



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT MAY 1999

REINSPECTION APRIL 2000

# Barber Bird

## Hairdressing Training

## SUMMARY

Barber Bird offers satisfactory training in hairdressing. The company has good achievement rates. There are many opportunities for trainees to be assessed, both in the training centre and in the workplace. However, trainees are not sufficiently involved in the assessment process. The company collects equal opportunities data, but these are not reviewed or evaluated. At the time of the original inspection, there was good teamwork among staff but little staff training provided. Upon reinspection, strong teamwork remains and training for staff has recently started. Monitoring and evaluation of quality processes is incomplete, and there is insufficient use of management data. Initial assessment is ineffectual. The internal verification system is thorough and well developed. The level of pastoral support available to trainees is high. The original inspection report was poorly completed. Upon reinspection, the company produced a realistic and accurate assessment of the quality of its work.

**As a result of the reinspection of Barber Bird, the original published report text for the management of training and quality assurance has been replaced by new text which makes reference to the original inspection findings. This summary page, the overall report introduction and the inspection findings section have also been amended to reflect the findings of the reinspection. All other sections of the original published report which have not been subject to full reinspection have been left in their original form.**

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Hair & beauty	3

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Trainee support	2
Management of training	4
Quality assurance	4

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	3

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good achievement rates
- ◆ opportunities for assessment maximised
- ◆ high level of pastoral support
- ◆ effective management team



- ◆ thorough internal verification system
- ◆ action planning effectively implemented

**KEY WEAKNESSES**

- ◆ trainees insufficiently involved in assessment process
- ◆ no evaluation or review of equal opportunities data
- ◆ ineffective initial assessment
- ◆ insufficient use made of management information
- ◆ quality assurance system not fully established



## INTRODUCTION

1. Barber Bird Hairdressing Training (BBHT) was established in 1986 to provide training in hairdressing. The company employs three full-time staff, one of whom is the managing director, with the other two responsible for training. The company offers work-based training for young people, (18 to 25) programmes, including national traineeships, modern apprenticeships and other programmes, which include a high proportion of trainees with special learning needs. At the time of the original inspection, Barber Bird had 31 trainees funded through Rotherham Chamber of Commerce, Training and Enterprise (CCTE). At reinspection, there were 32 people in training. Trainees work towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1, 2, and 3.

2. BBHT operates from commercial premises in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, and serves the surrounding areas within a radius of 7 to 8 miles. Rotherham is an area of social and economic deprivation, with a high unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent compared with the national average of 5.2 per cent. Loss of the main areas of employment in steel making and coal mining has had a devastating effect on this small community of 250,000 people. The resulting unemployment has had a knock-on effect on all other sectors. This is also manifested in the cost of living in the area and people's disposable income. It therefore affects the growth potential of all businesses including staff numbers and training opportunities. During the current contract year, there has been a 27 per cent reduction in TEC-funded training in the Rotherham area. Against this background, Barber Bird has maintained its trainee numbers. In 1999, the percentage of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 40.4 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. Young people are especially poorly qualified at this level compared with elsewhere in the region and nationally. In a recent survey undertaken by Rotherham CCTE, companies identified management, information technology and communications skills as areas of greatest demand over the next two to three years. Of the local population 2 per cent are from minority ethnic groups.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

3. Barber Bird Hairdressing Training produced its first self-assessment report in 1998. All staff contributed to the self-assessment process, and one training coordinator had responsibility for compiling the report. The report was accurate in identifying some strengths and weaknesses. However, other strengths were no more than normal practice. In some areas, the self-assessment report concentrated on future plans, rather than on current weaknesses. At the original inspection, inspectors agreed with the grades awarded for hairdressing and equal opportunities. They awarded lower grades for management of training and quality assurance and a higher grade for trainee support. At reinspection, the grades awarded for management of training and quality assurance were the same as those proposed in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report was compiled by the managing director. The judgements contained in it were made in consultation with staff and took into account feedback from trainers and employers.

4. At the original inspection, two inspectors spent a total of six days at BBHT during May 1999. They met trainees, training staff and employers, and spoke with representatives from the local TEC. They interviewed nine employees/supervisors and visited 12 work-placements. Inspectors met all members of the training staff and 27 trainees, and observed two training sessions.

5. Reinspection was carried out by a team of two inspectors. They spent a total of four days at Barber Bird in April 2000. They interviewed all staff, five trainees, and four employers. They visited work placements and observed training sessions.

### OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

#### **Hair & beauty (hairdressing)**

**Grade 3**

6. There are 31 trainees following hairdressing programmes, working towards NVQs at levels 1 to 3. There are seven modern apprentices, one national trainee and 22 on other work-based training programmes. Of these, 12 are endorsed as having additional training needs. All trainees are employed. Trainees' attendance at the training sessions varies according to employers' requirements. Some trainees attend once a week, others attend fortnightly, while a third group of trainees completes training totally in the workplace. Attendance at the centre can also be increased to provide one-to-one tuition for those who require it. Training covers both practical and theoretical aspects for all trainees. The remainder of the trainees' working week is spent in the workplace where they are visited regularly by training staff, to review their progress and carry out assessments. There are two

members of staff responsible for the delivery and assessment of hairdressing NVQs. Both have assessor and verification awards. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths claimed in the self-assessment report. Weaknesses were not clearly or accurately identified. Inspectors found additional weaknesses.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ high trainer/trainee ratio
- ◆ good achievement rates
- ◆ flexible training
- ◆ frequent opportunities for assessment

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ insufficient detail in review documents
- ◆ trainees insufficiently involved in assessment process
- ◆ insufficient variety of practical work

7. The training delivered at the training centre is flexible and attendance patterns can be varied to meet the requirements of employers and trainees. Some trainees undertake all their training in the workplace; others attend the centre on a weekly basis or more frequently, if necessary. Additional training is provided for individuals requesting it, and is often on a one-to-one basis. Training sessions at the centre are designed to enable trainees to progress towards individual targets. Each trainee's programme of work reflects the specific requirements of their place of employment. Their individual training progression route is then planned around this. This means that, although all trainees will complete the same prerequisite units, such as health and safety and shampooing, they then progress onto different units to suit the needs of their particular salon. For example, if a trainee were in a salon, which has a particular requirement for a colouring technician, that unit would be a priority for the trainee. This helps trainees to gain confidence and to become a useful team member within the salon, as they progress through their course.

8. Assessment is regular, rigorous and fair. It takes place either in the training centre, or regularly in the workplace. Training co-ordinators visit the salons as frequently as necessary to allow as many opportunities for assessment as possible. Detailed and objective verbal and written feedback is provided. Trainees have an individual assessment chart, to enable them to track their progress. However, the whole process of assessment is organised for them. The assessment file is prepared and given to them; most understand little of the content or the use of some of the recording systems. Documentation is completed on their behalf, which results in trainees having a poor understanding of the performance criteria or the range of specific units. They are informed when they will be assessed and they do not

participate in any negotiation, or planning. Training co-ordinators book appropriate models for them at the training centre. Many trainees who start a level 1 or level 2 training programme then progress to level 3. At this level, when they are expected to take ownership of the assessment process, they have no previous experience on which to draw.

9. Trainees' reviews are carried out in the workplace; they are regular and meet or exceed contractual requirements. However, recording of the results of the review process is rarely objective or sufficiently detailed. There is little setting of short-term goals or targets, no details of trainees' improvement or development, nor additional support recorded. Comments are subjective and general and lack specific detail.

10. Practical training at the centre is delivered in a commercial salon environment. There is sufficient stock, training tools and equipment. The rooms for theory work are basic, but clean and light. The rooms become crowded when group numbers rise. Trainees have access to relevant textbooks and useful learning support packs have recently been developed. However, some of the visual aids displayed are outdated. Trainers have many years' experience in the occupational area and hold appropriate assessing qualifications. The ratio of trainers to trainees is high, groups of five to ten trainees having two trainers working with them. This double staffing works well, providing trainees with constant supervision. The two trainers work in close unison, which provides a pleasant working environment for trainees.

11. Achievement rates have been high in the last three years, rising from 32 per cent to 79 per cent of trainees who complete the programme achieving an NVQ. Fifty-one per cent of these trainees require some form of additional support to assist them in gaining their qualification. The proportion of trainees gaining employment on completion of training is 100 per cent. Training co-ordinators are aware of the importance of organising appropriate work placements in salons where there are opportunities for trainees to gain employment on completion of their programme. Currently, 52 per cent of leavers gain employment compared with 32 per cent in 1995-96.

12. There are sufficient fee-paying clients available for trainees to practise their skills on when they attend the training centre. However, there is insufficient variety, and trainees have little practise in fashion techniques. Generally, the same clients rebook on a weekly or fortnightly rota. For trainees working in a salon where there is little fashion work required, they have no opportunity to develop skills on a wide range of clients using a breadth of different technical skills. Training methods are not sufficiently varied to maintain a high level of interest by trainees.

