

INSPECTION REPORT

The Training Partnership

24 March 2003



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

The Training Partnership is a private organisation offering vocational training for young people in retailing, customer service, business administration, hospitality, and hairdressing. The Training Partnership has offices in Stoke-on-Trent and is contracted by Staffordshire Learning and Skills Council. There were too few learners in business administration and hospitality for these areas to be inspected.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the quality of work-based learning in retailing is satisfactory, and in hairdressing it is good. The leadership and management are satisfactory, as is the organisation's approach to equal opportunities. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

GRADES

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

Retailing, customer service & transportation	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Hairdressing & beauty therapy	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- effective use of procedures for training and assessment
- very good support for individual learners
- thorough and effective staff development

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KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates for modern apprenticeship frameworks
- insufficient use of data to monitor performance
- poor involvement of employers in planning of training
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more detailed business planning
- better collection and use of feedback from learners and employers

THE INSPECTION

1. Four inspectors spent a total of 16 days at The Training Partnership (TTP) in March 2003. They interviewed 25 learners and carried out 16 interviews with staff. Inspectors visited 13 workplaces and interviewed 11 supervisors. They also observed a range of meetings at which learners' progress and assessments were reviewed. Inspectors examined a range of written material, including portfolios of evidence, procedures and policies, and reports from awarding bodies. Inspectors studied TTP's most recent self-assessment report, which was produced in January 2003.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. TTP is a private organisation which began trading in April 1998. It provides vocational training, mainly in Staffordshire. It offers training for foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships in retailing, customer service, business administration, hospitality, and hairdressing. The hospitality and business administration programmes were not inspected because of the low numbers of learners. There are 51 work-based learners. Two partners manage TTP. One has a responsibility for marketing and the other is involved with financial aspects. TTP employs 12 members of staff. There is a general manager with overall responsibility for training, an administration manager and four administration assistants. The contract manager, who is directly responsible for work-based learning, carries out all learners' reviews, co-ordinates internal verification and is the internal verifier for retailing and business administration learning. There is a part-time internal verifier in hairdressing and another in catering. Three assessors cover the areas of learning. TTP has a contract with the Staffordshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

3. For March 2003, the unemployment rate in Staffordshire is 1.9 per cent, compared with the national average of 2.7 per cent. The 1991 census shows that 1.4 per cent of the population in Staffordshire are from minority ethnic groups, compared with a national average of 6.2 per cent. In September 2001, the proportion of school leavers in Staffordshire achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 48 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

Work-based learning for young people

4. The procedures for learning and assessment are effective and training is well managed. Learners receive good support and regular, comprehensive feedback on their progress during frequent visits by trainers. Learners are given clear information about equal opportunities and they have a good awareness of the issues. Progress reviews are well organised, but the involvement of hairdressing employers is not always recorded, and retailing employers are not sufficiently involved. TTP does not provide enough formal training in retailing for some aspects of the national vocational qualification (NVQ). The achievement rate of retailing modern apprenticeship frameworks is poor. Operating procedures and staffing have changed during the past 18 months, and retention rates have improved significantly. Since 2000, all advanced modern apprentices in hairdressing have remained in training. Since 2001, 80 per cent of foundation modern apprentices have remained in training. In retailing, retention rates are satisfactory, although some learners make slow progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

5. TTP is owned and managed by two partners. One partner focuses on financial matters, the other on marketing and personnel. There is also a general manager and an administration manager. The general manager is responsible for managing a team of assessors and internal verifiers and also has overall responsibility for quality assurance. A contract manager oversees the day-to-day operation of the LSC's contract, co-ordinates internal verification and carries out learners' progress reviews. There are three assessors who visit learners in the workplace to oversee their learning and carry out assessments, and two part-time internal verifiers. TTP uses a set of key performance indicators for quality assurance. There are policies and procedures for equal opportunities. TTP has been carrying out self-assessment since 1999. The organisation produced its most recent self-assessment report in January 2003.

