 and 11 pupils from 23 schools across London through a European Social Fund (ESF) contract. LCBT was awarded the Training Quality Standard (TQS) in May 2008, and holds Matrix and Investors in People accreditation.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
FE funded provision	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
FE funded provision	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
FE funded provision	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
FE funded provision	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Sector subject areas

Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good: Grade 2
Customer service	Good: Grade 2

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

FE funded provision

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

- Achievement and standards for beauty therapy are good. Overall success rates at levels 1 and 3 are very high and satisfactory at level 2. Beauty therapy learners gain good commercial skills. Progression rates are good. Achievement and standards for customer service are satisfactory. Overall success rates are satisfactory. Timely success rates are low on the customer service programme.
- The quality of the provision is good. Teaching and learning are good on both programmes. Beauty therapy learners make good use of information learning technology (ILT). Customer service learners have excellent learning and assessment resources. LCBT is outstanding in meeting the needs and interests of learners. Both programmes are designed in an exemplary way and are exceptionally flexible. Courses meet the needs of employers excellently. Enrichment activities for beauty therapy learners are outstanding. Advice, guidance and support for learners are good. In particular, initial advice and guidance for beauty therapy learners is very effective.
- Leadership and management are good. Curriculum management is particularly good. Courses are well planned and resourced. Partnership work is excellent. LCBT makes good use of staff and learner feedback for improvement. Managers are not systematically using success rate data. Quality assurance arrangements, including self-assessment and reviews of programmes are generally satisfactory. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. LCBT ensures good social and educational inclusion, effectively removing learners' barriers to participation. Staff have not had recent equality and diversity training. Beauty therapy tutors do not sufficiently reinforce diversity in the curriculum.

### Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

- LCBT has good capacity to improve. Managers make good use of learner and staff feedback for improvements. Significant investment has been put in to the development of learning and assessment resources. Management and quality assurance roles have been developed over the last year to support the increase in the work-based learning provision. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Beauty therapy learning session observations and programme reviews for each course are not being used sufficiently to share best practice. Managers are not using success rate data sufficiently to recognise trends and drive improvement.

8. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The process is well established and previous reports have led to improvement. The current report is very detailed. The process involved the beauty therapy tutors, but not all customer service assessors. The customer service self-assessment report is largely accurate. In beauty therapy and leadership and management the process is insufficiently self-critical. Key areas for improvement have been missed and the report gives an overly-positive picture. Data is used throughout the report, with some suitable conclusions drawn about participation by diverse groups. The beauty therapy data has not been used to make appropriate judgements about overall success rates at level 2.

## Key strengths

- Very high success rates at level 1 and 3 in beauty therapy
- Good development of beauty therapy learners' commercial skills
- Excellent resources to support apprentices' learning and assessment
- Exemplary and innovative curriculum delivery model
- Very effective advice, guidance and support for learners
- Good curriculum management
- Excellent partnership work
- Good use of learners' and staff feedback towards improvement

## Key areas for improvement

- Low timely success rates by apprentices
- Insufficient recent and relevant training for staff in equality and diversity
- Insufficient use of success rate data by managers for improvement



## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

FE funded provision	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. Achievement and standards are good in beauty therapy and satisfactory in customer service. Overall success rates in beauty therapy on the national vocational qualification (NVQ) at levels 1 and 3 are consistently very high. On the NVQ at level 2 in beauty therapy, which has the largest number of learners, overall success rates declined in 2007/08 and are satisfactory. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. The small number of male learners all achieved their qualification. Black, Black British and Chinese learners have slightly lower success rates than white and Asian learners. In 2008/09, overall success rates for the large number of Train to Gain learners taking the BTEC diploma in retail beauty consultancy were satisfactory. The customer service overall success rates were high in 2007/08 at 79%. This was a significant improvement on the previous year.
10. Beauty therapy learners develop good commercial and professional skills. Learners demonstrate a strong awareness of sustainability and minimising product wastage. Beauty therapy progression rates are high, which is identified in the self-assessment report.
11. The standard of customer service learners' work is satisfactory. Many learners improve their sales, motivation and confidence through the apprenticeship.
12. Timely success rates for apprentices and Train to Gain learners are low. Many learners are set a target for completion, which is too short and unachievable.

### Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

FE funded provision	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

13. The quality of the provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Customer service learners use excellent learning and assessment resources, as identified in the self-assessment report. These have been customised very well to meet the requirements of their employing company. Customer service learners complete interactive and interesting assignments. Beauty therapy tutors and learners make good use of ILT. The best learning sessions are well planned and meet learners' individual needs well. Learners attend good demonstrations where they gain confidence in new tasks. Tutors and learners make good use of LCBT's good

quality course workbooks. In the weaker learning sessions, tutors do not effectively check learners' understanding, particularly in health and safety. The development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs is good. Tutors and assessors have good occupational experience.

14. Assessment is thorough and well planned with effective verbal feedback for learners. Customer service assessors are extremely efficient in using time and evidence towards achievement. They make very good use of learners' prior learning and experience. Some beauty therapy tutors provide insufficiently clear written feedback following practical assessments.
15. In one teaching room, the facilities for extracting fumes from solvents for nail service practical sessions are inadequate. LCBT is currently resolving this through the installation of new equipment. This was not identified in the self-assessment report.
16. Programmes and activities are outstanding in meeting the needs and interests of learners. The curriculum is provided innovatively. There is a very strong focus on meeting employers' and industry needs. The beauty therapy programme is highly flexible, catering well for different modes of attendance and start dates. Progression routes are very effective. The customer service programme is unique, including a qualification that LCBT developed with its' major employers and the awarding body.
17. Beauty therapy learners are provided with an excellent range of well managed enrichment activities. They have extensive opportunities for work experience and participating in high profile national events.
18. Advice, guidance and support for learners are good. Beauty therapy learners receive very effective initial advice and guidance, which is highly accurate and realistic. Initial assessment is used well to identify and support additional learning needs. Learners have good access to welfare and financial support. LCBT are currently developing their virtual learning environment to extend the support services to customer service learners in the workplace.

## Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

FE funded provision

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

19. Leadership and management are good. This aspect was graded outstanding in the self-assessment report. Curriculum management is good. The planning and management of courses, resources and assessment are thorough and ensure value for money. Significant investment is made in developing very effective learning and assessment resources, particularly e-learning. Staff are set

challenging targets, which are routinely monitored. Tutors are well trained and experienced. Meetings and communication are very effective.

20. Partnership work is excellent, as identified in the self-assessment report. Leaders and managers make outstanding use of employer and partner feedback. LCBT takes a key role in developing qualifications and local strategy. Managers have strong links with a wide range of professional organisations to support the delivery of the enrichment programme.
21. Staff and learners' feedback is used very well to improve the quality of the provision. Learners have extensive opportunities to give feedback. Managers thoroughly evaluate the reasons why each learner has left their programme early. Support and enrichment for learners have significantly improved over the last year to meet the personal and social needs of learners.
22. Leaders set a strong direction for good quality training and assessment. Their actions for achieving this are clear and are thoroughly discussed with tutors and managers. The strategic plan is comprehensive, although brief, and has been updated to reflect changes in funding body priorities. Staff are clear about company policies and procedures.
23. Management roles have been established to strengthen the quality assurance arrangements. The learning session observation system is satisfactory and identifies areas for improvement. The observers' grades consistently show the quality of teaching to be good, but the overall profile is not yet improving. Beauty therapy tutors are not sufficiently sharing best practice in teaching and learning or through course reviews. A well established audit system monitors the quality of learners' records. Complaints are managed appropriately.
24. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. All staff have Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, which are centrally recorded. Staff guidance and training are adequate. LCBT has appropriate systems to supervise the very small number of new tutors who are waiting for their CRB check to be processed. However, the systems are not always adhered to for the full duration of the learning session.
25. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The self-assessment report graded equality of opportunity as outstanding. LCBT ensures good social inclusion by effectively removing barriers to learning. Learners make good use of financial assistance to enable them to participate or help with the costs of uniform and equipment. Welfare support arrangements have been strengthened and are good. Participation data is thoroughly analysed. Managers recognise the need to increase participation by men and learners from some areas of London. Promotional materials have been reviewed for their suitability and there has been some innovative advertising to attract under-represented groups. This year the number of men on FE courses increased to four, but it is still low. The equality and diversity committee meets regularly and members are currently updating policies and equality action plans. Success rates by different groups have been