13. Key skills have only recently been introduced in relevant programmes, due to the company experiencing delays with the awarding body's advisory visits. Key skills were not, therefore, introduced until midway through trainees' programmes. However, the company has worked hard to develop the teaching and recording of key skills and trainees are currently producing relevant and interesting evidence.

## GENERIC AREAS

### Equal opportunities

### Grade 3

14. Barber Bird has an equal opportunities policy, which meets TEC and awarding body requirements. It is not updated in line with its development plan. Employers receive the policy as part of their information pack. Trainees also receive the policy during their induction programme. The local population has a small proportion of minority ethnic groups, and currently, the company has a higher number of people from minority ethnic backgrounds than that seen in the local community. Hairdressing is historically a female-dominated profession and there are no male trainees on programmes. There are 17 trainees with disabilities. Recruitment literature contains an equal opportunities statement. The self-assessment report was not accurate in identifying either strengths or weaknesses in this area.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ clearly defined equal opportunities policy
- ◆ promotion of training opportunities to minority ethnic groups
- ◆ interpreter available for non-English speakers

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ no formal staff training
- ◆ no evaluation or review of equal opportunities data

15. The company's equal opportunities policy is presented in clear easily understood language. It is given to both employers and trainees. However, the policy is not evaluated, nor was it reviewed by the planned target date. It does not include a reference to the latest legislative information, such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Although trainees are introduced to the concept of equality of opportunity at induction, it is not addressed in a way to make it memorable or to substantially increase their understanding. There is no reinforcement later in their programme and the focus for trainees relates around issues linked to the workplace, such as conditions of service and pay differentials. Most trainees are aware of the appeals procedure related to their NVQ. They also have a basic but accurate understanding of the meaning of equal opportunities and are able to explain in simple terms what it means to them. Employers receive a copy of the equal opportunities policy, but they are not monitored to ensure that they are providing fair treatment for all trainees.

16. Although staff has an understanding of equal opportunity issues related to gender and race, they are less aware of other issues. They do not have regular



training in equal opportunities, thereby missing updated information, or changes to legislation. There are neither documents to show that equality of opportunity is formally discussed, nor is it an item on staff meeting agendas. At an informal level there is a fundamental culture of equality of opportunity. This is reflected in the high representation of people from a minority ethnic background and the high level of support provided to trainees with disabilities. For example, the company provides specialised hearing equipment for hearing-impaired trainees to enable them to complete the reception unit of their programme.

17. The company's managing director has formed links with several locally based minority ethnic organisations, at both official and unofficial level, and uses these to promote career opportunities in hairdressing. Plans are in place for the design of a poster to promote equal opportunities in hairdressing training. Additionally, a marketing pamphlet clearly describes the company's status as an equal opportunities employer. The company is able to call on the skills of a member of staff in one of the placement salons to join the interview process of those trainees from a minority ethnic background. This member of staff is able to act as an interpreter in Kashmiri. As she also has a background in hairdressing, she is able to reassure parents of the valid career opportunities available to prospective trainees.

18. The company monitors the gender, ethnicity and disabilities of its trainees. This information has been collated over the last three years. However, it is not evaluated nor used to improve training, neither is it used to recruit under-represented groups.

## **Trainee support**

## **Grade 2**

19. Trainees are recruited by several methods, often as a result of direct contact with employers and sometimes by referrals from the careers service. All trainees who apply receive an interview and a standard checklist of questions is used at interview. Potential trainees receive information on the content of the programme. All trainees receive an induction at the training centre, followed by regular salon and tutorial reviews. The company offers individual support and guidance to trainees. Trainees are formally reviewed every 12 weeks, however, if required, the frequency may increase to weekly visits. All trainees are offered an interview immediately prior to the completion of their training. The self-assessment report accurately identified one strength, and inspectors found others. The self-assessment report accurately identified any weaknesses and inspectors awarded a higher grade than the company.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good pastoral support
- ◆ prior learning accredited
- ◆ trainees' progress strongly encouraged

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ ineffective initial assessment
- ◆ support for trainees not documented

20. There is a very high level of pastoral support. Trainees receive the home telephone number of a training co-ordinator, and are confident that they can access help whenever they need it. Many trainees have social and personal problems, as well as requiring learning support. The training co-ordinators work very closely as a supportive team to effectively identify trainees who are experiencing either work-related or personal problems. They offer practical and emotional support ranging from ensuring that trainees have suitable accommodation, to providing advice on managing their personal finances.

21. The company has introduced sex education as part of the induction programme. The proportion of female school leaver pregnancies in the local geographical area is 13.1 per cent, compared with 10.3 per cent for the rest of the country. Trainees who have a lapse in training under such circumstances are encouraged to return and complete their training. Job vacancies are held open for them, or new salon placements found. One-to-one support is provided to enable them to gain competency towards their qualification. One training co-ordinator has considerable experience in psychiatric rehabilitation, and is able to use her skills effectively in supporting trainees through difficult or traumatic circumstances. In the case of trainee pregnancies, trainees are made aware of the professional counselling available, to inform them of their options. Training co-ordinators frequently accompany trainees to this service at a council-run counselling centre.

22. The company has a system for accrediting prior learning. Training co-ordinators identify trainees who have prior experience in the occupational area, and provide additional assessment opportunities to enable them to sign off units or elements in which they are competent when trainees transfer from another provider. Trainers also provide one-to-one support to help cross-reference previously completed, but unrecorded, elements or units.

23. The company's initial assessment comprises a checklist of questions to be asked to elicit trainees' abilities and special learning requirements. It includes questions on prior learning and disabilities. Trainees also complete a self-assessment questionnaire, which requires them to identify any additional training needs, such as help with literacy problems. This is not an effective initial assessment technique and there are no other forms of diagnostic testing to identify trainees' needs.

24. Although support for trainees is effective it is not documented on trainees' review sheets and the information is not recorded elsewhere. This means that support provided cannot be systematically evaluated for effectiveness, or used to improve procedures.

### Management of training

### Grade 3

25. Barber Bird has a small management team led by a managing director and comprises two training co-ordinators who are also involved in training, assessment and administration. Since the last inspection, the company has formalised its approach to management and introduced systems for recording activities that were previously only done informally. Managers keep themselves up to date with changes to training programmes and qualification requirements. Trainees' retention rates have remained constant since the last inspection. Most of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report relate to improvements made during the past year. Inspectors considered some of these to be normal practice. The key weaknesses found by inspectors were included in the report. The grade awarded by inspectors was the same as that identified in the self-assessment report.

At the first inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ lack of strategic vision and company values
- ◆ no procedures for staff recruitment or induction
- ◆ no formal staff appraisal or performance monitoring
- ◆ little professional staff development
- ◆ data not used to inform management decisions

26. With the exception of the weakness concerning the use of management information, all other weaknesses has been addressed by the time of reinspection.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ effective management team
- ◆ staff fully support strategy and values
- ◆ regular updates for employers

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ insufficient use made of management information
- ◆ no evaluation of staff training
- ◆ lack of employers' understanding of company values and objectives

27. Managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work particularly well as a team. They are in close daily contact, and communicate well to monitor

the quality of training. Open debate is encouraged and the views and opinions of staff are valued. Communication between staff and with employers and trainees is effective. Improvements in completion of documents relating to training and their control have improved the effectiveness of the management team. Formal management meetings are held and notes are taken. Action agreed at meetings is clear and is closely monitored. Staff are well motivated and fully committed to supporting trainees. They are flexible and multi-skilled. They each have at least 30 years of experience in the hairdressing industry, and their training and assessment work keeps them updated. External sources of information are well used. For example, information on managing problems such as teenage pregnancy and substance abuse has been sought and referred to when necessary.

28. There is a detailed strategic plan, which includes a mission statement and objectives. The plan takes account of the commercial environment and has been used as the basis for action planning. Action points and targets are aimed at improving the quality of training. All staff are involved in the development of plans and implementing them. Action points arising from the strategic plan have included the introduction of a staff appraisal system, personal development plans and the provision of staff training. These initiatives have been well received by staff.

29. Barber Bird provides regular updates for employers which are useful and highly valued. Employers are given an information pack, which is updated regularly. The pack contains key information on a range of topics including company policies and services provided. It is a useful source of reference and is appreciated by employers. Employers particularly value the information provided on recent employment legislation such as the minimum wage and working hours. The information is presented clearly and linked closely to the hairdressing industry.

30. Barber Bird has made significant efforts to improve its use of management information. However, there is still not enough use made of data for determining long-term action plans. Data is collected and analysed, and some used for decision-making and short term planning. The company recognises that there is further progress to make and has arranged for staff to undertake training in the use of information technology. Once competent in information technology skills, the company plans to extend the scope and usefulness of its management information system.

31. The company has introduced a staff appraisal system since the last inspection. Staff development needs have been identified as a result of the appraisal. Training and development is arranged to meet the needs of both the business and the individual. The appraisal and personal development procedures are sound. Staff training has only recently been taking place and it is too early to judge its success. Staff training is not evaluated, and feedback from staff on external courses is not formally sought. There is currently no procedure in place to record staff comments.

32. While the new company mission statement and strategic plan is well understood by staff, it has had little impact externally. Trainees are aware that the company's

aims are written on many of their training documents but have little understanding of their meaning. Employers have no knowledge of the company's mission statement or its values. There is no formal opportunity for employers to influence the way in which the company is managed and its strategic direction.

### Quality assurance

### Grade 3

33. Barber Bird meets the external quality standards required by its training contracts with Rotherham CTE and its awarding body. There are no other external standards of quality used by the organisation. At the time of the first inspection, Barber Bird had some quality assurance arrangements, but they were incomplete. There were no formal systems for evaluating the quality of training. Since then, all staff have been involved in the development of policies and procedures to rectify the weakness. The company produced a full self-assessment report in preparation for reinspection. The self-assessment report accurately recorded the strengths and weaknesses for this aspect.

At the first inspection, the main weaknesses were:

- ◆ no systematic review of quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ quality assurance system does not provide continuous improvement
- ◆ no systematic evaluation of data
- ◆ incomplete quality assurance cycle
- ◆ no measurable targets to evaluate performance
- ◆ poor understanding of self-assessment

34. At reinspection, inspectors found that three of the weaknesses had been remedied. Work is still continuing on the other three weaknesses. Inspectors agree with the self-assessment grade for this aspect.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ well-recorded policies and procedures
- ◆ good internal verification system
- ◆ action planning effectively implemented

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ quality assurance system not fully established
- ◆ incomplete monitoring and evaluation
- ◆ poor awareness by employers of quality developments

35. At the time of the original inspection, the company's quality assurance arrangements were new. Staff had little understanding of the quality assurance procedures. There was a quality policy manual, which was clear and well understood by staff. However, since then the policies have been re-written, and additional policies produced. For example, the health and safety and equal opportunities policies have been rewritten, and a new policy produced for dealing with substance misuse. Policies are prominently displayed in the training centre. Procedures for all key areas of training have been written. These include trainees' attendance, recruitment, initial assessment, and induction. These documents are clear, concise, well presented and followed by staff.

36. Considerable time and effort has been invested in developing quality procedures. These are new, most having been in use for only a matter of months. The company is still in the process of putting procedures into place, and has not yet begun to evaluate or review the current arrangements. A system for monitoring and evaluating the procedures has not been established.

37. At the first inspection, the internal verification system was identified as a strength. The quality and thoroughness of the system have been maintained. There is effective planning, and records are comprehensive. Sampling plans are in place for both NVQs and key skills. Feedback from assessors is detailed and well recorded. Portfolio sampling records and reports on standards are informative.

38. The first inspection highlighted that although the company produced accurate data on trainees' achievements, retention and destinations. These were not evaluated nor used for continuous improvement. The collection and recording of data is now dealt with in a more systematic way and the company has now started an evaluation process, which is beginning to contribute to continuing improvement. During the first inspection, the company did not use external standards against which to judge the company's performance. The company now has access to external benchmarking through a quality monitoring questionnaire produced by Rotherham Chamber of Commerce Training and Enterprise. Quality developments include the use of amended or newly devised paperwork. These include training session plans and individual annual training plans. In addition, tracking documents are used to map each trainee's progress towards unit accreditation.

39. Employers are not sufficiently aware of the quality developments taking place. They are updated verbally on trainees' progress. However employers have not been supplied with the newly designed forms. They are not required to contribute to the trainee's progress review record.

40. The company has produced a well-written and realistic action plan, which contains achievable targets and is closely linked to the company's strategic plan. Work has been done on priority areas and the success criteria achieved. The plan is understood by all staff and actions are regularly monitored and discussed. The self-assessment report produced in preparation for reinspection accurately reports progress made in addressing weaknesses identified at the time of the first



inspection. It accurately identifies the strengths and weakness and demonstrates the company's ability to evaluate the quality of its work realistically.