

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Boston and South Holland Information Technology Centre Reinspection**

**28 June 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
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

## 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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## Boston and South Holland Information Technology Centre Reinspection

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Boston and South Holland Information Technology Centre (BSHI) is a charity-based private training organisation based in Lincolnshire. It operates from centres in Stamford, Grantham, Spalding and Boston, and offers training across Lincolnshire and Rutland. It also delivers training from a centre at Oakham in Rutland. BSHI offers training in engineering, business administration, hairdressing, care and foundation programmes, such as Entry to Employment (E2E). The number of learners has declined since the previous inspection, partly due to restrictions placed on the provider by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Since the previous inspection, BSHI no longer holds a contract for Jobcentre Plus provision, which the organisation subcontracts to another training provider.
2. The organisation has a chief executive who reports to a board of trustees. Five programme managers have responsibility for the areas of skills for life, E2E, engineering, youth programmes, including work-based learning and adult programmes such as Jobcentre Plus. Skills for life is the government's strategy on literacy, numeracy and the use of language. The skills for life manager is responsible for the co-ordination of equal opportunities. Managers report to a general manager, who is also supported by a head of service. BSHI has recently appointed a quality co-ordinator.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

#### Reinspection Grade 3

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** At the previous inspection, business administration, hairdressing, health, social care and public services, and all aspects of leadership and management, were inadequate. BSHI's overall effectiveness was considered inadequate. At the end of the reinspection, all reinspected areas are satisfactory or better.
4. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment report for the areas of learning provided evaluative information, and the key strengths and weaknesses matched some of those that the inspectors found. In leadership and management, there were no key strengths and weaknesses and the report in this area was over-descriptive. It was difficult for the inspectors to form a view of how BSHI assessed the quality of its leadership and management. The self-assessment process is more inclusive than at the previous inspection and it now includes learners' and employers' views. Although the use of data has improved marginally since the previous inspection, the use of analysed data in the self-assessment process is still insufficient.
5. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** The strategies to improve retention rates that were reported on at the previous inspection have had a positive effect. While the number of learners that have joined programmes at BSHI has declined, retention and achievement rates have improved significantly in most areas. Skills for life, which was a weakness at the previous inspection, is now a strength. A co-ordinator is now in place for quality improvement, and comprehensive quality arrangements are in place that staff use and understand well. However, some of the

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improvements have only taken place recently, which was highlighted during the reinspection monitoring visits, particularly in the area of equality of opportunity. The new quality framework and auditing arrangements have not been in place long enough for inspectors to judge their effect on quality improvement.

### GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		4
Quality improvement		4

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Motor vehicle/cycle</b>		<b>3</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	47	3	

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Business administration</b>		<b>4</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	22	4	

<b>Hairdressing &amp; beauty therapy</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Hairdressing</b>		<b>4</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	36	4	

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Care</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	10	4	
<b>Early years</b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	33	4	

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Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Employability/employment training</b>		
New Deal for young people	24	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	20	3
Programme centres	12	3
Work-based learning for adults	32	3
Entry to Employment	32	2

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Business administration, management & professional		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Business administration</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	7	2

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Hairdressing</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	24	2

Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Care</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	7	4
<b>Early years</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	12	2

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

6. The reinspection took place over the period from November 2005 to June 2006, and it covered the areas of business administration, hairdressing, and health, social care and public services, as well as all aspects of leadership and management. Engineering and E2E were not reinspected, as they received satisfactory or better grades at the previous inspection. The provision funded by Jobcentre Plus is now delivered through a subcontracting arrangement and it was no longer in scope for the reinspection.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	15
Number of learners interviewed	28
Number of staff interviewed	20
Number of employers interviewed	10
Number of subcontractors interviewed	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	11
Number of visits	4

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

7. **In business administration, achievement rates have improved and they are now good.** Sixty-nine per cent were successful in 2003-04 and this rose to 88 per cent in 2004-05. All of the learners who started in 2005-06 have successfully achieved their framework. Since the previous inspection, the number of young people joining the business administration programme has dropped.
8. **Learners make good progress in the development of their workplace and personal skills in business administration.** Employers value this.
9. **In hairdressing, retention and achievement rates are good.** In 2003-04, 69 per cent achieved the apprenticeship framework. In 2004-05, out of the 24 that started, 10 have already completed, with the remaining seven that are still in training due to complete.
10. **In Spalding, hairdressing learners display high standards of hairdressing skill.** They also work on a diverse range of clients.
11. **In early years, the achievement rates are good.** Learners develop good employability skills and work confidently with people in early years settings.
12. **In care, learners make slow progress.** The subcontracting arrangement has been unsuccessful and has resulted in learners passing their expected completion date and still not achieving their qualification. Half of the learners who started are still waiting to complete the framework. BSHI has now commissioned an alternative provider to complete these frameworks to a September deadline.

### The quality of provision

13. **There is good support for the learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs in hairdressing.** Individual support and a range of strategies ensure that learners' literacy, numeracy and English improve, and that they can progress and achieve the key skills aspect of their apprenticeship framework. Records of support provide a clear account of the progress that learners make against clear aims for each session.



14. **Assessment practices are good in early years.** Planning of assessment clearly outlines for the learner the way in which BSHI will carry out assessment, and there is good involvement of learners.

15. **Background knowledge in early years lessons is taught well.** There are detailed session plans and learners are engaged throughout. Learners make good contributions during learning sessions and the tutors use teaching and learning strategies effectively. Learners' portfolios are well presented and contain a good range of evidence around child development.

16. **Key skills in early years are integrated well with the vocational training.** Learners make good use of their everyday tasks to generate evidence for the key skills.

17. **Learners in early years receive good pastoral support, as well as support for their qualifications.** Where BSHI identifies a learning or social support need, learners receive individual workplace support.

18. In business administration, assessment practice is satisfactory. There are regular workplace visits by BSHI's staff to carry out observations of workplace performance. Learners receive clear, helpful feedback and know how they can improve and progress with their qualifications.

19. Effective initial and diagnostic assessment ensures that business administration learners have their support needs identified accurately. Appropriate arrangements are in place, with qualified staff to meet the learners' additional needs.

20. Planning of off-the-job training in business administration, which was a weakness at the previous inspection, has now improved and it is now satisfactory. Lesson plans and schemes of work are used and staff use a wide range of effective teaching and learning strategies to engage the learners.

21. Off-the-job training in hairdressing overall is satisfactory. The practical lessons in Spalding are well managed and learners are kept busy and productive.

22. Resources in business administration are satisfactory. This was a weakness at the previous inspection.

23. The accommodation and resources that both subcontractors provide in hairdressing are satisfactory. The salon facilities in Stamford are good. In Spalding, learners have access to a good range of clients. The room used for background knowledge and key skills in Spalding has improved since the previous inspection, and it provides a good setting for teaching and learning.

24. Resources to support learning for the early years learners are satisfactory. Learners have access a range of learning materials and resources both on and off the job.

### **Leadership and management**

25. **Internal communication has improved since the previous inspection and it is now good.** The planned schedule of regular meetings allows good practice to be shared and sets clear actions for improvement. Staff have been consulted regarding internal

communications and this has resulted in a communication action plan, which ensures that they receive the necessary information in a timely manner to enable them to operate effectively.

**26. There is good management information to monitor learners' progress against their qualification targets.** Case conference meetings are effective in driving learners' progress. Retention and achievement rates have improved since the previous inspection.

**27. There is a comprehensive strategy and good management for literacy, numeracy and language support.** The post of skills for life co-co-ordinator has been effective in introducing a range of initiatives to identify and support the learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. Staff training has included an awareness of particular learning difficulties, and staff are encouraged to participate in specific training. Staff are well informed as to how to identify and support learners' additional needs.

**28. The management of subcontracted provision is poor in some areas.** Service level agreements place insufficient emphasis on the expectations that BSHI makes on the subcontractor. One of the subcontractor agreements has recently been reviewed and updated, but this was only introduced in June 2006. There are no written agreements or contracts for individuals when they provide a service, for example in areas such as internal verification.

**29. The use of data remains incomplete.** BSHI makes better use of data at team level, but the analysis of data across the organisation is new. There is no information on trends that would prioritise management action.

**30.** Many of the strategies for improvement are very recent, particularly around equal opportunities and quality improvement. Retention and achievement rates have improved, but the number of learners has dropped significantly since the previous inspection, partly due to the restriction imposed by the LSC. It is too early to judge the effect that some of the improvement strategies will make in the longer term and particularly when numbers of learners increase.

**31.** The self-assessment is more inclusive than it was at the previous inspection. BSHI now considers feedback from employers and learners.

**32.** Although it identified some of the weaknesses that the inspectors found, the self-assessment report did not reflect the provision at the time of the reinspection. The leadership and management report was insufficiently evaluative.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- good internal communication
- good system for monitoring learners' progress
- good management of learning support

### **Weaknesses**

- some poor management of subcontracted provision

- insufficient use of data
- slow implementation of improvements

### **Business administration, management & professional**

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement rates
- good development of learners' personal and occupational skills in the workplace

#### *Weaknesses*

- no significant weaknesses identified

### **Hairdressing & beauty therapy**

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement rates
- rapid attainment of good-quality technical skills by learners
- good support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient sharing and use of good practice

### **Health, social care & public services**

#### ***Early years***

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement rates
- good assessment practices
- good integration of key skills with the vocational training
- good learning support

#### *Weaknesses*

- no significant weaknesses

#### ***Care***

#### *Strengths*

- no significant strengths identified

#### *Weaknesses*

- extremely slow progress with social care apprenticeship frameworks
- poor management of the subcontractor

## DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

#### Strengths

- good internal communication
- good system for monitoring learners' progress
- good management of learning support

#### Weaknesses

- some poor management of subcontracted provision
- insufficient use of data
- slow implementation of improvements

33. Internal communication was satisfactory at the previous inspection and it is now good. The planned schedule of regular focused meetings includes the board meetings and also monthly managers' meetings. These take place at least fortnightly, or more often when the need arises. There are also monthly programme team meetings. BSHI records meetings well, and identifies and monitors actions clearly.

34. Further developments to improve communication have taken place in the past year. BSHI seeks feedback from staff through a questionnaire and it has a communication action plan in place. Staff find the electronic communication useful because some training centres are in isolated locations. The staff intranet is more structured, with specific areas available for the quality assurance framework procedures and paperwork, recording systems, staff training records, resources and other areas of interest and information. Access is available to this site from all of the centres. Managers make good use of the site to communicate with their teams and ensure that everyone is up to date. All staff interviewed found this site a useful way of keeping in touch. BSHI has recently developed a new procedure for sharing good practice. Individual teams identify good practice and this is discussed at the managers' meeting. Approved examples are then included in the weekly update, which is e-mailed to all staff. Not all of the examples are necessarily good practice but the organisation uses the process as a way to communicate internally about ideas and activities. This has not only kept staff informed but has encouraged communication between staff and centres.

35. BSHI has a good system for monitoring the learners' progress. The organisation had successfully introduced initiatives to raise retention rates for work-based learners at the previous inspection. Achievement rates began to increase shortly after the inspection. The recently introduced learner monitoring system has ensured that this improvement is maintained. Assessors have monthly case conferences with their manager where they discuss individual learners, monitor their progress against targets and agree new targets and actions to ensure that they make progress. On youth programmes, assessors supply regular information to their manager about assessments carried out in the workplace, reviews, and evaluations of their training sessions. All of this information enables the close monitoring of all aspects of the training programme and ensures that the learners are

progressing in a timely fashion.

36. Management of learning support, which was poor at the previous inspection, has improved and it is now good. Developments introduced just before the previous inspection have continued and there is now a comprehensive strategy to provide and manage literacy, numeracy and language support for learners. BSHI uses a comprehensive range of initial assessment tools to identify any additional learning needs and the specific support required. These include initial assessment in literacy and numeracy, plus further diagnostic testing if it is required. There is also good awareness around specific learning difficulties that have not been identified before, and the organisation has developed screening tools for areas such as dyslexia. Staff have received in-house training to assist them in supporting learners with specific learning needs. BSHI has developed a new learning needs form to support the assessor. The skills team manager has also developed in-house training to support staff, as well as encouraging them to participate in national and local training. Several staff members have either achieved or are working towards the national qualifications in teaching adult literacy or numeracy at levels 3 and 4. BSHI has developed information sheets to support staff and employers. The new session plan encourages staff to focus on providing support for the learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills and differentiation in lessons.

37. Strategic management and business planning are satisfactory. The organisation has experienced change over the past few years which was well planned. The implementation of improvements since the previous inspection have been slow. The key roles to effect change, such as quality assurance co-ordinator, skills team manager and equal opportunities co-ordinator, have only been in place for the past few months. Most of the improvements have taken place since then.

38. Links with employers are satisfactory. Employers speak positively about the working relationship with BSHI and the flexibility of staff to arrange assessments and training. Health and safety monitoring records are detailed. However, there are no records of equal opportunities monitoring of employers or ongoing discussions regarding the arrangements.

39. Staff training is satisfactory and their annual appraisal process is linked to training and support. Planning for training takes place at either team or functional level. There is no organisational overview or planning of training. The staff training chart is on the intranet but it does not have all of the training recorded on it.

40. BSHI uses subcontractors in several areas of learning. Service level agreements are very general, with no specific targets or requirements from BSHI to ensure that the subcontracted service meets its standards. One contract has been amended recently to include specific targets and it is intended to introduce this to contracts as they are renewed. There are no written agreements where the organisation uses individuals to supply a service. There are good health and safety initial checks and ongoing monitoring. There is no evidence of monitoring of equality of opportunity, either at the beginning of the agreement or during it. It is included in learners' progress reviews, but this is not linked to the employer as part of formal monitoring. There is poor monitoring of the delivery of the contracted services in some areas of learning.

41. BSHI has introduced better use of data since the previous inspection. This has mainly

been at team level, where retention and achievement data have been monitored and compared with national data. The first data analysis meeting with managers, to look at data across the organisation, was four weeks before the inspection. It is now planned for this to happen quarterly. There is still little data available to compare different groups of learners or to contribute to the self-assessment process or to quality improvement.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

42. In March 2006, a member of staff took responsibility for the co-ordination of equality and diversity across the organisation. Following this appointment, a number of successful initiatives have been introduced to strengthen awareness and understanding of equality and diversity issues among managers and training staff. One important initiative has been the requirement for all staff to attend formal equality and diversity training days. As part of this training, staff were each required to identify one action point that they would implement within their own job roles. Staff welcome this opportunity to influence practice. Action points already implemented include increased information about religious holidays and clearer information on posters designed to attract learners. Equality and diversity are now regular agenda items at staff meetings. All of BSHI's policies and procedures are available on the organisation's intranet. Staff can access the intranet from any training centre. Staff are also currently being consulted about a new equal opportunities policy to be implemented from September 2006, and they have expressed the view that the training received has better prepared them to comment constructively on the proposed new policy.

43. Most of the initiatives that have been put in place to raise the profile of equality and diversity has been very recent. A number of 'soft' targets identified in the post-inspection action plan have been met, including for example the production of enlarged programme literature to meet the needs of the visually impaired. However, there is still insufficient formal strategies to attract participation from learners from under-represented groups and to reduce barriers to learning. There is some evidence from recent correspondence that this is starting to happen in respect of families of migrant workers from Eastern Europe, but it is too early to judge the effectiveness of such developments.

44. BSHI continues to promote equal opportunities policies and procedures effectively to the learners. There is appropriate coverage of equal opportunities as part of the learners' induction. The guidance material given to learners is easy to read and understand. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities, and how to deal with problems that they may encounter at work. Policies and guidance on equality and diversity matters are posted in the training centres for the learners to refer to. However, the learners' awareness and understanding of equality and diversity are still insufficiently reinforced at progress reviews. Questions are posed which are selected from a bank of questions and some aspects of equal opportunities are not explored sufficiently. Work-placement providers receive a useful information pack that promotes equality of opportunity. The monitoring of employers' compliance with equality of opportunity is carried out through the review process. However, there are no records to confirm that employers' policies are appropriate and updated regularly.

45. Access to most of the training centres for learners with restricted mobility is satisfactory. In one centre where access is poor, BSHI's management can use other premises in the locality from which to deliver training. The training centre in Spalding for hairdressing learners is on the first floor and access is unsuitable for people with restricted

mobility.

46. BSHI does not make sufficient use of equal opportunities data to help with decision-making or to help develop target-setting. The organisation gathers data on gender, ethnicity and disability status, but it does not develop its use well. This is recognised in the most recent update of the equality and diversity action plan, based upon the findings of the previous inspection.

### Quality improvement

### Contributory grade 3

47. Following the previous inspection, the post-inspection plan was clearly referenced to the areas that were raised at the inspection. Actions and deadlines provided a clear focus for management, but it was not sufficiently specific for staff to understand its purpose and the contribution that they can make to quality improvement. This plan has since been divided into specific areas, such as quality improvement, and equality and diversity.

48. Arrangements for quality improvement were judged inadequate at the previous inspection. A new quality assurance framework had been introduced recently but the system of internal audit had not yet started. The organisation had identified that it needed an individual to manage its quality improvement, and in November 2005 it created the new role of quality assurance co-ordinator, which became fully operational from February 2006. The managers have worked closely with the new quality assurance co-ordinator to develop a quality improvement action plan. This has taken objectives from the post-inspection action plan and broken them down into small targets, with clearly defined responsibilities and completion dates. Most of the actions have been completed on time, although some are not due for another two months. Priority was given to finalising the procedures, putting them on the intranet and developing a quality monitoring process. Some procedures still have to be included, for example, those relating to staff development and appraisal. A useful 'quality alert' e-mail is sent out to all staff when there are any changes in quality arrangements or procedures. Staff find this a very useful way to ensure that they are using the latest versions.

49. A comprehensive quality timetable has been developed recently. This includes all the observations and audit requirements to be carried out over a contract year. The quality assurance co-ordinator selects the samples for each manager and inputs them on the timetable. This is available on the intranet and all staff can access it. Each manager is sent a 'snapshot' of their auditing for the month and sends a report to the quality assurance co-ordinator at the end of each month. This report is reviewed by the general manager, who follows up the report with each manager. Improvements have taken place in the observation system. The schedule is now very wide ranging and includes interviews, inductions, initial assessments, teaching and learning sessions, assessments and learners' progress reviews. Learning sessions are now graded and actions identified for improvement. It is too early to see how these link with the staff appraisal system. Audits also take place on files and learning plans.

50. The organisation's collection and use of feedback from learners and employers is satisfactory. BSHI uses a series of questionnaires and evaluation forms and discussions take place within the individual teams. The organisation takes action where required. There is no review of this feedback at organisation level.

51. Improvements have taken place since the previous inspection. Most areas graded as

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inadequate are now satisfactory or better. Some of the improvements have been very recent. The three monitoring visit reports show that slow progress was made in several areas, including quality improvement and equality of opportunity. For example, the new quality assurance framework and auditing arrangements have not been in place long enough to be able to judge their effect on quality improvement.

52. BSHI has made improvements to the self-assessment process and it is now more inclusive. All staff were invited to a self-assessment day and analysed their provision using the Common Inspection Framework and the learners' journey as a guide. Evidence was also used from a variety of other sources, including learners and employers. The self-assessment report was completed in January and some of the improvements had not been implemented at that time. No strengths and weaknesses are listed for leadership and management and it is difficult to identify clear judgements made in this area.



## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Business administration, management & professional

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Business administration</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	7	2

53. BSHI provides training in business administration for seven apprentices. Learners are recruited through referrals from Connexions or school careers advice officers. All learners are placed on a four-week trial work placement before joining the apprenticeship programme. Learners who are not in employment when they start the programme are offered a work placement. All learners attend BSHI's training every week or fortnight to prepare for the technical certificate and build their portfolios of evidence. An assessor visits learners in the workplace every three to four weeks to assess and plan their progress.

#### Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good development of learners' personal and occupational skills in the workplace

#### Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

### Achievement and standards

54. The number of learners on the business administration programme has declined since the previous inspection. Sixteen learners joined the programme in 2003-04, eight in 2004-05 and seven in 2005-06. The achievement of frameworks is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Sixty-nine per cent of starters in the year 2003-04 achieved the full apprenticeship framework. This rose to 88 per cent in 2004-05, and all of the learners who joined the programme in September 2005 have successfully completed all components of the programme.

55. Development of personal and occupational skills in the workplace is good. Learners are motivated and keen to progress to the next qualification level. Employers comment on the learners' improved workplace practices and their increased confidence and self-esteem. Learners take pride in their improved presentational skills, use of the telephone and in contributing towards team tasks and targets. Some have responsibility for specific areas of work, including for example the monitoring of parking and speeding fines incurred by company employees.

56. The standard of work included in learners' portfolios of evidence is satisfactory. There is an appropriate range of evidence, including personal statements and witness testimony, clearly recorded and referenced against national standards.

## The quality of provision

57. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessors visit the workplace regularly to carry out assessments and agree assessment action plans with the learners. Appropriate medium-term targets are set for key skills qualifications, technical certificates and unit achievement. Employers are made aware of agreed assessment targets. Assessment methods include observation of learners' performance. Learners receive detailed written feedback following observation and are clear as to what may be required to improve their competence. Assessors make appropriate use of question and answer sheets to test the learners' knowledge and understanding. These are clearly cross-referenced to qualification standards.

58. All learners have an effective initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy and language skills support needs. The results of initial assessment are recorded on the learners' individual learning plan. Where a specific support need is identified, BSHI has appropriate arrangements, including qualified staff to meet these needs. BSHI's staff use diagnostic assessment tools to identify dyslexia and dyspraxia and put strategies in place to support the learners. One learner currently in training is receiving effective literacy support during visits to a BSHI training centre and also through visits made by BSHI's staff to the workplace.

59. Learners' progress reviews are satisfactory. Employers are present during the reviews and have the opportunity to offer verbal and written input to the process. Employers find the review process beneficial and that it enables them to monitor the learners' progress effectively, especially the development of their work skills.

60. The planning of off-the-job training is now satisfactory. This was a weakness identified in the previous inspection. Staff now prepare lesson plans linked to a scheme of work for all training sessions. Lesson aims are shared with learners, and staff use a wide range of learning strategies. All lesson plans are subject to internal moderation by programme managers as part of BSHI's quality improvement strategies. Since the previous inspection, internal monitoring of the quality of off-the-job training sessions has been introduced. Tutors receive written feedback and, where required, actions to improve.

61. Resources are satisfactory. This was a weakness at the previous inspection. One training centre remains inaccessible for learners with restricted mobility. BSHI's management has made arrangements for learners with restricted mobility, who wish to attend this centre, to receive training on alternate premises. All training centres now have sufficient information technology (IT) resources to support training, including internet access. The amount of manuals and support materials available to learners is now satisfactory in all centres, and training staff have access to appropriate training aids, including video and television equipment.

62. Learners receive satisfactory pre-course, on-course and exit information advice and guidance. Induction practice has been strengthened since the previous inspection and it enables the learners to settle more quickly into their training programmes. The induction programme includes an appropriate focus on health and safety, and equality of opportunity. Learners are clear about the complaints procedure and the requirements of the target qualification.

63. Learners feel well supported by BSHI's staff and their employers. BSHI's staff enjoy a good relationship with learners and employers and this contributes to a positive learning environment. All learners benefit from good support and guidance in evidence collection and portfolio-building at the beginning of their programme. There are recorded examples of BSHI's staff working closely with employers to provide specific support, as in the case of one learner with dyslexia and dyspraxia.

### **Leadership and management**

64. Internal verification is satisfactory. Internal verification is carried out by an external consultant who ensures that practice meets the requirements of awarding bodies. However, there is no specific service level agreement in place for this subcontracted activity. There is a clear sampling strategy and records confirm that internal verification is ongoing throughout the programme.

65. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. BSHI appraises them annually and deals with their identified development needs. One member of staff is currently receiving support in working towards a teaching qualification, and all staff have recently attended equality and diversity training.

66. Staff have been involved in the self-assessment process and in implementing improvement plans arising from this process.

**Hairdressing & beauty therapy****Grade 2**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Hairdressing</i></b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	24	2

67. BSHI provides work-based learning for 24 apprentices in hairdressing in the Stamford and Spalding areas of Lincolnshire. There are two subcontractors. Learners based in salons in the Stamford area attend off-the-job training at Stamford College. Learners based in salons in the Spalding area attend off-the-job training at Steffens, a local salon that operates as a training centre on behalf of BSHI every Monday. There are currently 14 learners attending the Spalding centre and 10 at Stamford College. BSHI employs two assessors who cover either the Spalding or Stamford area, and carry out assessments in the learners' workplace monthly. The subcontractors teach and assess key skills. The subcontractor in Spalding is supported in application of number by a member of staff from BSHI. The learners are based at 27 salons and these are predominantly small businesses. The subcontractors carry out registration, certification and internal verification. BSHI does not offer progression to the advanced apprenticeship.

*Strengths*

- good achievement rates
- rapid attainment of good-quality technical skills by learners
- good support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient sharing and use of good practice

**Achievement and standards**

68. Retention and achievement rates are good and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. In 2003-04, 69 per cent of learners completed the apprenticeship framework, compared with 40 per cent in 2002-03. Forty-two per cent of learners who started in 2004-05 have already completed their framework, with 29 per cent due to complete very soon. In the current year, 2005-06, out of the 19 learners who started on the programme, 17 remain in learning and are making good progress. Key skills are now achieved by learners early in the programme. A range of effective strategies ensures that BSHI closely monitors learners' progress with their qualifications. The organisation takes prompt, effective action if learners do not achieve timely targets or are at risk of non-achievement.

69. At Spalding, learners produce high-quality practical work early in their programme. They get the opportunity to work on clients at the off-the-job sessions from the beginning of their programme. This builds their confidence. Learners work confidently with the services that they provide to clients. They produce good standards of colour work and learners quickly become confident in choosing colours and techniques to meet the clients' needs. They achieve their colour unit by the end of their first year of training. There are good health and safety practices. Learners wear personal protective equipment when

working with chemicals. The Spalding salon attracts a range of commercial clients, which allows learners the opportunity to work on different hair types, age groups and work with clients who have different demands. Learners are advanced for the stage in the programme.

### **The quality of provision**

70. Support for literacy, numeracy and language is good. Initial and diagnostic assessment ensures that there is a clear identification of any additional support requirements. Learners receive individual support either during their off-the-job training sessions, or by staff visiting learners in the workplace. Learners receive effective guidance and support to develop their literacy, numeracy and language skills, using a range of effective strategies. They improve these skills and move on to achieve key skills qualifications. BSHI keeps good records of the additional support that the learners receive. Records give a clear account of the tasks that learners have carried out, as well as the progress that they have made. Each session has clear appropriate learning aims. Tutors make good use of hairdressing resources and terminology, which allows the learners to cope better in the workplace. One learner has had exceptional language support, which the learner and the employer value highly. This learner has moved from lacking in confidence to now being a valuable asset to the salon through the support that BSHI has provided.

71. Off-the-job teaching overall is satisfactory. In the practical sessions in Spalding, learners are productive throughout the sessions and there is good management of the classes. Tutors use practice blocks effectively to help the learners to perfect their skills or prepare for services that they plan to carry out on clients later in the training day.

72. Learners have access to an appropriate range of resources that enables them to achieve their qualifications. Salon facilities at Stamford College are good. In Spalding, the salon runs as a commercial salon and learners have access to a good range of hairdressing products and clients. The salon in Spalding is on the first floor and restricts access for those with limited mobility. The key skills/background knowledge training room in Spalding that was cramped at the previous inspection has improved and it is now spacious and light.

73. Learners receive a satisfactory induction to their programme both on and off the job. Learners are introduced to the key skills early in their programme. Key skills is linked effectively to vocational topics from the national vocational qualification (NVQ).

74. Learners' progress reviews remain satisfactory. BSHI usually carries them out every 10 weeks and discusses them with the employers. The organisation makes reference to the previous review to check the learners' progress. A useful pre-review form gives the learner the opportunity to bring forward any issues for discussion at the review. There is good monitoring of progress with qualifications, but there is insufficient emphasis given at the reviews on progress made in the workplace.

### **Leadership and management**

75. Internal verification is satisfactory overall and ensures that assessment practice is at least satisfactory. However, during the monitoring stage of the reinspection, the inspectors highlighted that there was insufficient observation of assessors' performance.

This has since been dealt with. The service level agreement between BSHI and the two subcontractors has been revised and improved since the previous inspection. There is now more emphasis on the expectations that are placed on the subcontractor in terms of the promotion of equality of opportunity. The contract is more specific, but it is too early to make a judgement on its effectiveness as it was only introduced in June 2006.

76. The learners' experience differs considerably across the provision. In Spalding, learners have access to clients from the first day of their training. However, in Stamford they do not work on clients until they have been on the programme for approximately six months. This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. In Stamford, learners spend excessive time working on practice blocks. This does not allow them to build their confidence when working with clients or allow them to experience different hair types and client demands during their off-the-job training sessions. Assessment practice and internal verification are good for some learners, with learners completing units early in the programme. In Stamford, they do not have the opportunity for assessment at the off-the-job sessions until they have been on the programme for six months. For some, there are large gaps between assessments and learners are in training for considerable lengths of time before they complete a unit.

77. There is regular monitoring of staff performance, and retention and achievement rates. An individual review is carried out every month with the youth manager and the staff. The use of retention and achievement data has improved since the previous inspection. There is good understanding by managers of current performance with regard to retention and achievement. Learners' progress is monitored, and retention and achievement rates have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

78. There has been some recent staff development in equality and diversity. Staff and learners have a basic awareness of equality of opportunity, but it is too early to judge the effect of the recent training.

**Health, social care & public services****Grade 3**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Care</b> Apprenticeships for young people	7	<b>4</b> 4
<b>Early years</b> Apprenticeships for young people	12	<b>2</b> 2

79. BSHI provides training and assessment in social care and early years NVQ awards. There are 19 learners in total. On social care programmes there are seven apprentices. On the early years NVQ programmes there are five advanced apprentices and seven apprentices. The social care programme is subcontracted to Essential Training Services. All apprentices work towards key skills and technical certificates. In addition, learners work on the employment rights and responsibilities programme. Learners are referred mainly by Connexions and through BSHI's own promotional activity. BSHI offers continuous training programmes. The learners gain evidence of practical learning in the workplace. Induction is provided and progress reviews take place every four weeks initially, and then every 12 weeks after the learners have been on the programme for three months.

**Early years***Strengths*

- good achievement rates
- good assessment practices
- good integration of key skills with the vocational training
- good learning support

*Weaknesses*

- no significant weaknesses

**Achievement and standards**

80. There are good achievement rates in early years programmes since the previous inspection. In 2002-03, out of the five learners that joined the advanced apprenticeship programme, four achieved their framework. In 2003-04, out of the 10 that started on the advanced apprenticeship programme, five achieved their full framework, with three still in learning. In 2004-05, out of the three starts on the advanced apprenticeship programme, two have achieved the full framework, with one still in learning. In 2005, out of the five starts on the advanced apprenticeship programme, two have already completed and two remain in learning. All learners that remain on the programme are making good progress with all aspects of their qualifications.

81. On the apprenticeship programme in 2002-03, six learners were successful, out of the 18 starts on the apprenticeship programme. In 2003-04, out of the 14 starts on the apprenticeship programme, 71 per cent achieved their full framework. In 2004-05, 83 per

cent of learners achieved their full framework, with the remainder still in learning. In 2005, all of the learners who started remain on the programme.

82. There is good development of skills for work. Learners develop good practical skills and show confidence in working with people in early years settings. Managers confirm that learners are able to work to a good professional standard. Learners have grown in personal confidence, and show greater self-awareness and improved understanding of their work.

### **The quality of provision**

83. There are good assessment practices in early years programmes. Assessments are well planned and detailed, with particularly good involvement from learners. Planning outlines the activity and assessment methods needed to complete the assessment, including time and any input from workplace staff. It also identifies the objectives of the assessment and an evaluation by the learner, which the learner agrees and then signs.

84. BSHI teaches learners the related background knowledge well. All tutors are occupationally experienced and qualified. There are weekly off-the-job training sessions. Attendance is good. The session observed was good. Tutors have detailed session plans, with clear aims and objectives, that are linked to the NVQ, technical certificate and key skills. Tutors sustained the learners' interest and engaged them throughout the session. They encourage the learners to contribute and participate in all activities, and used appropriate teaching methods to promote and extend their learning. Teaching and learning aids were effective. Key learning points were reinforced and checks were made that learning had taken place. There is a positive relationship established between staff and learners. Learners felt that the quality of training was good and that they were extending their knowledge base.

85. Learners have a good understanding of the NVQ process. There are some good-quality NVQ portfolios. They are well presented, clearly signposted and contain a good range of evidence, especially around child development, which is an important aspect of all early years work. BSHI uses a variety of assessment methods to assess the learners' competence. All relevant documents are completed and signed. Assessments are holistic and cross-referenced expertly to several NVQ units. Observations of assessments are recorded in detail and are clearly linked to the NVQ standards, technical certificates and key skills. They receive good verbal and written feedback on assessment outcomes at the earliest opportunity. Learners receive good support with portfolio-building and the collection of evidence is candidate led.

86. The integration of key skills with vocational training is good in early years programmes. There is a dedicated key skills co-ordinator. BSHI introduces the learners to key skills during their induction. Key skills are taught and assessed at the same time as their NVQ qualification. The organisation encourages the learners to gather evidence of their acquisition of key skills through their everyday tasks at work and their work for the NVQ. Key skills has been made an integral part of the learners' programme. Learners said they were able to appreciate the relevance of key skills to their work for the qualification and to the world of work. Key skills assessments are delivered online or they are paper-based, according to the learners' needs, which has speeded up the process.



87. The support for learners is good throughout their programme in early years. BSHI's staff have recognised the need to increase support mechanisms for learners' personal and social issues, as well as support towards their qualification. This support has helped learners who have been in training for longer than their funding period to stay in training and continue with their framework. Any additional learning or social needs identified at induction are assessed on an individual basis, and appropriate support is provided by means of additional individual support at the workplace with the skills for life co-ordinator and assessor. Some learners with reading and writing difficulties receive help each week to complete assessment paperwork and to prepare for future assessments.