analysed and actions set to increase the rates for black learners. LCBT has not reached any conclusive reasons about why success rates are lower for these learners. Progress towards achieving this action, is not being routinely monitored. Tutor and learner awareness of equality of opportunity is generally satisfactory. Tutors have not had recent, relevant equality and diversity training. Some beauty therapy tutors are not sufficiently promoting diversity or disability awareness within the subjects they teach. The monitoring of equality and diversity in the learning session observation system is insufficient.

26. Managers have access to an extensive range of information systems. Senior managers make insufficient routine use of data to monitor and challenge in-year performance trends at each level and by specific groups. This was not identified as an area for improvement in the self-assessment report. On the apprenticeship programme, there is close monitoring of timely success rates. However, these remain low and actions to rectify some of the underlying reasons have not taken place.

## What learners like:

- 'Learning at the college - I've recommended the college to several of my friends'
- Having the chance to shadow a TV makeup artist for the day
- The many extra things they can do besides the NVQ classes
- Being far more confident to sell products to clients
- Getting the qualifications quickly compared with other colleges

## What learners think could improve:

- Many learners felt nothing could be improved
- Being able to take the next level of qualification after the apprenticeship

## Sector subject areas

### Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Good: Grade 2

#### Context

27. LCBT offers full-time NVQ beauty therapy courses to 504 learners, four of whom are male. At the time of inspection, Of these, 310 learners are working towards NVQs at level 2, 152 aged 16-18 and 158 aged over 19. Some 194 learners are working towards NVQs at level 3, 96 aged 16-18 and 98 over 19. Although LCBT had enrolled 46 level 1 learners in 2008/09, they had finished their course by the time of inspection. Learners attend one of the college's two sites for two or three days each week.

#### Strengths

- Very high overall success rates at NVQ level 1 and 3
- Good development of learners' commercial skills
- Good progression to employment, education and training
- Good use of information learning technology in teaching and learning
- Exemplary and innovative curriculum delivery model enhanced by an extensive range of enrichment activities
- Very effective initial advice and guidance
- Outstanding employer responsiveness

#### Areas for improvement

- Inadequate facilities for extraction of fumes in nail service practical sessions
- Insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity in the curriculum
- Insufficient identification and sharing of good practice

#### Achievement and standards

28. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates in 2007/08 are very high for the NVQs at level 1 and 3 at 100% and 96% respectively. Overall success rates at level 3 are consistently high and have improved over the last three years. Learners develop good commercial skills including professionalism, practical and communication skills. There is a strong emphasis on sustainability and learners minimise product wastage. Progression is good between courses and into employment, which is identified in the self-assessment report. In 2007/08, 84% of level 3 enrolments were previously level 2 learners with LCBT.

29. For the NVQ level 2, which is the largest programme offered by LCBT, success rates in 2007/08 are satisfactory. Overall success rates by level 2 learners aged 16-18 were slightly below national rates, while for learners over 19 years of age

they were just above. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. Attendance rates are satisfactory.