STRENGTHS

- open and responsive management
- thorough and effective staff development
- clear, comprehensive equality of opportunity policies
- effective additional support for learners' diverse needs
- good awareness of equality of opportunity by learners
- good use of key performance indicators to improve quality of provision

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient use of data to monitor providers' performance
- poor involvement of employers in planning of training
- insufficient monitoring of employers' equality of opportunity provision
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- poor self-assessment

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more detailed business planning
- better analysis of data and information collected for equality of opportunity
- further promotion of training to learners from diverse backgrounds
- better collection and use of feedback from learners and employers

6. TTP's management style is open and responsive. There are monthly staff meetings which all staff attend. The standard agenda includes staff development, equal opportunities, health and safety and internal verification, as well as updates from the Staffordshire LSC and managers. Staff openly discuss any difficulties they are having and

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ask for advice or clarification. Managers are responsive to staff suggestions or criticisms. Decisions are taken following a vote. Clear minutes are produced, with any actions identified, and these are reviewed at the start of the next meeting. There are also board meetings and monthly management meetings. Internal communication is particularly good. Good practice is effectively shared between staff. For example, internal verifiers meet regularly to discuss assessment practice and to ensure that all staff are aware of awarding body requirements. Meeting schedules are planned carefully to ensure that staff can attend all the meetings appropriate to their roles. There are particularly good working relationships between members of staff and they are well aware of their responsibilities. Most of the current staff team have worked for the organisation since it was founded and staff turnover is extremely low.

7. Staff development is thorough and effective. It is monitored effectively throughout the year, using a set of key performance indicators so that any development needs are identified early. The results of this monitoring are reviewed and discussed during staff appraisal. The appraisal results in an updated personal training plan, and these are collated to form the organisation's overall training plan. Staff are actively encouraged to gain further qualifications, such as teaching certificates. TTP keeps detailed records of all professional updating activities carried out by staff, and success is celebrated at the monthly staff meetings. All new staff have an initial review after six months of employment, followed by annual appraisal. The appraisal system is well designed and includes self-assessment as preparation for the review. The appraisal process results in clear and agreed objectives, target-setting and the identification of any training needs.

8. TTP uses a comprehensive and well-planned induction programme for new members of staff or for those changing roles within the organisation. The induction takes place over four weeks and includes workshops on time management, NVQs, and the use of a distance-learning package. All new staff complete the 12-week distance-learning customer service package as part of their induction. Questionnaires are used at inductions to evaluate new staffs' prior experience and their progress through induction. Mentors are used effectively to support them as they develop their work skills. All mentors are chosen carefully from the more experienced staff and mentors receive guidance on their role. New assessors are observed by an internal verifier and their progress is monitored closely. Assessors are given clear and constructive weekly feedback with action plans to follow. New assessors greatly value the amount of support and advice available to them and are positive about the effectiveness of the induction in helping them to settle into their roles.

9. TTP has a satisfactory strategy to support learners with literacy and numeracy needs. A key skills diagnostic initial assessment is used to identify needs, and learners are given workbooks to help them to develop their key skills. TTP encourages assessors to achieve the key skills practitioner award.

10. The available data is not used sufficiently to monitor TTP's performance. Although TTP does monitor its performance against its contract with the local LSC, it does not use data to monitor or compare the performance of different areas of learning or

programmes. No targets are set for improvement and there is no identification of trends over time. Data are not used to evaluate the effects of any improvements made. For example, the provider believes that the introduction of the distance-learning package has produced greatly improved retention rates. However, it has not analysed whether this is because of learners being better prepared to start their training, or whether this taster course means that some learners decide not to start the NVQ.

11. Employers' involvement in the planning of training is poor. Although they are required to sign a contract with TTP, this only briefly refers to the provision of training by employers. TTP provides very little off-the-job training, so there is a reliance on the employers to provide sufficient and appropriate training to enable learners to achieve their qualifications. TTP has an employer's guide that clearly describes the roles and responsibilities of employers, but this is not always made available to learners' supervisors. These roles and responsibilities are not adequately enforced in the contract and TTP does not monitor the on-the-job training. Employers are also insufficiently involved in learners' progress reviews, and supervisors are often unaware of the training a learner might need to achieve the NVQ. For example, there is no formal background knowledge training for most retailing learners who are working towards an NVQ at level 3. Insufficient feedback is collected from employers. A questionnaire has been produced to check employers' understanding of the employer's guide, but the response has been very poor, with few questionnaires returned, and there has been no overall analysis of the results.

12. TTP produces a business plan each year which contains both short- and long-term objectives for the organisation. The plan does not include a review of the previous year's plan. The business plan lacks detail and does not include an analysis of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses. TTP has not used self-assessment effectively to develop its business plan. The operational plan that accompanies the business plan is also insufficiently detailed.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

13. TTP has comprehensive and clear policies and procedures for ensuring equality of opportunity, including procedures for dealing with harassment, grievances and appeals. Statements in the policy are extensive and cover broader issues within equality of opportunity, such as sexual orientation and age equality. Staff responsibilities for equality of opportunity are clearly identified in the staff handbook.

14. Assessors are appraised monthly against key performance indicators, including how well they provide additional learner support and promote equality of opportunity. They are also required to complete a form each month on equality of opportunity. The form asks for information about new starters, those leaving, and achievement rates in four categories: men, women, learners with disabilities and learners from minority ethnic communities. It also asks assessors to record how they have promoted learning opportunities to disaffected people, what they have done to help others understand minority groups and what efforts they have made to retain learners and provide additional support. Some analysis has been conducted of assessors' reports, but trends have not been analysed over time and no action plan has been drawn up.

15. One member of staff was designated as mentor for the promotion, co-ordination and monitoring of equality of opportunity. She belongs to a regional working group for equal opportunities and attends regional meetings and other training events. Information about equal opportunities is effectively shared with staff through staff meetings and memos.

16. Assessors provide effective support for learners who have additional learning needs. Learners who require it are given extra time during the weekly assessor's visits, for help and support with literacy needs, or if they find aspects of the assessment difficult to understand. For example, one learner is diabetic and needs frequent breaks. This learner is given extra time during visits. In another example, an assessor arranged an appointment and escorted one retailing learner to take a test for dyslexia. Assessors often intercede with learners' line managers and resolve conflicts before they become major issues.

17. Equality of opportunity is covered comprehensively during induction. Learners sign to say that they have read and understood the Learner Charter. The Learner Charter is particularly well written and outlines the learners' rights and responsibilities. Learners also receive a comprehensive guide at induction. They complete a questionnaire which includes information about prejudice and tests their understanding of important aspects of equality of opportunity. All the learners interviewed by inspectors had a good understanding of equality of opportunity issues and how these relate to their work. Equality of opportunity is satisfactorily monitored with learners during progress reviews conducted on employers' premises.

18. Employers are required to sign a contract which mentions equality of opportunity. A well-designed questionnaire has recently been sent to employers to raise issues of equality of opportunity, but none has been returned. Some employers' equality of

opportunity policies are held on file, but many are missing.

19. The recruitment of learners is by word of mouth and trainers' contacts. There are currently no learners from minority ethnic communities. Posters used to promote training have an image of a person from a minority ethnic community, but have no statement to confirm a commitment to equality of opportunity. The equality of opportunity mentor has raised the issue of promoting training to members of the local minority ethnic communities and has had discussions with a local radio station. TTP has no premises for off-the-job training. When training is arranged, suitable premises are hired.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

20. The general manager has overall responsibility for quality assurance. There is a strong commitment to improving the quality of provision and TTP has devised and uses a set of key performance indicators effectively to do this. The performance indicators consist of criteria with grades, on a scale from 1 to 5. Specific indicators are used to measure the quality of the work of assessors. They include observations of assessments and reviews of portfolios, internal verification and assessment plans. Other indicators are used to measure the quality of staff's teamwork, communication skills, organisation and planning, administration and supervisory and leadership skills, as well as the achievement of personal development objectives set during their appraisals. Staff value the performance indicators and are motivated to improve their grades. They have a good understanding of what they must do to improve their performance.

21. Internal verifiers visit the assessors monthly to complete the comprehensive performance reviews. Any assessor given a grade 4 or 5 is immediately given extra support and training. Internal verifiers give excellent support to the assessors. The results of these monthly visits are collated and used effectively during staff appraisals.

22. Internal verification is thorough and carried out to awarding body requirements. Extensive use is made of the indicators to check the quality of assessment and verification. There is an ongoing process of verification and a final internal verification exercise. Sampling is carried out across a range of units and includes all types of evidence, as well as observation of assessments. The internal verification co-ordinator attends the regional internal verifier meetings to ensure consistency and to share good practice. Current internal verifiers have appropriate occupational competence. Internal verification includes detailed and constructive feedback to the assessors and learners.

23. Although the key performance indicators are used effectively for many areas of TTP's work, the arrangements for quality assurance are incomplete. There is no overall quality assurance policy or quality assurance strategy. There are no policies or procedures for the recruitment of learners, induction, initial assessment, literacy or numeracy support, the production and use of individual learning plans, progress reviews, training, or self-assessment. There is no system to ensure that quality assurance arrangements are reviewed and evaluated, and no system for internal audit. There is insufficient monitoring or reviewing of the on-the-job training. There is an over-reliance on employers providing good-quality training. There are no systems or procedures in place to monitor, measure and evaluate any changes to the programmes.

24. The latest self-assessment exercise carried out by TTP was poor. The self-assessment report does not clearly identify the organisation's strengths and weaknesses. It consists mainly of narrative and is insufficiently evaluative or self-critical. The self-assessment report failed to identify many of the key weaknesses found at inspection. It does not focus sufficiently on the experiences and achievements of the learners. There is insufficient evidence in the report to support the proposed grades. There is no development or action plan to maintain the strengths and rectify the weaknesses. The

results of self-assessment have not been used effectively by TTP to set objectives in its business plan.

25. TTP has collected some feedback from learners and employers. Where individual problems are identified, TTP acts quickly and effectively to resolve them. However, the questionnaires used to collect feedback are not well designed and the results are difficult to analyse. The questionnaires have not been used frequently enough to produce useful data, or to help TTP make improvements to the training programmes.

Good Practice

One learner who thought she may have dyslexia has been well supported by TTP. Arrangements were made for a formal dyslexia assessment and the trainer escorted her to the venue. The trainer has sought information and guidance from the organisation offering the assessment, and amendments have been made to learning materials.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	24	3

26. There are 24 learners on work-based learning programmes in retailing, customer service and transportation. Of these, 17 are foundation modern apprentices and seven are advanced modern apprentices. Learners are recruited by assessors who identify young people already employed in the industry. All the learners on modern apprenticeship programmes are employed in a variety of retailing companies, spread over a large geographical area. Induction takes place in the workplace. Learners receive regular visits in the workplace for progress reviews, training and assessment. All assessors and internal verifiers have appropriate qualifications and occupational experience, and some have recognised teaching qualifications.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	8		4		19		8								
Retained*	0		2	50	4	21	2	25								
Successfully completed	0		0	0	1	5	0	0								
Still in learning	3		2	50	2	11	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	4		11		5		5		1						
Retained*	0		10	91	1	20	0	0	0	0						
Successfully completed	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Still in learning	4		10	91	3	60	0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- very good support for individual learners
- well-documented procedures effectively used for training
- good use of assessment to monitor progress

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates for modern apprenticeship frameworks
- insufficient formal training for aspects of the NVQ
- some slow progress of learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more involvement of employers in progress reviews
- more use of distance-learning materials

27. TTP gives very effective individual support to learners. This was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. TTP's staff are dedicated to helping learners succeed, and give good individual support and guidance. They respond quickly and effectively to learners' needs, provide appropriate motivation and take an active interest in learners' personal development. Frequent and effective visits to the workplace give learners the opportunity to be assessed and to identify valid and relevant evidence. During the visits, learners receive clear advice and guidance from their assessor. TTP has established strong relationships with employers. Employers are in favour of their staff taking qualifications and they recognise the benefits to their organisation. Employers are involved in the progress review process, but they do not always attend progress meetings between learners and TTP's staff. Learners are given the opportunity to move between departments if necessary to gather appropriate evidence and there are good prospects for career advancement. Some supervisors have either begun, or are in the process of beginning, NVQs in retailing and are able to provide additional advice and guidance. Assessors are provided with laptop computers to provide key skill training sessions in the workplace. Learners are encouraged to find project assignments that relate to their work and they are given individual guidance to help them understand the key skills required of them.

28. TTP's initial assessment asks learners to evaluate their current competence against each requirement of the retailing and customer service qualifications. Literacy and numeracy skills are also assessed at this stage, as well as key skills. At the time of inspection, TTP did not have any learners in this occupational area requiring additional support for numeracy, literacy or English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). It has

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an arrangement with the local college to provide such support, if required. Induction to programmes is spread over a period of time, which gives learners a good opportunity to absorb the information provided.

29. TTP has developed a range of well-documented procedures that are used effectively to help learners with their studies. Reports of visits to learners are comprehensive and detail the actions required of them. These include clear target dates for completion of programme requirements. Separate reports are also provided for employers. In addition, individual action plans for NVQs and key skills are drawn up to give learners clear guidance on the requirements for the qualification. Internal verification is thorough. Feedback to assessors on their assessment practice is constructive, using well-designed internal verification documents. Progress reviews are also clearly documented and are distributed to all parties involved.

30. Assessment is good, and effective for monitoring learners' progress. Comprehensive observation reports are compiled, detailing the activities that correspond to the various qualification requirements. All the evidence provided by learners is clearly cross referenced with the identified qualification criteria. This enables the learner to develop a clear understanding of how their work activities directly relate to the required industry standards. Clear feedback about learners' progress is provided through visit forms that include detailed plans for further assessment. Portfolios are clearly structured and contain a wide range of evidence, including work-based documents, observations, personal statements, projects, questioning and records of professional discussion and witness testimonies.

31. Achievement rates on the modern apprenticeship programmes are poor. Since 1998, only one advanced modern apprentice has completed the full framework. Since 1998, no foundation modern apprentice has yet completed their framework, although 17 learners are still in training. In the past, learners only began key skills work after completing their NVQ. However, there is now clear evidence that key skills are being taught at the same time as the NVQ and external testing of learners' key skills has been carried out. Learners have been achieving NVQs and several are close to completing their full modern apprenticeship framework requirements. Retention rates in this occupational area are satisfactory and some learners continue to be trained by TTP, despite reaching the end of their period of funding.

32. Insufficient formal training is provided for some aspects of NVQs. Some learners taking NVQs at level 2 complete a distance-learning pack developed by TTP before starting their modern apprenticeship. This provides evidence of knowledge that can later be accredited to the NVQ. These packs, however, only provide information about the mandatory requirements of the qualification and there is no mention of optional requirements. Learners taking NVQs at level 3 have no such resource and they rely on answering questions based on their own knowledge, or that available in the workplace.

33. Some learners make slow progress. Several learners taking NVQs at level 3 have only completed one or two units of their NVQ after being on programme for over two

years.

Good Practice

One learner taking an NVQ at level 3 in retailing has been asked by the employer to transfer temporarily to other workplace locations. Some of these locations are a considerable distance from the learner's home. Staff from TTP have continued to visit the learner frequently to provide support and guidance.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	14	2

34. Fourteen learners are working on modern apprenticeships. The trainer recruits new learners to modern apprenticeships from existing salons and through recommendations. There are five foundation and nine advanced modern apprentices. All the learners are employed by three employers in eight salons. All training and assessment for the NVQs at level 2 and 3 and key skills is carried out on the job by visits from TTP's trainer who is also an assessor. TTP's manager, who has overall responsibility for the LSC contact, carries out progress reviews every 12 weeks in the salons. As a result of a reorganisation, there was a change in operating procedures and staff 18 months ago.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																	
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	2		3		4		5		4							
Retained*	0		0		0		1	20	3	75							
Successfully completed	0		0		0		0	0	0	0							
Still in learning	2		3		4		0	0	0	0							

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																	
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts			5		2											
Retained*			0	0	1												
Successfully completed			0	0	0												
Still in learning			4	80	1												

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- very good standards of practical skills
- well-managed training
- effective feedback to learners
- good retention rates

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient recognition of prior learning

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more recording of employers' comments in progress reviews
- clearer identification in action plans of all skills to be assessed

35. All learners are employed in professional and well-equipped salons. They use up-to-date equipment and internationally recognised hairdressing products. Learners are able to gain experience with basic haircuts to more creative styles. Learners employed by one of the larger salons extend their skills to develop a broader knowledge of trichology. Learners use specialist electrical equipment to perform treatments on clients with hair and scalp problems. All learners demonstrate good practical hairdressing skills in the salon. They confidently use colouring techniques such as mesh, weaving, spatula and foils to a good professional standard. Learners demonstrate a commitment and interest in achieving wide-ranging skills by choosing to do additional optional units. They enter national competitions and these activities are used as evidence for the NVQ and key skills units. The trainer has devised some innovative and realistic key skills projects. For example, for teaching the application of number, learners were asked to collect data about the amount of colour treatments bought by clients in the salons. Data collected about what is sold, and staff product knowledge were used to improve the retailing skills of staff and to promote the least-popular products and treatments.

36. At the beginning of their employment, all learners receive an effective induction to the programme that lasts for up to 12 weeks. During this time, all learners undergo an initial assessment of their vocational skills, as well as an assessment to identify basic and key skills needs. At the time of inspection, no learners had been identified as needing basic skills support. If learners need help with key skills, useful workbooks are provided. All learners are given a good introduction to equal opportunities. They receive a well-written charter, as well as other written information on the broader aspects of equal opportunities. Health and safety training is good and work completed in this area by the learners is used as evidence for the NVQ. During induction, all learners complete a

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distance-learning course in customer service. This work is later accredited for the NVQ. Decisions about the most suitable level of modern apprenticeship programme for learners are made at the end of the induction period. However, accreditation of prior learning is not used sufficiently, to enable learners to qualify in the shortest possible time. Some learners have worked as Saturday staff for up to two years before entering full-time employment and training yet, the starting point for these learners is the same as a learner without such experience and skills. One learner joined the modern apprenticeship programmes after one and half years in college as a full-time student. TTP did not recognise this learner's skill level.

37. Training is well managed. The trainer/assessor makes frequent visits to learners in the workplace. Good use is made of a flexible appointment system to meet individual learner's needs. For example, assessment visits take place on Saturdays and in the evenings if learners request it. The contract manager conducts all progress reviews every 12 weeks. Good use is made of thorough discussions, and progress made is recorded. Learners use this information as evidence towards the NVQ unit 'developing and maintaining effective teamwork and relationships'. The contract manager also uses information from the learners' reviews to raise any issues with the trainer. The trainer meets employers or supervisors during weekly visits, having effective discussions about learners' training needs. Employers are also involved in discussions in the progress reviews. However, some reviews do not contain any evidence of discussions, and some review forms are not signed by employers.

38. Comprehensive written feedback is given to learners after each weekly visit by the trainer. Previous targets are reviewed and information about the learners' progress is recorded. The progress review record also acts as an action plan with clear targets for work to be completed before the next visit. However, action plans do not always record some of the wider-ranging elements of the NVQ and these are not as clear to learners. Learners also complete an evidence chart which helps them to monitor their own progress effectively. A comprehensive observation report is completed when assessments are carried out. Each assessment is carefully cross-referenced to the NVQ and key skills requirements. A clear outline is given to the learners about units and elements they have achieved. The assessor gives detailed verbal feedback immediately after assessment has taken place. An appropriately qualified part-time member of staff carries out internal verification. Internal verification is thorough and follows awarding body requirements. Helpful feedback is given to the assessor following internal verification.

39. Retention rates have improved significantly and are now good. In 1999, only 20 per cent of learners remained in training and there were poor achievement rates among modern apprentices. Since 2000, all learners working towards advanced modern apprenticeships have remained in training. Since 2001, 80 per cent of foundation modern apprentices have remained in training. Of the 13 learners who either stayed to the end of the training period or who are still in training, 11 have achieved the NVQ. Of these learners, one also achieved an NVQ in customer service and another learner achieved an NVQ in hairdressing at level 3. All the NVQ achievements have occurred

since TTP's reorganisation 18 months ago.

Good Practice

Learners in one salon are using their skills in colouring and styling to raise money for a local charity. Working alongside pupils from a local school, they are providing a catwalk exhibition of hairstyles to a fee-paying audience.