88. The resources to support learning are satisfactory on early years programmes. Learners are taught their practical skills and related background knowledge to a high standard in groups and/or on an individual basis. Staff use a satisfactory range of learning materials. Learners have access to books, journals, handouts, leaflets, computers and the internet. There are also some satisfactory resources within many workplaces to support learners who are unable to attend training. Assessors are easily accessible and responsive to the learners' needs. There are also some good-quality work placements. Employers have a good understanding of the NVQ requirements and are supportive of the learners. Learners are provided with good-quality supervision, which develops their practical skills, and have additional training/workshops to support their knowledge base and job role. Learners are able to work with all age groups within the nursery, ensuring full coverage of the range of NVQs. All staff are occupationally competent and experienced. The close relationship between assessors and learners helps to build the learners' self-esteem and confidence. Learners value the support they receive very highly and recognise that it helps them to stay in training.

89. Induction is satisfactory on early years programmes. Induction is memorable, effective and provides a good foundation for learners' NVQ programmes. Learners receive detailed information on all aspects of their programme. They are aware of equal opportunities and the appeals/complaints procedure. Learners appreciate their induction and feel that it gives them more confidence at the start of their programme and ensures that they have a full understanding of all aspects of their training.

90. The monitoring and recording of learners' progress is satisfactory on early years programmes. All learners complete an individual learning plan that identifies their previous knowledge, skills, expectations and review arrangements. Learning outcomes are identified at the start of the programme and BSHI uses them to monitor the learners' progress. A document monitoring achievement is completed and updated after every review. BSHI agrees a short-term action plan for the NVQ and key skills, with clear, realistic targets that challenge the learners' ability to improve their skills. All parties sign this document in agreement.

### **Leadership and management**

91. The internal verification process is satisfactory. There are clear monitoring charts and regular sampling of assessment activity, which includes regular observations of assessors' practice, teaching and progress reviews. There is regular NVQ portfolio sampling and the internal verifier completes reports of the sampling. There are monthly assessors' meetings that are activity based and used clearly to standardise practice. Internal verification is sufficient to assure the reliability, consistency and quality of the assessment process.

## **Care**

### *Strengths*

- no significant strengths identified

### *Weaknesses*

- extremely slow progress with social care apprenticeship frameworks
- poor management of the subcontractor

## **Achievement and standards**

92. Progress towards NVQ and key skills awards in social care programmes is extremely slow. All of the social care programmes have been subcontracted to a training provider who has not fulfilled their agreed commitment to provide training and assessment to learners on behalf of BSHI. Learners have completed too few NVQ units or key skills units in relation to the time that they were in training. Assessments have been carried out holistically, with insufficient emphasis on unit completion. Key skills were introduced late in the apprentices' training. Key skills training was not an integral part of most NVQ training sessions and was taught and assessed separately to the NVQ award. Learners produced additional written work to achieve their key skills. Evidence collected for their everyday work was not always used to assess key skills and learners have not made the links to the occupational area. There is a separate key skills file maintained by the learners that is not cross-referenced to the NVQ.

93. Learners are over their funding period and have still not achieved their full frameworks. Out of the 13 starts during 2003-04, 46 per cent have left the programme and 54 per cent are still in learning. Assessors have not contacted some learners for months. BSHI has since withdrawn from the contract and has commissioned another training provider to complete the awards with the learners that are still in training.

## **The quality of provision**

94. Some of the target-setting within progress reviews is insufficient. There are few clear targets set to measure learners' progress and achievement. They do not clearly identify what action the learner had to take before the next progress review and they are not used effectively to guide the planning of learners' training. There is insufficient detail recorded on the review form and some comments are vague and descriptive rather than evaluative. They give insufficient direction for the learner to progress. Individual learning plans are not routinely updated.

## **Leadership and management**

95. The management and co-ordination of the subcontracted provision are very poor. There is no contract or service level agreement in place that clearly defines roles and responsibilities, quality assurance arrangements and financial agreements. There have been no formal meetings with the subcontractor to deal with any issues or to develop the training provided. There have been no quality assurance processes or communication channels in place to monitor the work of the subcontractor or to gather information, such as reports or teaching observations. This has been evident with the lack of information

available during the inspection.

96. Learners have been left for significant periods of time with no assessor and no contact from BSHI or the subcontractor. This has had a significant effect on those who have been in training for longer than their funded period and have still not achieved their framework.

97. BSHI was aware that there were some significant problems over a year ago and it has not taken the appropriate action in rectifying the problems until recently. It has now commissioned a training provider to focus on the learners still in training to try and achieve their full frameworks by September 2006.

98. BSHI has stated that once the remaining learners have completed the frameworks they will not be providing the social care awards in the future.

99. The self-assessment report gave a general overview of the activity within the area of learning, but it did not accurately identify the key strengths and weaknesses that the inspectors identified. Some of the weaknesses that BSHI identified were satisfactory at the previous inspection.