### Quality of provision

30. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors make good use of information learning technology (ILT) in teaching and learning to enhance the delivery of theory learning sessions. Learners use technology very effectively to research topics such as manufacturers' information in the production of aromatherapy oils and in developing marketing materials. Learners make good use of the virtual learning environment.
31. Tutors have good commercial backgrounds and reflect current industry practices. The best learning sessions are well planned and meet individual learners' needs well. Tutors check learners' understanding thoroughly. Learners benefit from good demonstrations where they gain confidence before performing new tasks, such as epilation and eyelash perming. Learners attend extra classes to catch up or practice for assessments. Tutors and learners make good use of good quality course workbooks. The development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs is good. Action planning is good. Assessments are thorough with constructive verbal feedback. However, some written feedback on assessment is not sufficiently clear.
32. In the weaker learning sessions, learning is poorly planned and links are not effectively made to other sessions. Extended learning activities are not always appropriate, with learners being directed to finish off work rather than extending their knowledge. Not all tutors effectively check learners' understanding of health and safety risks associated with treatments before they start work on clients. Few learning sessions attempt to raise learners' awareness of equality and diversity or prepare them for working with clients who have a disability.
33. One teaching room has inadequate facilities to extract fumes from solvents for nail service practical sessions. This was the second course that had been held in this room. Practical sessions included external clients. LCBT's health and safety risk assessment and self-assessment process had not adequately identified this issue. LCBT is currently resolving this through installing new equipment.
34. Programmes and activities are outstanding in meeting the needs and interests of learners, which is identified in the self-assessment report. The curriculum is delivered innovatively. There is a strong focus on meeting employers' needs. Level 1 is appropriately offered as a six week intensive course for small numbers of learners with low prior attainment. LCBT has a highly flexible model of attendance, for example, learners can take courses for two days over seven months or three days over five months. Learners have excellent opportunities to develop skills intensively or work part-time while they are training. Courses start at various times of the year, enabling learners to progress without taking long breaks between courses.

35. Learners benefit from an outstanding range of enrichment opportunities linked to health, new skills and employment. Learners have extensive opportunities for work experience and participate at high profile national events. Learners' participation in enrichment activities is monitored and celebrated with certificates. Learners make a positive contribution to society through themed events linked to charity.
36. Guidance and support are good. Initial assessment is used very effectively to identify learners requiring additional support. Learners have access to a wide range of individual support, extra learning sessions and additional resources. Learners make good use of hardship funds and welfare services.
37. Initial advice and guidance are very effective, accurate and honest. Learners receive a detailed insight into all aspects of LCBT during pre-enrolment days. They have an excellent understanding of their course and progression routes.

#### Leadership and management

38. Leadership and management are good. Employer engagement is outstanding. LCBT operates an excellent recruitment service for employers that also provides learners with jobs. LCBT's wide range of short courses are very closely linked to industry requirements and needs, enhancing the employability of learners. Communication is systematic, with weekly recorded meetings and good teamwork. Managers make good use of learner and employer feedback to improve the provision.
39. LCBT uses positive images of men in their publicity materials. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity. Internal verification is satisfactory. It is well planned and assessors receive useful written feedback. Arrangements for standardisation are regular and effective. Staff development and appraisal are effective.
40. The self-assessment process is inclusive. However, the report is insufficiently critical, with judgements on success rates for NVQs at level 2 being too high. Not enough identification and sharing of good practice takes place through quality improvement procedures, such as course reviews or the observation of teaching and learning.



## Customer service

Good: Grade 2

### Context

41. LCBT has 163 customer service apprentices. Apprentices additionally take the BTEC diploma in retail beauty consultancy, which LCBT has mapped into the customer service framework. All learners are employed when they start the programme and work for one of 40 beauty product retailers or health clubs nationally. Eight % of the learners are aged 16-18, 47% are aged 19-24 and 45% are aged over 25. LCBT has 12 work-based assessors. All learning and assessment takes place at work.

### Strengths

- Excellent resources to support learning
- Outstanding response to employer needs
- Good support for learners
- Highly effective management

### Areas for improvement

- Low timely success rates

### Achievement and standards

42. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. This increased significantly in 2007/08 to 79%, which is high and 10 percentage points above the national rate. Learners develop effective practical skills in sales techniques and product knowledge. Many learners experience an increase in achieving sales and their confidence and motivation. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners' portfolios are well structured and organised. Learners fully understand their qualification and the targets they need to meet.

