



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

Inspecting post-16

hairdressing and beauty therapy

with guidance on
self-evaluation

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The post-16 subject guidance published in 2001 comprised: art and design; business education; classics; design and technology; drama and theatre studies; engineering and manufacturing; English; geography; government and politics; health and social care; history; information and communication technology; law; mathematics; media education; modern foreign languages; music; physical education; religious studies; science; sociology.

Further booklets published in 2002: agriculture; basic skills in literacy and numeracy; construction; dance; English as a second or other language; hairdressing and beauty therapy; hospitality and catering; leisure and tourism; psychology.

Contents

Introduction	1
Common requirements	3
1 Standards and achievement	5
1.1 Evaluating standards and achievement	5
1.2 Analysis of students' work	6
1.3 Talking with students	8
1.4 Lesson observation	9
2 Teaching and learning	13
2.1 Evaluating teaching and learning	13
2.2 Lesson observation	14
2.3 Other evidence on teaching and learning	19
3 Other factors affecting quality	21
3.1 Resources and accommodation	21
3.2 Co-ordinating work-based and college-based training	21
3.3 Curriculum and management	21
3.4 Staffing	22
4 Writing the report	23

Introduction

This booklet aims to help inspectors and staff in schools and colleges to evaluate standards and quality in hairdressing and beauty therapy for students post-16. It complements the *Handbook for Inspecting Secondary Schools* (1999), the supplement *Inspecting School Sixth Forms* (2001) and the *Handbook for Inspecting Colleges* (2002).

This guidance concentrates on issues specific to hairdressing and beauty therapy. General guidance is in the *Handbooks*. Use both to get a complete picture of the inspection or evaluation process.

This booklet focuses on evaluating standards and achievement, teaching and learning, and other factors that affect what is achieved. It outlines how to use students' work and question them, the subject-specific points to look for in lessons, and how to draw evaluations together to form a coherent view of the subject.

Examples are provided of evidence and evaluations from college inspections, with commentaries to give further explanation. These examples are included without any reference to context, and will not necessarily illustrate all of the features that inspectors will need to consider. The booklets in the series show different ways of recording and reporting evidence and findings; they do not prescribe or endorse any particular method or approach.

Inspectors and senior staff in schools and colleges may need to evaluate several subjects and refer to more than one booklet. You can download any of the subject guidance booklets from OFSTED's web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Our Inspection Helpline team, on 020 7421 6680 for schools and 020 7421 6703 for colleges, will respond to your questions. Alternatively, you can e-mail collegeinspection@ofsted.gov.uk or schoolinspection@ofsted.gov.uk.

OFSTED's remit for this sector is the inspection of education for students aged 16–19, other than work-based education. In schools, this is the sixth-form provision. In colleges, the 16–19 age group will not be so clearly identifiable; classes are likely to include older students and, in some cases, they will have a majority of older students. In practice, inspectors and college staff will evaluate the standards and quality in these classes regardless of the age of the students.

This booklet concentrates on the most commonly found courses in or related to hairdressing and beauty therapy for students 16–19. However, the principles illustrated in this guidance can be applied more widely. We hope this publication is helpful to you.

In colleges, you are most likely to encounter:

- full-time courses in hairdressing at levels 1, 2 and 3 and in beauty therapy at levels 2 and 3; courses in complementary and holistic therapies are also provided, usually for students older than 19 years;
- part-time courses, including hairdressing at levels 1, 2 and 3, and complementary therapies in beauty, for example, reflexology and Indian head massage;
- part-time programmes for students who want to specialise in gentleman's hairdressing, Afro-Caribbean hairdressing and advanced nail techniques;
- pre-entry qualifications in hairdressing for students who require support in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy;
- work-based training, both in hairdressing and in beauty therapy, which is usually provided on a day-release basis through the modern apprenticeship framework; the learners, who are called advanced modern apprentices (AMAs) or foundation modern apprentices (FMAs), spend most of their time in their work placements; employers may or may not be involved in assessing aspects of the training; key skills provision at levels 1, 2 and 3 in communication, application of number and information and communication technology (ICT) is integral to modern apprenticeship programmes;
- Edexcel validated Higher National Diploma (HND) courses in beauty therapy which allow progression on to the first year of a degree course;
- City and Guilds validated progression awards both in hairdressing and in beauty therapy, which are designed to be provided in colleges and tested by the awarding body.

Common requirements

All inspectors share the responsibility for determining whether a school or college is effective for all its students, whatever their educational needs or personal circumstances. As an inspector, ensure that you have a good understanding of the key characteristics of the institution and its students. Evaluate the achievement of different groups of students and judge how effectively their needs and aspirations are met by any initiatives or courses aimed specifically at these groups of students. Take account of recruitment patterns, retention rates and attendance patterns for programmes and courses for different groups of students. Consider the individual goals and targets set for students within different groups and the progress they make towards achieving them.

You should be aware of the responsibilities and duties of schools and colleges regarding equal opportunities, in particular those defined in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. These Acts and related codes of practice underpin national policies on inclusion, on raising achievement and on the important role schools and colleges have in fostering better personal, community and race relations, and in addressing and preventing racism.

As well as being thoroughly familiar with subject-specific requirements, be alert to the unique contribution that each subject makes to the wider educational development of students. Assess how well the curriculum and teaching in hairdressing and beauty therapy enable all students to develop key skills, and how successfully the subject contributes to the students' personal, social, health and citizenship education, and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Judge how effectively the subject helps prepare students aged 16–19 for adult life in a culturally and ethnically diverse society.

1 Standards and achievement

1.1 Evaluating standards and achievement

From the previous inspection report, find out what you can about standards and achievement at that time. This will give you a point of comparison with the latest position, but do not forget that there is a trail of performance data, year by year. Analyse and interpret the performance data available for students who have recently completed the course(s). Draw on the school's *Performance and Assessment* (PANDA) report or, in the case of a college, the *College Performance Report*. Also analyse the most recent results provided by the school or college and any value-added information available. When numbers are small, exercise caution in making comparisons with national data or, for example, evaluating trends. For further guidance on interpreting performance data and analysing value added, refer to *Inspecting School Sixth Forms*, the *Handbook for Inspecting Colleges* and the *National Summary Data Report for Secondary Schools*.

Where you can, form a view about the standards achieved by different groups of students. For example, there may be data which enable you to compare how male and female students or different ethnic groups are doing, or how well 16–19-year-old students achieve in relation to older students.

Make full use of other information which has a bearing on standards and achievement, including success in completing courses, targets and their achievement, and other measures of success.

You should interpret, in particular:

- | trends in results;
- | comparisons with other subjects and courses;
- | distributions of grades, particularly the occurrence of high grades;
- | value-added information;
- | the relative performance of male and female students;
- | the performance of minorities and different ethnic groups;
- | trends in the popularity of courses;
- | drop-out or retention rates;
- | students' destinations, where data are available.

On the basis of the performance data and other pre-inspection evidence, form hypotheses about the standards achieved, whether they are as high as they should be, and possible explanations. Follow up your hypotheses through observation and analysis of students' work and talking with them. Direct inspection evidence tells you about the standards at which the current students are working, and whether they are being sufficiently stretched to achieve as well as they should. If the current standards are at odds with what the performance data suggest, you must find out why and explain the differences carefully.

As you observe students in lessons, look at their work and talk with them, consider the extent to which they:

- | understand and comply with legislation and good practice in health and safety in hair and beauty settings;
- | keep abreast of developing trends in techniques for cutting and colouring hair, applying make-up and treatments in beauty and complementary therapies;
- | select and use a suitable range of approaches, materials and products, for example, when colouring a client's hair or applying oils and lotions in body massage;
- | select and use tools and equipment effectively, working safely and competently;
- | demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of hairdressing and beauty therapy and its commercial context;
- | accurately interpret clients' and teachers' requirements when carrying out practical tasks and assessments;
- | develop interpersonal skills in order to communicate effectively with, ask searching questions of, and apply suitable hairdressing and beauty therapy techniques to, clients in a commercial environment;

- | work productively and co-operatively as members of a team to achieve the salon's targets, and evaluate their contributions to such team work;
- | discuss methods they have used, or might use, to solve problems in a commercial environment;
- | take an increasing responsibility for their own work and learning, including the theory which underlies practice, for example, the effects on appearance of skeletal structure and facial muscles;
- | apply and, where appropriate, develop competence in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy;
- | use ICT to present written work, improve the efficiency of salon management and, for the more advanced salons, design new images for clients to visualise.

1.2 Analysis of students' work

A detailed analysis of students' work and the information drawn from the pre-inspection analysis provide important sources of evidence to judge whether the students are achieving well. Students' portfolios are an essential source of evidence for the standards they are achieving, and students and teachers will need time to gather them together, because of the amounts of practical work involved. It is best to adopt a flexible and negotiated approach to their access. At the beginning of the inspection, it is important that you make it clear to the school or college what you need to see. Also tell curriculum managers that you would like to see students working with their portfolios while they are in practical classes. Observing students working in a commercial environment and linking their portfolio records to their practical work will confirm whether the portfolios selected are representative. It will also indicate the extent to which students understand what they need to do to complete their vocational courses.

Looking through the portfolios of individual students will give evidence of the progress they have made and the demands of the teaching. Look for understanding of the theory and how well it supports the students' developing practical competence.

A close analysis of students' current and completed work is important when observing lessons. Talk to students about the work they are doing, their previous experiences and the products they are using, and explore their levels of understanding of the subject. While observing practical sessions, ask students what progress they feel they are making and how they are dealing with clients. This will indicate clearly how well they understand the importance of working with people in a commercial environment.

You should look in detail at the work of at least three students, of above average, average and below average attainment, from the main courses being evaluated. Look at the students' own work and its level of subject content and analysis. Ascertain the students' understanding of hairdressing and beauty therapy principles, and their improvements over time, as their competence increases with maturity.

Example 1: evidence from analysis of some assignment coursework by three year 2 students in a college of further education (FE) on an NVQ level 3 beauty therapy programme

Work for unit about improving face and skin condition using electrical treatments

Higher-attaining student

The work is detailed and demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the roles of beauty therapists, together with an appreciation of the industry in which they work. The student has included a wide range of case studies to demonstrate how important it is for the services that are being offered in the beauty therapy industry to match the needs and wants of the client. There are pertinent examples of client consultation, with detailed treatment plans which give clear details of any adverse reactions the clients might face if the correct procedures are not carried out. Each case study indicates the significance of the individual differences between clients. The assignment identifies relationships between health and safety and the importance of confidentiality in the relationship between client and therapist. There is extensive coverage of the procedures a beauty therapist would have to understand and put into practice. The assignment is accurately word-processed and shows that the student has knowledge of, and competence within, relevant software. There is also substantial photographic evidence of the student's own work. The student has set challenging and achievable targets to 'fast track' through the qualification.

Middle-attaining student

Sound standards of work are evident in the portfolio. The student has a good capability in ICT, shown by the clear presentation of the research into beauty therapy. The portfolio is well referenced and there is a clear understanding of the role of a beauty therapist in the industry. Written evidence demonstrates that the student can link theory to practice. There is an example of a client who has had a facial massage treatment, with a satisfactory written account of the procedures that have been carried out. Photographic examples illustrate good standards of completed work for assessment. The main weakness is the lack of evidence of her own ideas and opinions about the range of practical tasks that she is studying and the lack of written reflection and evaluation of the work she has done.

Lower-attaining student

The student has not presented her portfolio well. It is not well referenced and there are too few assessments, which shows insufficient progress towards the final qualification. The student has copied much information directly from textbooks and does not relate theory to practice. There is little evidence that the learner can use IT to complete her work and her writing is poor, with spelling mistakes and incorrect grammar. The student has not responded to the teacher's comments and the work remains uncorrected. It does not meet the success criteria for a pass grade and shows insufficient progress from level 2 in beauty therapy.

[Attainment average (4)]**Commentary**

The students show significant differences in their level of understanding of the theory which should support their practical work. The quality of research, analysis and presentation also varies considerably, as do effort and commitment. The weakest student's work indicates that she has not successfully bridged the gap between level 2 and Advanced level. The other students have made good and satisfactory progress respectively. Overall, achievement is satisfactory and attainment is average, but it will be necessary to look at other students' work to see how typical these three are. The weakest student may have been placed on the wrong level of programme to meet her individual needs.

Example 2: evidence from the portfolios of advanced modern apprentices working towards NVQ levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing on a day-release basis**Higher-attaining learner**

The portfolio is clearly indexed and contains a variety of evidence from a number of sources, including comments from clients, direct observation records, assessment plans, client records, theory/knowledge test papers, and photographic evidence of completed work. Assessment plans and review documents show that the learner is meeting most deadlines and progressing at a sound rate. Written work is of a satisfactory standard, meeting NVQ requirements. Key skills are mapped and studied as an integral part of the NVQ; they are at the level required by the modern apprenticeship framework. Naturally occurring evidence is collected in working situations.

Middle-attaining learner

The standard of work barely meets NVQ requirements. Assessments and written work are planned and most deadlines are met, but written evidence shows a tenuous understanding of the essential knowledge required for the NVQ. Assessment planning and review show that the learner is making uneven progress and is some way off successfully completing the modern apprenticeship programme within the specified time. Key skills are being studied at the level required by the framework.

Lower-attaining learner

The learner is not progressing through the programme at an appropriate rate. Practical assessments and written work are incomplete and behind the planned schedule. The learner has insufficient experience working on clients and this is affecting assessment opportunities. Portfolio evidence is limited and sometimes insufficient. Review documents show that the learner is behind with the scheduled work but that clear actions and targets to help the student improve have been identified. The initial assessment failed to identify additional learning needs for this apprentice.

[Attainment below average (5)]

Commentary

The students vary widely in the range and quality of recorded work and in the underlying understanding and skills that this work shows. They are not working with enough urgency to meet programmed deadlines and they lack insight into what they need to do and to what levels, in order to complete tasks on time. It also indicates unsatisfactory achievement. Both the issues of allocating students to courses, and their achievements therein, need to be investigated further. This casts doubt on the initial allocation of at least two of these students to a programme running at these levels, and of the quality of training being provided.

1.3 Talking with students

Listen to discussions between students and talk with them individually about their past and current studies while they are working. This is important in hairdressing and beauty therapy, to ascertain if the students are making satisfactory progress and to see how their achievements compare with their qualifications on entry to the course. It can also provide a rich seam of evidence to establish their attainment. Try to arrange a meeting with a group of students outside lessons. Ask the students to bring their portfolios with them to any discussion you may arrange and talk about their work with them.

Your judgements must be made in the light of the expectations for each course, but the following are useful points to consider when you are discussing work with students.

- | Do they show an enthusiasm for their chosen course and a desire to progress to a higher level qualification?
- | Do they reflect critically on their work and see new possibilities?
- | Are they able to transfer ideas from one context to another and apply learnt techniques to achieve different outcomes on a variety of clients?
- | Are they able to express their own views about the expected usefulness of their planned practical activity?
- | Do students have enough resources to complete their different and varied assessments?
- | Do students have enough clients for them to make realistic progress on their assessments?
- | Are they confident when working in a commercial environment?
- | Are they able to negotiate their assessment plan?

Example 3: evidence from a discussion with four members of full-time, year 1 NVQ level 3 hairdressing course in an FE college

Unit about contribution to the planning and implementation of promotional activities

- | *The students have been studying a promotional unit which includes planning, designing and presenting artistic images of models and how such presentations can be used effectively in a commercial environment. They have completed the outline of their plan and are now discussing the content, which will include a presentation of cat-walk models in conjunction with a large commercial company which is sponsoring the hairdressing section.*
- | *The students speak very enthusiastically about the brief they have been given and quickly demonstrate the evidence they have already assembled in their portfolio. They respond well to the strong leadership of their informed and charismatic teacher.*
- | *When discussing the proposed outline of their plans, they recognise that, although all have a sensible structure, they would have difficulty in linking their programme to that of the company they are working with, in order to meet the time-limit they have been given. During the discussion, they are all able to suggest how improvements could be made and how the two programmes might be better synchronised. They are also able to distinguish the problems that they might still encounter. For example, they are aware of time sponsors will need to complete their work, and who will edit and sequence the music needed for the presentation, to suit both their part of the presentation and that of their sponsors.*
- | *Their portfolios are of a high standard.*
- | *They all demonstrate a high level of understanding and they are able to evaluate and discuss the way their work has progressed during the year.*

[Attainment well above average (2)]

Commentary

The students have a firm grasp of the area of study and have clearly gained a great deal of insight into promotional planning. They appreciate that in reality their proposals might need modification if they are to solve the logistical problems that can arise when dealing with an external partner. They have a real understanding of what is possible and when an idea is not workable.

They carry out and are able to discuss their practical skills with considerable insight. They are also able to demonstrate a high level of understanding and they are clearly inspired and motivated by their teacher, who works alongside them. They are able to apply what they have learnt to the new context, showing a growth in the sophistication of their knowledge. Their high attainment, together with the evidence of enthusiastic and committed effort, points to very good achievement and progress.

Example 4: evidence from discussion with two members of year 1 NVQ level 2 beauty therapy course in an FE college; both students have at least 2 GCSE grades of D and above

Unit about enhancing the appearance of eyebrows and lashes

- | *First student spent a week in a beauty therapy salon for her work experience; she has used that experience to complete some of her assessments.*
- | *There is effective use of photographic evidence to illustrate different make-up techniques.*
- | *The students have little knowledge of the assessment they need to complete.*
- | *During the discussion, there is some progress in students' understanding of the relationship between the principles of theory and applying those principles in practical work.*
- | *Students have insufficiently well-developed key skills to accredit them with the requirements for their key skill award.*
- | *Students' work has not been corrected for spelling and grammar.*
- | *Students take pride in their well-presented portfolios.*
- | *Both students are well able to point out shortcomings in some commercial activities and to describe which would be most useful for a particular client, for example, how the correct colour eyebrow shape will give the appearance of widening the client's eyes.*
- | *The second student finds it more difficult to talk about her progress and does not have a clear understanding of the effort she should be making.*

[Attainment below average (5)]

Commentary

Overall, the analysis of these two students' work indicates that attainment is below average. Although the average student should pass, she is not achieving as well as she might. There is, however, no mechanism, such as an action plan with set targets, for the student to work towards to improve progress, and the teacher does not make clear assessments of her written work. Tutorial records note this student's lack of progress. The higher-attaining student is achieving at the level one might expect from her GCSE grades on entry to the course. While they have an adequate basic understanding of the subject, their lack of confidence prevents them from progressing. This evidence contributes to the overall judgement of below average attainment and indicates that achievement overall is unsatisfactory. However, it is important to explore how the work of these two students represents the work of the rest.

1.4 Lesson observation

Lessons may be observed in a classroom, lecture theatre, workshop, salon or laboratory. They can provide good evidence on standards and achievement. Lessons may be structured for whole-group or individual activity, tutorials, seminars, or open learning. It is important that the sample observed reflects the range of hairdressing and beauty therapy courses offered and that both practical and theory lessons are covered. There may well be differences, for example, in the attainment of students studying the same qualification, but through different modes of attendance.

Example 5: evidence from NVQ level 2 beauty therapy lesson in an FE college; 12 students, all of whom passed 5 subjects in GCSE at grade D and above (they intend to progress on to level 3 beauty therapy)

Unit about enhancing facial appearance using make-up techniques

Teacher's lesson plan indicates objectives are to be able to: 1) understand the principles of make-up and their application; and 2) identify combinations of colours for face make-up.

This is the first lesson on this subject. The teacher demonstrates to the students correct techniques for applying make-up.

Students are enthusiastic about the demonstration and show their good level of understanding by answering the teacher's questions in detail. They then move on to their own models after completing client consultation sheets. Students show confidence in their activity and compare different colour combinations of make-up which they have used before on other clients as indicated by their portfolio of evidence, including make-up suitable for different ethnic skin tones. Students are encouraged to develop their skills of critical evaluation, and show a good understanding of health and safety.

The standard of work is good. Attainment is above average for this stage of the course. Progress since the beginning of the course has been very rapid, indicating that the students' achievement at this point is very good. They are acquiring new knowledge and skills and show confidence in what they are doing.

The teacher moves between the students to check individual progress and discuss any improvements needed in preparation for the next stage of their work.

There is a lost learning opportunity for the one student who did not have a model, since she was used as a client. This apart, the teacher's lesson objectives are well secured.

[Attainment above average (3)]

Commentary

The students are clearly very interested in their work. They know a good deal about colour combinations and how to use them effectively on different tones of skin. They have a good awareness of health and safety and apply appropriate rules while working on their clients. There is a realistic commercial environment which the students enjoy. This helps them to relax and develop their communication skills with their clients. All of this contributes effectively to the group's above average level of attainment and to the rapid progress they have made. The indication is that their achievement has been very good rather than simply good.

Example 6: evidence from a beauty therapy NVQ level 3 lesson in an FE college; eight students who have all passed their NVQ level 2 in beauty therapy

Teacher's plans indicate objective as: 'The use of body electrical treatments'

The teacher outlines the content of the lesson for the students by using a flip chart.

The students are asked to work in pairs and practise on each other. One student complains that her equipment is causing her a headache. There is no response from the teacher who does not investigate this health and safety issue. There is not enough equipment for all of the students to use.

Learners complete client consultation sheets to evaluate their own work; this is not discussed with the teacher. Four students work confidently using the electrical equipment. The remainder of the class do not make satisfactory progress because they do not take the task seriously. They are using each other as models and do not adequately understand the importance of using the equipment safely. The four students who act as models do not learn enough about the effective use of this equipment. Lack of models has been a long-term problem on this course, reflecting

weaknesses in the management of beauty therapy here.

Four students make satisfactory progress in developing skills necessary for this part of their qualification. Four students make little progress because of the shortage of models. This is poor practice and leads to attainment being well below average for this stage of the course. Two students who finish their task early are not given any other task, and so miss a learning opportunity.

[Attainment well below average (6)]

Commentary

In this example, the inspector has written very little about the students' attainment. The evidence does show that only four students make satisfactory progress in this lesson. They seem confident and show interest in what they are doing. They work productively and communicate well with their clients. The remainder of the class are not prepared and do not take the task seriously. This is made worse by their use of each other for practising their skills, both in this lesson and in those which have gone on before. This has resulted in long-term limited progress. Overall, the standard of students' work is unsatisfactory, largely through the lack of models or clients on whom they could realistically practise using the electrical treatments and also through inattentive teaching. All of this contributes to a judgement of unsatisfactory achievement in this group.

2 Teaching and learning

2.1 Evaluating teaching and learning

Learning practical skills is an essential element of most hairdressing and beauty therapy courses. Inspectors will observe the teaching of practical skills in salons and work-based sessions. You may find it useful to observe the start and end of a practical lesson to help you assess the students' progress.

Interpret the *Handbook* criteria with specific reference to hairdressing and beauty therapy. On all courses, you should look for the characteristics of effective teaching and learning in which:

- | high quality demonstrations are given of skills and techniques which lead students to learn how to deal with clients in a commercial environment (*subject knowledge, planning, resources*);
- | through the teachers' carefully structured planning, clear explanations, demonstrations and focused listening and discussion, students improve their skills, develop insight and extend their understanding and appreciation of high standards of commercial work (*subject knowledge, planning, resources*);
- | because of the teachers' skilled demonstrations, choice of good examples and penetrating questioning, students are able to relate theory to practice and understand and complete the practical tasks; they memorise the knowledge, give informed views and opinions on it, and use it to improve their own practical activity (*subject knowledge, expectations*);
- | there is clear enthusiasm among teachers to encourage students to try innovative ideas and persevere when faced with difficulties (*challenge, expectations, subject knowledge, methodology*);
- | teachers make good use of a range of learning materials – for example, overhead projector slides, handouts, independent learning materials, demonstrations, practical equipment, PowerPoint, ICT, and references to wider reading and other learning resources which enhance students' learning (*methodology, use of resources*);
- | there are links to industrial applications and the use of students' own experience (*methodology, use of resources, expectations*);
- | teachers carefully explain new concepts, setting exercises and examples which stretch students and provide prompt guidance when it is needed (*methodology, expectations, assessment*);
- | students undertake challenging tasks which develop skills and related theory and their writing assignments are of a high standard (*methodology, expectations*);
- | the teachers pass on their own careful use of technical language (*subject knowledge, expectations*);
- | a variety of learning activities is provided which motivate students to work at a good pace (*planning, challenge, methodology, pace of learning*);
- | students take responsibility for their own progress, improving their levels of skill in the use of tools and materials, working safely and maintaining safe working environments (*thinking and learning for themselves*);
- | through a well-planned curriculum, students learn techniques which develop transferable skills that can be used in their chosen industry, and they are given good opportunities to practise, consolidate, and refine their skills for assessment (*planning, methodology, assessment*);
- | the teacher's thoughtful and incisive assessments and the way students are encouraged to evaluate their own work throughout the course lead students to make rapid progress in all aspects of their learning (*assessment*).

Be alert to teaching which may have superficially positive features but which lacks the rigour, depth, insights and command of good subject teaching. Examples might include lessons:

- | which are conducted at a fast pace but in which the teacher provides too many of the answers and makes suggestions (for example, moving from one curriculum related topic to another) without allowing students time to think for themselves and assimilate the content (*expectations*);
- | where much of the work is theoretical and, although tackled at a high level of sophistication, the curriculum is too narrow and does not allow the students practical opportunities to apply their knowledge and consolidate what they have learnt; the students do not have the time or the opportunity to reach a commercial standard of practical capability (*methodology*);

- | where the teacher and students show enthusiasm for, and knowledge of, the superficial details of hair and beauty industry, but the teacher fails to use this knowledge to deepen students' understanding of the commercial context of the occupations (*expectations, methodology*);
- | in which students use ICT extensively but in such a way that it does not contribute to increasing knowledge, skills and understanding of hairdressing and beauty therapy (*use of resources, methodology*).

2.2 Lesson observation

Example 7: evidence from a lesson in the second term of an NVQ level 1 hairdressing course in an FE college; five students, none of whom has GCSE qualifications above grade F

Students are discussing and role-playing reception duties

- | *This is an early lesson on reception techniques and communication skills. Students listen to the teacher outlining the main points of reception duties and how they relate to the world of work in this unit. The teacher encourages participation from the whole group by gentle persuasion. This relaxes the students and they participate fully in the discussion.*
- | *Students follow the main outline of the lesson from an overhead projector, which the teacher uses to develop the students' communication skills in encouraging discussion of the planned activity.*
- | *Students start with poor competence in dealing with people on a one-to-one basis. The teacher is effective in developing the students' communication by first helping them to understand the need for effective communication and some of the commercial consequences of its absence. From their reactions, it is clear that the students develop their understanding of this basic but crucial idea.*
- | *All five students can eventually explain the concept of reception systems and their importance in commercial hairdressing. They come to recognise some effective procedures and how they can promote good communication with clients. The teacher spends some time using an overhead projector to explain effective procedures and reception duties. Good use is made of open-ended questions to check students' understanding. Students are given time to think, respond and develop their own communication skills.*
- | *The teacher then moves on to the hairdressing reception area to demonstrate how to put this theory into practice.*
- | *All five students become involved in role-play and are encouraged by the teacher to develop their reception skills by using information technology. This increases the students' acceptance of the relevance of key skills to their main qualification.*
- | *The teacher challenges students to link practical activity to theory.*
- | *Two students make errors in operating the computerised till while dealing with clients. The teacher handles this well, giving encouragement and outlining clearly how they might pre-empt such problems.*
- | *This is a relaxed yet productive lesson and students make very good progress.*

[Teaching and learning very good (2)]

Commentary

Here the teacher's expertise is evident. She is well versed in different approaches used with clients in a commercial environment and explains them well. Her use of questioning is effective and students relate well to her thorough and encouraging style of teaching. The students respond productively in the lesson, making rapid progress even though they started with weaknesses in their knowledge and capability. They develop a good understanding of the way communication can help them deal with clients and the importance of key skills in the world of work. Despite their lack of formal qualifications, these students make rapid progress. This is helped by their obvious enjoyment of the tasks. This very good teaching leads to very successful learning.

Example 8: a group of eight AMA students studying NVQ level 2 in hairdressing

A practical workshop on: 'The theory and practice of colour techniques'. It is run by a colour consultant from a manufacturing company together with the teacher

The teacher introduces the lesson and shares the learning aims with the students.

Clear links are drawn with previous lessons and the teacher sets the context for the lesson to link theory to practical application.

The session plan is clear and indicates a number of activities to motivate the students and keep them fully involved.

The group is divided into two with both the teacher and external consultant demonstrating colouring techniques to a sub-group. The students are encouraged to ask questions. They in turn are questioned, and encouraged to discuss current practices in their placement salons. They answer the questions fully and are able to expand the concepts discussed.

Two students in one of the groups are reticent and do not participate unless questions are directed to them. This allows the other two members of the group to dominate the discussions.

Four models are used for demonstration purposes and the groups are moved around so that they have the opportunity to see all techniques. All students are encouraged to question the techniques and colour choices in order to understand their reasons. This creates open discussion among the students and develops their technical knowledge. The demonstration provides the students with constant visual information and explanations of the techniques used and the choice of colours.

[Teaching and learning very good (2)]

Commentary

This lesson is very well-planned and conducted. Careful sequencing encourages the students to link underlying theory with practice. The teacher arranges a variety of activities to keep the students motivated. Good use is made of the students' salon experience, from which they are able to share with the group current industrial practice. The students are challenged throughout the lesson and good checks are made on learning. The consultant does not sufficiently engage all the students in discussion in her small group, but ensures that the more reticent students are asked direct questions to involve them in the process. The practical skills displayed are of a high standard.

Example 9: observation of an FMA student review taking place in a workplace salon

- *All relevant parties are involved in the review, although the employer tends to defer too much to the teacher.*
- *The college teacher spends some time with the learner discussing progress against targets. New targets are identified with specific dates for their achievement.*
- *The employer contributes to setting targets and identifies which can be achieved in the workplace, although the teacher has to ask questions to help her to formulate the targets clearly enough for the student to understand. Training is discussed and areas are identified where the learner will require models for the salon training night, in preparation for assessment.*
- *Health and safety and equal opportunities are reflected upon, and the learner identifies areas where she has contributed to the relevant practices within the salon. An issue of health and safety is raised where the salon has insufficient protective gloves for chemical treatments. The salon owner assures the learner that this situation will be rectified immediately.*
- *The employer discusses time-keeping and comments that the learner is often a few minutes late for work, but attendance is 100%. A target is set in the review to improve time-keeping by getting an earlier bus for work to ensure that she arrives on time.*

[Teaching and learning satisfactory (4)]

Commentary

A sound review process. The tutor, student and employer are all involved and are able to discuss the various aspects of the training process in a professional and open manner, although the employer's lack of experience and confidence requires the teacher to help her to clarify what she expects of the student. The student is encouraged to evaluate performance and progress against targets and is able to negotiate new targets and deadline dates for their achievement. Sufficient attention is paid to health and safety and equal opportunities issues. They are discussed in a meaningful way that leads to better working practices, which are recorded on the review document. The employer is sufficiently involved in the review to give effective feedback on the student's performance and so support and inform the training programme. However, this is only moderately successful, requiring as it does the teacher to help interpret the employer's views.

Example 10: evidence from 10 students on a beauty therapy NVQ level 3 body massage class in an FE college

Unit about treating clients, using aromatherapy body massage

This lesson is midway through the 15-week, three-hours-a-week programme on body massage using aromatherapy oils. This class has a high proportion of mature students. There are, however, some younger students who are interested in the subject and who, their teachers feel, can cope with this level of work.

Strengths

- | *The teacher uses effective questioning techniques that develop students' understanding of their subject.*
- | *The teacher uses a flip chart to outline the importance of aftercare procedures. This helps students to discuss the problems that could arise if the procedures were not adequately explained to clients during their treatments.*
- | *The teacher makes effective eye contact with the students to check if they understand what is being discussed. Teacher's good technical knowledge of body massage techniques is used well to clarify the different types of bones and muscles the students will be dealing with.*
- | *Students have in-depth knowledge from their previous lessons on this topic and they bring this to bear effectively on the practical situation.*
- | *Students show confidence in carrying out their tasks on clients and show increasing competence as they work. The teacher uses effective questioning techniques frequently to check students' understanding.*
- | *The students have reached good levels for this stage of their course, with marked improvement during the session.*

Weaknesses

- | *Students comment on the colour of felt pen that is being used. It is not clear enough to discern.*
- | *The quality of assessment materials and handouts used for this lesson is good. However, the teacher has not photocopied the handout sheets on time for the start of the class. This means that the students have to wait during the lesson whilst the handouts are copied, before they can proceed with the exercises they contain.*

[Teaching and learning good (3)]

Commentary

The teacher has not adequately prepared handouts for the start of the lesson and there is some confusion for students. This results in time being wasted during the lesson. Also, the use of poor quality felt pens causes more confusion. However, the rest of the teaching is very effective and the teacher shows very good subject knowledge and understanding of the finer details of the topic. The handouts are well written. The teacher uses effective questioning techniques to check students' understanding regularly. The students' previous knowledge is evident and used to further the progress in their practical subject. At this stage of the course, students have made very good progress.

Example 11: evidence from first year full-time NVQ level 1 hairdressing lesson in an FE college

Key skills: application of number

There are many weaknesses in teaching. Planning is poor. The start of the lesson is confusing and there are no clear aims or learning outcomes to give the students a sense of direction. However, teacher shows knowledge of subject being taught, she circulates among learners and challenges them to work out measurements for themselves. Teacher uses whiteboard to outline answers to questions. Learning support worker assists the students sporadically.

There is little opportunity for students to ask questions. The pace of work is badly managed. The teacher is not sensitive to the students' needs and rushes through parts of the exercise, where more consolidation is needed. For example, when students cannot understand how to write down their estimated figures, the teacher moves on to the next planned activity.

Classroom management is poor. Students' mobile 'phones frequently ring. The teacher does not deal with this. Majority of the students do not sufficiently acquire new skills and knowledge; nor do they understand why they are using estimation of measurement alongside their main qualification. The layout of the tables around which students are sitting does not allow interaction within the group. One student finds the activity uninspiring and cannot understand why she needs this mathematics lesson when she is studying hairdressing. The teacher covers the subject material again with this student, but she still has little comprehension of the material or the problems she has to solve. This student becomes detached from the lesson and puts her head on the desk when she finally gives in to her frustration at not achieving.

[Teaching and learning poor (6)]

Commentary

In discussion after the lesson, the teacher showed her concern at the limited progress these students made. The majority of the group were assessed as having basic skills needs at induction. Although the teacher clearly knows her subject, she does not have the teaching expertise to select effective teaching methods. She has not prepared additional examples to allow the students to practise and understand how the application of number is relevant to hairdressing. There is a lack of clear purpose to the learning and the problem solving activity is laborious for the students, since they see no clear link to their main qualification. This causes confusion and frustration.

Example 12: evidence from a lesson on Indian head massage in a diploma course in an FE college; 14 part-time students present

The students' interest is captivated by the teacher's brisk use of PowerPoint to outline the procedures for them to follow. They soon show keenness to become involved in the activity the teacher has planned. The teacher introduces a variety of massage techniques, encouraging students to interact with different group members as they practise these.

The students develop new practical skills and in-depth understanding of the theory underlying these practices. They answer the teachers' questions with clarity. Students are therefore able to apply and consolidate what they know,

establish how techniques and procedures are used, and reach a more sophisticated understanding of the development of Indian head massage.

The teacher has prepared informative and well-written handouts that all students find easy to follow. She is very knowledgeable about the subject and this supports her effective teaching. Because she facilitates learning for students using whole-group, paired and individual work, she can assess how well each student is grasping the important ideas and concepts. She is very successful in discussing, prompting, interrogating, affirming and summing up the students' ideas and techniques.

Students enjoy the experience of learning and develop the skills of critical evaluation when asked to carry out a prepared role-play exercise. Teacher encourages students to discuss their findings with her.

The teacher has excellent relationship with the students, which increases their respect, admiration and enthusiasm. The teaching is very good. It encourages an atmosphere of focused study and creative response.

[Teaching and learning very good (2)]

Commentary

Here the teacher's expertise is evident: she is well versed in the different teaching and learning styles. The lesson is well planned and makes effective use of a good variety of activities. The students are used to the very successful questioning style of the teacher and are able to relate their practical and theory work very well. Motivation of the students and the quality of their learning are very good. The introduction by the teacher has set the scene very well and prompted the students to correct misconceptions. The pace is brisk and the summary highly successful in pulling together the main ideas. The handouts are well designed to reinforce the students' understanding, which is at a high level.

Example 13: large, very busy commercial salon where 15 students on AMA and FMA programmes are working on clients for assessment purposes

A large number of clients have appointments, which are staggered over a three-hour period.

One learner acts as salon manager to organise the work and allocate clients. There is resistance from some learners to take the models allocated. The teacher steps in and reallocates some of the clients to match the learners' assessment requirements, but the match remains poor.

It is unclear to learners which of them are being assessed and there is little evidence of assessment planning.

The teacher checks all learners and discusses what service they are going to perform. Client record cards are given to all learners. There is a good range of commercial products for the learners to use and sufficient equipment for the client services to be carried out without them having to wait.

Some of the less able learners do not receive sufficient attention from the teacher and struggle to perform the service on their clients. The allocation of some of the clients is arbitrary and does not sufficiently meet the skill levels of some of the learners. Several learners report that they do not feel confident to give the treatment. Other more able learners work effectively and complete their treatments within a commercially reasonable time.

The lesson runs over time and the teacher is unable to give thorough feedback on the assessments that have taken place.

The teacher does not review the lesson at the end as she runs out of time.

[Teaching poor (6) and learning unsatisfactory (5)]

Commentary

The session is badly planned. There are too many assessments taking place for the teacher to give sufficient attention to all in the group. Insufficient attention is paid to the individual skill levels of the learners. The teacher spends time with the more able learners who are being assessed. Because of poor time management, the teacher is unable to draw out learning points for the group at the end of the lesson. Poor teaching and planning are partly ameliorated by the good will of the learners and the clients.

2.3 Other evidence on teaching and learning

Lesson observation is usually the most important source of evidence on the quality of teaching and learning, but the analysis of work and discussions with students can also yield valuable information. This is particularly important when the work includes a coursework component undertaken over time. Under these circumstances, the observation of individual lessons may give a very partial picture of the students' learning experience and of the support provided by teachers.

The work analysis will give you a good feel for the overall rate of progress, and therefore the pace of the teaching. It will show the range and depth of the work that the students are required to do. The pace of teaching and learning is often revealed when comparing the later assignments and practical work with those completed in the first stages of the course. It will also indicate whether students use an adequate range of realistic work situations and whether they have enough clients to practise on, so as to improve their skills and make satisfactory progress. The pace of the lesson will also indicate whether students are challenged sufficiently to develop their skills.

Discussions with students will give you a sense of their motivation and the range of their experiences. Questions can also be asked to show whether they have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve.

3 Other factors affecting quality

You should report other factors only in so far as they affect the standards and achievement of the students and the quality of teaching and learning. Note and evaluate any significant features of the curriculum, leadership, management, staffing, accommodation or resources.

3.1 Resources and accommodation

You may need to report how standards in the courses you inspect are affected by the quality and availability of resources, equipment and accommodation. You might consider some of the following points.

- | How extensive is the range of books, computers and specialised equipment related to the hair and beauty industry, and how easy is it for the students to gain access to them?
- | To what extent are items of equipment and products available for students to use in completing practical tasks?
- | What is the cost of the personal equipment which students have been asked to purchase?
- | How adequate are the specialist rooms available for them to carry out practical activities?
- | Are lessons timetabled in rooms with sufficient space and equipment or are they in small or ill-suited spaces, which limit the range of approaches and activities?
- | Are there sufficient computers for students to develop key skills and good quality written work?
- | Is there an effective system for booking out equipment and controlling stock?
- | Are students able to work without being disturbed by intrusive noise from other classes?
- | Is there sufficient ventilation in practical salons?
- | Is there a reception area with a computerised till?
- | Do work-based students have sufficient access to college facilities such as the learning resources centre?

3.2 Co-ordinating work-based and college-based training

The college might have its own managing agency for work-based trainees. In such a case, the process would usually be managed by a curriculum co-ordinator who would monitor the trainees' progress. Evaluating such provision may require answers to the following questions.

- | How far do learners benefit from regular reviews with employers and the curriculum co-ordinator on their training and progress? Are those reviews updated regularly?
- | What processes are there to check that salon owners are given advice before they sign a contract on their role and responsibility towards the learners' training?
- | Is there a well-documented training plan for the individual learner?
- | What advice is given to the employer on the health and safety of the learner, and has the salon been checked to see if it is a safe and healthy environment for the trainee to work in?
- | Are there clear lines of communication between the curriculum manager, teaching staff and the hair and beauty co-ordinator, to assess trainees' progress?
- | Are learners seen in the workplace, if there is no assessor in the hair or beauty salon where they work? Will the learners have enough opportunities to be assessed in college?
- | Is there a system to check the quality of internal verification and, if so, does it cover assessments carried out in the hair and beauty salons?

The majority of learning for students on work-based programmes is carried out in a hair or beauty salon, with students attending college for one or two days a week. When considering the quality of the work-based provision, find out how regularly learners attend college for their off-the-job training and portfolio preparation.

3.3 Curriculum and management

Portfolios of evidence of learning take time to build and need sound guidance, particularly at the start of an NVQ programme. Consider the management of this aspect of the students' work and how their learning is affected by the guidance they receive. The following questions may help.

- | Do students benefit from regular advice on the development of their portfolios? Is this linked to their tutorial process?
- | Are students preoccupied with their portfolio construction to the detriment of the learning?
- | How good are the schemes of work and how well are assignments designed? Are key skills fully integrated into the vocational aspects of the work?
- | Poorly designed assignments may be insufficiently challenging. Do students simply transcribe material from textbooks, computers or information leaflets, with little analysis of the content?
- | Where students at different levels are taught together, how well differentiated is the teaching?
- | If team teaching is used, how effectively is it co-ordinated?
- | Where mature students are included on college courses, with relevant experience of hairdressing and beauty therapy, how far do teachers recognise them as a valuable resource, encouraging their interaction while moderating their enthusiasm? Are there opportunities for them to extend their knowledge and relate it to past experience?
- | Are there systems to accredit the students with previous learning?
- | In the way units are timetabled, are different units allocated to different teachers? And if so, do students fail to understand the relationships between the topics covered by different units? How successful are teachers in drawing out these connections?
- | Do students' timetables enable them to make the most of their time in college?

3.4 Staffing

The use of part-time specialist teachers needs careful managing. Their deployment is not always successful because they may not have an overview, and so be unable to relate the immediate study to knowledge and understanding from other parts of the course. When specialists are being used to teach parts of the course, consider how well they understand the importance of the vocational context and whether the course leader has ensured that they use effective methods of teaching. Evaluate staffing by asking questions like the following.

- | Do specialist teachers attend team meetings to discuss course content and students' progress?
- | Are teaching staff involved in target setting to improve the standard of retention and achievement?
- | Do all the subject team members understand the internal verification process to monitor the quality and rigour of assessment?
- | To what extent are teachers specialists who are confident in their understanding of the subject? How does this impact on students' learning? Are the specialist backgrounds and experiences of teachers deployed sensibly and equitably across courses and levels?
- | Is there sufficient technical support for teachers and students?

4 Writing the report

The following is an example of a subject section from an inspection report on an FE college. (It does not necessarily reflect the judgements in any or all of the examples given elsewhere in this booklet.) The summative judgements in these reports use, for colleges, the five-point scale: *outstanding*; *good*; *satisfactory*; *unsatisfactory*; *very weak*, whereas for schools, they use the seven-point scale: *excellent*; *very good*; *good*; *satisfactory*; *unsatisfactory*; *poor*; *very poor*. The summative judgements *excellent/very good* used in school reports correspond to *outstanding* in colleges; *poor/very poor* used in schools correspond to *very weak* in colleges.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Overall, the quality of provision is good.

Strengths

- | Retention and pass rates are good on most programmes.
- | There is a good standard of skills development in beauty and holistic therapies.
- | The students are well motivated and take initiative.
- | The range of programmes is broad and appropriate.
- | There are excellent resources of good commercial standard.

Areas for Improvement

- | Some lessons are dull and undemanding.
- | Students are late for some lessons.
- | There are undemanding individual learning plans.

Scope of provision

The college offers a broad range of courses leading to NVQs in hairdressing and in beauty therapy levels 1, 2 and 3. The range of complementary therapy and related courses includes holistic therapies and sports therapy, reflexology, aromatherapy and Indian head massage. There are currently 144 students aged 16–18 and 135 adults on full-time college courses. Of the 655 part-time students currently enrolled, 88% are over 19. The inspection covered a franchise beauty school in the city centre.

Achievement and standards

The students' achievement is good, given their capabilities on entry to the courses, and their standards of attainment are above average. Retention and pass rates on beauty therapy courses at levels 2 and 3 are good by national comparison. The pass rates have improved significantly since the last inspection: on hairdressing level 1 courses it has improved steadily over the last three years and on hairdressing level 2 courses it has improved notably. Retention rates on both these programmes have also improved and are now in line with the national average. Some second year day-release students, most of whom have spent time in the hairdressing industry, are scheduled to complete their learning programme over an extended two-year period.

The standard of written and practical work on beauty courses is good. Practical work in beauty, sports therapy, media make-up and holistic therapy is of a commercial standard. However, in a few lessons on hairdressing courses, students' attainment was not satisfactory. Students whose first language is not English make good progress towards their qualifications. Students of a wide range of abilities achieve well, although a minority of less able students do not achieve satisfactorily in the key skills aspects on their assignments. Students attend lessons regularly. The average attendance rate for the groups observed was 81%.

Quality of education and training

The quality of teaching is good overall and rarely less than satisfactory. Some of the best lessons were on beauty, holistic therapy, and sports therapy, and theatrical and media make-up courses. In these areas, students display real

interest and maturity. They organise and manage their workstations effectively without supervision. Teachers continuously check students' learning and understanding during lessons. They offer sensitive and supportive guidance in practical sessions. Teachers work as part of a team and all are specialists in different aspects of the provision. They communicate their enthusiasm and extensive knowledge to students. Some lessons, however, are uninspiring and dull. For example, during one practical demonstration, students were inactive for most of the time, and they became distracted and lost interest. In another lesson, too much time was allocated to a short practical task, which some students finished quickly and then had nothing to do.

Hairdressing students often have to work on head forms for a large part of the lesson when waiting for clients. In 34% of the lessons observed, students arrived late. Their failure to arrive on time disrupted the lesson because the teacher then had to repeat parts of it for their benefit.

The internal verification process is good and students' assessments and progress are recorded carefully. Assessments are well spaced throughout the year. There has been some progress on making key skills integral to the curriculum area. The staff have worked alongside key skills teachers and produced effective learning materials that are relevant to the occupational area. Students have individual learning plans but these do not reflect their results in initial assessment and are not updated to take account of their progress.

The franchise provision in the city centre aims to enable adults to make swift progress. Resources and the teaching at the franchise centre are good. Class sizes are small and students can attend extra sessions to complete work they may have missed, or use the practical facilities to complete required case studies.

The hairdressing and beauty section is accommodated in a purpose-built suite of commercial salons at the front of the college. These salons are of a high commercial standard and are well equipped with modern fixtures. Hair and beauty students use a wide range of quality products and are able to demonstrate their requisite NVQ competencies. Students can purchase textbooks, equipment, salon wear and various products from a retail outlet at the college. All full-time teaching staff have appropriate professional qualifications and relevant experience. Theory is taught in other areas of the college, in rooms which are not up to the standard of those in the hairdressing and beauty suite.

Students are well supported by their teachers and tutors, and speak highly of them. All full-time students have helpful group and individual tutorials.

Leadership and management

The section is well managed. There are clear lines of management responsibility, which are devolved from the section manager to three team leaders. Each team leader is responsible for a significant area of the provision. Just over half of the teaching on beauty and holistic therapy courses is carried out by agency staff who are well supported and effectively managed. The section has its own business development plan and also a human resources and marketing plan. These plans include demanding targets. They also specify who is responsible for monitoring progress towards these targets and the deadlines by which they must be reached. The internal inspection report serves as the self-assessment report. Few staff, however, are familiar with the internal inspection report or consider that it has much to do with them.

