



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Training for Success and  
ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in  
Belfast College of Training and  
Education Limited

Report of an Inspection  
in November 2015

## Quantitative terms used by the ETI

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

## Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning, on Leadership and management, and on the overall quality of professional and technical areas:

Current performance level	Previous performance level <sup>1</sup>
Outstanding	Outstanding
Very good	Very good
Good	Good
Important area(s) for improvement	Satisfactory
Requires significant improvement	Inadequate
Requires urgent improvement	Unsatisfactory

## Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the organisation:

Overall effectiveness outcome	Previous performance level
The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor the organisation's progress in addressing any area(s) for improvement through its annual scrutiny inspection.	Outstanding and very good
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement through its annual scrutiny inspection.	Good
The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement, which includes the need to produce an improvement plan, which will be the basis for a formal follow-up inspection within 12-18 months.	Satisfactory
The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, which includes the need to produce an improvement plan, which will be the basis for a formal follow-up inspection within 12 - 18 months.	Inadequate and unsatisfactory

<sup>1</sup> The ETI performance levels were revised with effect from the 1 September 2015.

<b>Key Performance Indictors and Definitions</b>	
<b>Retention</b>	The percentage of enrolments at week 4 of year one who completed their occupational training framework, measured over the full duration of their course.
<b>Achievement</b>	The percentage of trainees/apprentices who completed their occupational training framework and who fully achieved their framework qualification.
<b>Progression</b>	The percentage of successful completers who progressed to further/higher education/training or employment.

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## 1. Inspection method and evidence base

A team of six inspectors observed a total of 190 apprentices and trainees in 25 directed training sessions. Inspectors visited 14 workplaces and 73 trainees and apprentices were interviewed in focus groups. The inspectors also held discussions with the chairman of the board of directors, the managing director, centre managers, assistant centre managers, monitoring officers and tutors. In addition, inspectors examined samples of the trainees' and apprentices' work, tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans, and personal training plans. The organisation's self-evaluation report and other relevant documentation were also scrutinised.

The inspectors evaluated the organisation's arrangements for care, guidance and support and for safeguarding young people. The inspection included the opportunity for the trainees and apprentices to express their views on their training and learning experience by completing an online questionnaire prior to the inspection.

The returns show that the apprentices and trainees have a very positive experience in Belfast College of Training and Education. Nearly all of the apprentices and trainees who responded to the questionnaire were positive about their training experiences, and all of those who made written comments were complimentary about the high levels of support provided by the organisation.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned (%)	Number with comments
Learners	235	204	87%	130

## 2. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the achievements and standards;
- the effectiveness of the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes;
- the quality of provision for training and learning; and
- the quality of the leadership and management of the organisation.

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation and which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Improving Quality: Raising Standards Work-based Learning* <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/improving-quality-raising-standards/improving-quality-raising-standards-iqrs-work-based-learning.htm>.

## 3. Context

Belfast College of Training and Education is a privately owned organisation. The organisation was first established in 1980 to provide specialist training in beauty therapy. In 2001, the organisation merged with Hair Academy and currently trade as the Academy Hair and Beauty Training School. Belfast College of Training and Education is managed by the managing director supported by four campus managers and is governed by a board of directors.

Belfast College of Training and Education is contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (Department) to provide the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. Currently, it delivers the Training for Success programme and the ApprenticeshipsNI programme in the professional and technical area of beauty therapy. The organisation delivers training in: Brunswick Street, Belfast; Church Street, Ballymena; Mill Street Newry and High Street, Portadown.

At the time of the inspection, there were 167 trainees on the Training for Success 2013 programme and 61 apprentices on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. Of the trainees registered on the programme, 41 (25%) were on the Skills for Your Life strand, 28 (17%) on the Skills for Work level 1 strand and 98 (58%) on the Skills for Work level 2 strand.

The organisation's data shows that a minority (22%) of the trainees have a disability, special educational needs or are from a care background. The organisation reports that many of the young people who present to them have a range of barriers to learning, the most prevalent being mental health issues, addictions and involvement with the criminal justice system. Fifty-nine percent of the trainees have declared no formal qualifications on entry to their training programme. Eight percent of the trainees and 20% of the apprentices entered the programme with four or more GCSE passes or equivalent at grades A\* to C. Only 20% and 10% of the trainees hold a GCSE qualification at grade C or better in English and mathematics respectively.

At the time of the inspection, 68% of the trainees were in a work-experience placement. The first year trainees had just finished their induction and most of those not already in a work-placement required further training and skills development before they would be work ready. The placement rate for the trainees in their second year was higher at 74%.

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
Achievements and standards	Outstanding
Provision for learning	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding

Professional and technical areas performance levels	
Beauty Therapy	Outstanding
Essential Skills	Very Good

#### Going well

- The high retention rates across all of the provision with the average retention rate being 86%.
- All of the apprentices and trainees who stay on their programme achieve and almost all (97%) of them progress to further training or to relevant employment.
- A significant number of the trainees are working towards achieving higher level qualifications above the level required in their framework, both in the professional and technical area and in the essential skills.
- The high quality of teaching, training and learning, with all the observed sessions being good or better and most (80%) being very good or better.
- The excellent curriculum that is planned well to meet the needs of the sector and enhances significantly the employability of the trainees and apprentices.
- The high quality learning experiences provided for the trainees and apprentices that is conducive to learning and meets their needs fully.

- The excellent provision for the trainees who are not yet in a work-experience placement and the wide range of very good quality enrichment activities.
- The comprehensive arrangements that ensure the apprentices and trainees are well cared for guided and supported.
- The excellent leadership provided at all levels with a very strong focus on continuous improvement.
- The experienced staff who are provided with a well planned and comprehensive continuing professional development programme.
- The outstanding physical resources that contribute significantly to the high quality education and training.
- The excellent and effective links and partnerships that the organisation has developed including those with similar high quality providers across the United Kingdom to benchmark and improve the quality of provision.

## **5. Achievements and standards are outstanding.**

Almost all of the trainees and apprentices demonstrate high standards of personal presentation and are well-motivated and engaged. Most of them report that their confidence levels have improved considerably since joining the programme. They have progressed significantly from a low level at the start of their programme to having excellent personal and social skills that allow them to work effectively, either independently, or as a team member in busy commercial settings. They demonstrate high standards of behaviour and customer care skills.

All of the trainees and apprentices give a high priority to working safely, hygienically and professionally to reflect best industry standards. The trainees are well prepared for the workplace and have an excellent grasp of the basic skills that allow them to consolidate and improve these skills in a commercial salon. Nearly all of the trainees and apprentices demonstrate very high levels of competence in their professional and technical skills, frequently producing work that is well above the standard required by their targeted qualifications. The trainees, for example, are able to complete a range of tasks such as facials and make-up application in their practical training and in the commercial beauty salon. The apprentices complete tasks, such as client waxing, to a professional standard. The trainees and apprentices are encouraged to demonstrate their creativity in make-up application and techniques through participating in competitions and events such as the internal Academy Awards. They are also involved in providing beauty treatments to the local community.

In essential skills, the trainees and apprentices are encouraged to work beyond the requirements of their framework. For example, information communication technology (ICT) is not a requirement of the framework but they are all given the opportunity to achieve an essential skill in ICT. The trainees' and apprentices' speaking and listening skills develop very well over time, and support, very effectively, their client based training and professional work. The standard of their written work is more variable; however it does improve across the duration of the programme to a mostly good standard. In numeracy and in ICT, the standards of work achieved by both the trainees and apprentices are mostly good or better. In ICT, and in numeracy, the trainees and apprentices acquire a sound knowledge of both subject areas and most can apply their understanding to a range of contexts within their professional and technical settings.

Over the last four years, the retention rate on the Training for Success programmes is very good at 85%, and for the ApprenticeshipsNI programme it is outstanding at 90%. All of the apprentices and trainees who were retained achieved their full training frameworks. The average progression rate to further training or relevant employment is also outstanding at 97%.

Over the last four years, the average achievement rates in the essential skills of literacy numeracy and ICT have been outstanding at 100%. It is a strength that a significant minority of the trainees (41%) achieve at least one level higher than the required level of their training framework.

## **6. The quality of the Provision for learning is outstanding.**

Belfast College of Education and Training work continuously to improve and develop the beauty therapy curriculum to ensure that the trainees and apprentices are provided with an innovative learning experience that is matched well to the sector needs and beyond the level required in their framework. The provision designed and developed for trainees who are not in a work-experience placement is excellent. Eighteen extra-curricular building blocks of training have been developed which enhance well and extends the trainees existing professional and technical training. This extra-curriculum provision is carefully planned at an individual level to ensure that each trainee develops further specific occupational skills and improves their employability skills to meet the demanding requirements of commercial salons. Examples include back massage, waxing, spray tanning, fantasy make-up, nail art and complimentary therapy.

The quality of the teaching, training and learning ranged from good to outstanding with 80% of the sessions observed being very good or outstanding. The tutors have an excellent rapport with the trainees and the apprentices and provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment which caters well for their individual learning needs and personal development.

In beauty therapy, all of the sessions observed were very good or outstanding. The learning environment is dynamic, challenging and tutors use a broad range of teaching, training and learning methods and resources to stimulate and motivate the trainees and the apprentices. Differentiation is well integrated into the lessons and the tutors provide well-planned opportunities for the trainees and apprentices to engage in practical and active learning activities. Research activities and peer to peer learning techniques are used effectively to support the trainees' and the apprentices' development of communication and team work skills. The trainees and apprentices are provided with an outstanding range of additional learning opportunities including access to high profile workshops, participation in competitions, motivational talks by leading industry experts and attendance at specialist courses to further enhance their employability skills.

In essential skills, the quality of the teaching, training and learning in all of the sessions observed was good or better. There are appropriate initial and diagnostic processes in place and the tutors use the outcomes, mostly to good effect, to plan for individualised learning. Most of the essential skills training is well contextualised to the professional and technical area of beauty therapy and good links are made to the personal development and employability provision. In the most effective sessions, the tutors use an effective range of strategies, including active learning, and well-integrated technology enhanced learning approaches, to engage and to motivate the trainees and apprentices. The one-to-one and small group teaching and training sessions are particular strengths of the provision and the quality of the tutor feedback and support is very good within these sessions. In the numeracy provision, it is an example of effective practice that each trainee has a formative workbook for individual, independent note making. It is of note, however, that the range of teaching, training and learning strategies in the larger group sessions would benefit from further development. On occasion, the questioning strategies used in these sessions are narrow and they constrain the development of extended responses, both spoken and written. In a minority of these sessions, there was too much tutor led activity and too few opportunities for independent learning.



The organisation has invested in a range of support materials, many of which are used for independent homework activities to refresh and reinforce new learning. A range of effective enrichment activities within the essential skills are also provided, examples of which include the opportunity for trainees and apprentices to conduct interviews with industry based professionals and to write the outcome of the interview for publication in the organisation's magazine. There is also a sound and appropriate emphasis on the development of reading through the provision of a book based reading corner, although the trainees and apprentices need ongoing encouragement to avail fully of this facility.

The tutors use an extensive range of information and learning technology (ILT) imaginatively to enhance the trainees' and the apprentices' learning experiences. Examples include the use of mobile technologies, in teaching, training and learning and a bespoke website that is being developed to further support learning. This is beginning to work well, for example, the tutors use cloud based file sharing technology to disseminate good practice.

The personal training plans are clearly linked to the 'learner journey' and reflect the prior achievements and the progress of the trainees and the apprentices. The monitoring and review process is robust and successfully involves employers to inform the training delivery and to reflect current practices and industry-specific skills development for the trainees and the apprentices. The review of progress in the essential skills could be further developed.

The quality of the arrangements for the care, guidance and support of the trainees and apprentices is outstanding. The staff at all levels set high expectations and standards and demonstrate a strong commitment to meeting the pastoral care and welfare needs of the trainees and apprentices, in order to help them to achieve their full potential. There is a strong inclusive ethos across the organisation which permeates all aspects of the provision, with relationships between the staff and trainees and apprentices based on mutual respect. The well structured induction processes, including the systems for identifying and meeting individual support needs at an early stage in the programme, are well-established and effective. Ongoing monitoring and review processes help identify issues relating to the attendance and progress of individual trainees and apprentices and appropriate interventions are put in place. As a result, almost all of the trainees and apprentices overcome successfully many of their barriers to learning and progression.

The trainees and apprentices have very good access to an appropriate range of support services and agencies. All of the responses from the online questionnaire and discussions with the trainees and apprentices were positive about the extent, quality and positive impact of the support they receive. Staff work hard to establish collaborative links with the parents or carers of the trainees to help them to remain on their training programme.

The quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance is outstanding. The level and extent of the careers support is aligned well to the professional and technical area and ensures effective individual career planning and guidance. All of the trainees and apprentices are provided with opportunities to gain experience of the world of work and skills development through effective work-related learning, participation in competitions and projects, practical activities, a broad range of guest speakers and employers, and inputs from relevant professional bodies. These arrangements enable almost all of the trainees and apprentices to make effective career decisions and to gain access to relevant work-placements and appropriate progression pathways.

## **7. The quality of Leadership and management is outstanding.**

The strategic leadership of the organisation is highly effective. A board of directors, who oversee the management of the organisation have a clear commitment to excellence and continuous quality improvement. A learner focused, three year corporate plan is in place which informs well the future direction of the organisation. The model that has been developed for the delivery of the training is based around very high quality commercial working environments and is an example of best practice with the training being well integrated into this professional environment. There is a clear and well understood management structure that works well to ensure a high quality provision is provided across the campuses that meets the needs of local employers, trainees and apprentices.

The managing director and the wider management team provide excellent management and leadership to all of the staff resulting in positive working relationships where the staff at all levels feel highly valued and motivated. There are clear and open channels of communication between the managers, staff and the trainees and apprentices. Excellent use is made of technology to facilitate staff meeting across the campuses where appropriate. The staff all work well together for the good of all of the trainees and apprentices.

All the staff have clear roles and responsibilities. It is a feature of the provision that a number of the tutors and managers have cross-campus responsibilities which is an effective strategy to ensure that the staff in each of the campuses feel that they are an integral part of the organisation.

The self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes are very comprehensive and the staff at all levels in the organisation demonstrate a clear commitment to continuous improvement in all aspects of their work. The management information system is used effectively to provide an appropriate range of reliable data. This data is used on an ongoing basis to quickly identify issues so that appropriate interventions can take place at an early stage. Excellent systems are in place to generate evidence from all stakeholders, including parents, which underpins effectively the improvement agenda. There is a planned cycle of tutor observations that are used effectively to inform the process. The staff are all appropriately involved in the self-evaluation and quality improvement processes. There are separate evaluations for each of the training strands and a start has been made at producing a self-evaluation report for essential skills.

In essential skills recent changes have been made to the timetabling arrangement that are working to mostly good effect. The shorter and more frequent slots would, however, benefit from a review of tutor planning to ensure that the planned content fits well with the shorter teaching and training slots. It is also timely for the organisation to review and evaluate the impact of the recently introduced fast track model for the apprentices to ensure that there is ongoing, planned support for the development and embedding of the apprentices' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the full duration of their programme.

The staff are deployed appropriately with a policy in place that all tutors deliver at all levels in order to understand better the progression of the trainees and apprentices. The staff are all very experienced and are well supported by a comprehensive continuing professional development programme that includes higher education courses where appropriate. All of the tutors regularly work in the salons with commercial clients to keep their industry skills up-to-date. There are good opportunities for the staff to develop their leadership and management skills which include being part of the internal quality assurance team.

The physical resources are of the highest standard and are comparable to the best found in the beauty sector. Good quality learning resources are also available to the trainees and apprentices irrespective of the level they are working towards. The resources are well managed to make effective and efficient use of them and to provide the trainees and apprentices with a very high quality learning experience.

Excellent links have been established with employers through a very effective employer engagement strategy. They value highly the training provided by the organisation and are kept informed through the distribution of the in-house Hot Gossip magazine. The organisation also has good links with the sector skills council and they have developed relationships with a range of similar high quality training organisations across the United Kingdom for benchmark and quality improvement purposes. The organisation has a substantial client base who use their salons frequently. All of these links are used effectively to inform curriculum planning and the quality improvement process. Effective links and working relationships exist with a wide range of support agencies to assist the trainees and apprentices in the development of important life skills to underpin their training.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the organisation has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

Belfast College of Training and Education has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor the organisation's progress in addressing any areas for improvement through its annual scrutiny inspection.

## APPENDIX

### Current registrations by programme

Programme	Numbers of registrations	% of total registrations
ApprenticeshipsNI	61	27%
Training for Success (2008)	-	-
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Your Life	41	18%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (strand 1)	28	12%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (strand 2)	98	43%

### Current registrations by professional and technical area

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations
Beauty therapy	167	73%
Professional and technical area	Number of apprentices	% of total registrations
Beauty therapy	61	27%

### Qualifications of current trainees/apprentices on entry to their programme

Programme	Training for Success (%)	ApprenticeshipsNI (%)
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C including English and mathematics	8%	20%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C	11%	26%
(%) of learners with GCSE English or equivalent at Grades A*-C	20%	34%
(%) of learners with GCSE mathematics or equivalent at Grades A*-C	10%	23%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-G	31%	48%
(%) of learners with no prior level 1 or level 2 qualifications	59%	46%

**Note:** All data was sourced from Belfast College of Training and Education Ltd at the time of the inspection.

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