43. Timely success rates are low, as identified in the self-assessment report. In 2007/08, only 14% of learners achieved within their agreed timescale, which is significantly below the national rate. Learners have a target set by LCBT of 12 weeks to complete their full qualification, which is too short for some learners. Some learners are struggling to meet the requirements of the qualification, particularly in environments affected by the recession. A minority of employers are not providing learners with sufficient time away from customers for assessment meetings.

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## Quality of provision

44. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. The resources to support learning and assessment are excellent, which is identified in the self-assessment report. Learners complete interesting and interactive assignments. The comprehensive resource pack and workbooks are adapted well to meet the individual needs of the learner and major employers, through using their own corporate identity and terminology. The materials are highly relevant to the industry. Key skills are linked particularly effectively into the apprenticeship. Assessment is well planned with clear targets for learners. LCBT has developed extremely effective documents where assessors record evidence accurately and efficiently, avoiding repetition. Assessment practices are consistently good across all assessors. Very good use is made of prior learning and experience. Assessors are highly qualified and experienced. They are well equipped with good quality technology.
45. The customer service programme is outstanding in meeting the needs and interests of learners and responding to employer needs. The curriculum is innovative and uniquely targeted to retailing within the beauty therapy and cosmetic industries. LCBT worked extensively with most of the high profile employers in the premium retail beauty sector to develop the additional qualification; the BTEC diploma in retail beauty consultancy. This is the first specialised qualification for the sector. Employers have very high levels of satisfaction with the programme. Learners value the opportunity to gain the apprenticeship which complements their existing beauty therapy qualifications and experience.
46. Advice, guidance and support are good. Initial assessment is thorough and involves a variety of reading, writing and listening activities. Learners' preferred learning styles are analysed and in the better assessment plans, the results are used to good effect. Learners attend a comprehensive induction programme. Assessors maintain regular contact with learners through email, telephone and individual visits. They take a very flexible approach with their visits with appropriate recognition of learners' priorities towards work and their clients. LCBT is currently developing their virtual learning environment, including the enrichment, guidance and support services, to make it available to learners in the workplace.

## Leadership and management

47. Leadership and management are good and highly effective. Assessors receive a comprehensive induction and ongoing training and development. Communication with remote assessors is good, and includes webcam and telephone discussions with their line manager. Roles and responsibilities are well defined. Assessors carefully monitor learners' progress. Managers and assessors make good use of a colour coded system to monitor and update learners' progress. Despite some improvement in the last three months in timeliness, many learners are still not achieving within their agreed timescale. Assessors reinforce and develop equality

of opportunity effectively through professional discussions held with learners during assessment. Learners have sufficient understanding of equality of opportunity.

48. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory and effective in maintaining consistency across assessors, employers and geographical locations. Standardisation meetings are regular, interactive and effective. Internal verification is thorough and gives clear and relevant feedback with action points. Managers have access to comprehensive data, but are not always analysing this sufficiently to address areas for improvement.

## Annex

## Learners' achievements

Success rates on mainstream Level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age.

Notional Level 2	Exp End Year	16-18		19+	
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	Starts – Transfers	College Rate
NVQs	05/06	261	66%	224	70%
	06/07	219	76%	149	85%
	07/08	293	72%	212	82%

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age.

Notional Level 3	Exp End Year	16-18		19+	
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	Starts – Transfers	College Rate
NVQs	05/06	60	88%	73	90%
	06/07	72	92%	56	91%
	07/08	112	96%	94	96%

Success rates on work-based learning apprenticeship programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Apprenticeships***	06/07	overall	20	0	68%	0	65%
		timely	52	0	54%	0	53%
	07/08	Overall	38	79%	71%	79%	69%
		timely	29	14%	57%	14%	56%

\* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

\*\* College/provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the Individual Learning Record (ILR)

\*\*\* Apprenticeship programme started in 2006/07

## Annex

## Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2009

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	23	4%
		timely	97	2%
	2007/08	overall	165	73%
		timely	152	38%
	2008/09 (8 months)	overall	267	70%
		timely	234	33%

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first eight months of the LSC contract year

\* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

\*\* NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection