

INSPECTION REPORT

Nottingham Hairdressing Training Agency Reinspection

30 June 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. 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
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.

SUMMARY

The provider

Nottingham Hairdressing Training Agency is a limited company based in Nottingham. It provides work-based learning programmes mainly for young people. Learners follow modern apprenticeship programmes and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in hairdressing. This training is funded by Nottinghamshire Learning and Skills Council.

The company is run by a director of finance and administration and a director of training and development. There are 10 full-time and five part-time staff. Training and assessment are carried out at the main premises, its commercial salon, a further training centre and at workplaces throughout Nottingham.

Overall judgement

The ALI's inspection in January 2002 found that the organisation's leadership and management and its arrangements for quality assurance and equality of opportunity were satisfactory. However, training for learners in hairdressing was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

Grades awarded

	Original	Reinspection
Leadership and management	3	2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity	3	3
Quality assurance	3	2

	Original	Reinspection
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	4	2
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	2

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During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following key strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

KEY STRENGTHS

- good management of operational and strategic change
- well-developed strategies to meet learners' diverse needs
- good on- and off-the-job training

KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better observation to include on-the-job training
- more work-based assessment
- more staff involvement in equal opportunities training

THE REINSPECTION

1. Reinspection started in January 2003 and a total of 13 inspection days was used. The final inspection visit was on 2 and 3 July 2003. Nottingham Hairdressing Training Agency (NHTA) had prepared a revised self-assessment report for the inspectors to examine.

Grades awarded to learning sessions at the original inspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	2	4	1	0	0	0	7
Total	0	2	4	1	0	0	0	7

Grades awarded to learning sessions at reinspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
Total	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	4

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good management of operational and strategic change
- well-developed strategies to meet learners' diverse needs
- good use of self-assessment process for continuous improvement
- effective strategy to improve awareness of equal opportunities for learners

WEAKNESSES

- unsystematic audit of quality assurance arrangements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more monitoring of operational targets
- better observation to include on-the-job training
- more staff involvement in equal opportunities training

2. Since the original inspection, NHTA has implemented a range of operational and strategic initiatives to deal with the findings of the original inspection. It has adopted a more focused learner-centred approach to the delivery of training, and implemented a range of measures to involve the learner and employer in target-setting during the progress review. It has introduced comprehensive guidance for its employers, which contains sections on modern apprenticeship frameworks, employer agreements, the purpose of individual learning plans, health and safety, and comprehensive cover of equality of opportunity. This is now used during the regular 12-weekly review process and is covered by new, comprehensive quality assurance procedures. Since the original inspection, NHTA have introduced a new management information system which allows managers to monitor performance against targets. Strategic decisions have impacted positively on hairdressing learners. One example of this is the improved retention rates.

3. Learners' individual needs are well supported during on- and off-the-job training. This strength was recognised in the original inspection. NHTA has been particularly proactive in developing its basic skills and key skills strategy. Since the original inspection, NHTA has employed two specialist staff to refine and review the support offered. Learners' needs are skillfully identified. The results of initial assessment for literacy and numeracy needs are used to make decisions on the choice of programme and for support strategies. Much work has been done to increase the take-up of support and its effectiveness is monitored. There has been much development of staff who support learners. There are good working relationships with external specialist support

agencies, in particular with one local dyslexia support association.

4. Key targets are identified and understood by managers. The new management information system enables them to effectively monitor progress towards these targets. However, insufficient work has been carried out to establish this at operational level and to link targets to the staff appraisal and development system.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

5. NHTA has developed a new statement for equality of opportunity which is targeted at current and potential employers and is included in the new employer manuals. There is innovative use of methods to expose learners to issues around equality of opportunity. All learners have the opportunity to work with a range of people who have profound needs, disabilities and difficulties, whom they might not otherwise meet in the workplace. This is done through a work-experience project which provides hairdressing services in conjunction with a partner organisation that offers holidays for physically disabled people. Learners confirm that they value this realistic experience, which reinforces their understanding of equal opportunities.

6. Insufficient work has been carried out to further develop the staff's understanding of equal opportunities issues and legislation. This was identified as an improvement needed at the original inspection. Some targeted staff development has taken place since the original inspection, to keep up to date with equality of opportunity legislation. However, some staff were not included.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 2

7. NHTA has worked closely with its local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to establish a self-assessment culture in the organisation. A thorough new self-assessment report was prepared for reinspection in March 2003 which includes assessment against improvements identified in the original inspection. For example, the new report contains a new employer response survey and also feedback from staff and learners. All were identified as weaknesses in the original inspection report.

8. The effective use of information systems was recognised as a strength in the previous inspection report. NHTA has recently acquired a more comprehensive management information system which is used effectively to support strategic and operational decisions and to set quantifiable targets. All staff can now compare their performance against business plan objectives.

9. There are comprehensive policies and procedures in place to cover the key training processes. The internal verification process is good. However, there is currently no systematic auditing of all quality assurance procedures in the organisation.

10. The staff appraisal and development system is good. This was recognised as a strength in the original inspection report. The quality assurance system has been extended to include observation and development of off-the-job training. However, it does not include the workplace to ensure that all learners have good, standardised training at work.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	146	2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- improving retention rates
- good on- and off-the-job training
- effective support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates
- late introduction of key skills

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more work-based assessment

11. At the original inspection in January 2002, the retention rates were identified as a weakness. Since then, retention rates for foundation modern apprentices have shown a marked improvement. Of those who started in 2002-03, 77 per cent have remained in learning. Retention rates for advanced modern apprentices have also shown a significant improvement from 33 per cent in 2000-01 to 56 per cent for the 2002-03 intake.

12. Learners have good on-the-job training and continue to work in good, well-resourced salons. The salons offer a wide range of technical skills opportunities. Most learners have supervised training sessions in their salons and have the opportunity to attend additional manufacturer workshops. NHTA has continued to provide good off-the-job training, which was identified at the original inspection. Learners progress well and enjoy their off-the-job training days at the centre. Additional training is available and learners who have nearly achieved the NVQ are encouraged to attend more frequently. The training salons are well resourced and meet the learners' needs. Trainers are well qualified and all the observed teaching is good or better. NHTA has a good range of clients and is proactive in advertising the salon services to add to the current client base.

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13. Learners are effectively supported from induction and throughout their training programme. There are effective diagnostic tools and screening tests to establish the learners' individual needs. There is particularly good specialist support for learners who have additional learning needs. Learners' progress continues to be effectively monitored and this process enables learners to plan their assessments. However, information on NVQ and key skills progress is not shared with employers. NHTA has further developed the review process, which now incorporates more specific target-setting with detailed actions for the employer and learner. The learner and the employer are now given a copy of the new review forms.

14. There have been some significant developments with key skills teaching. However, at the time of reinspection, key skills are still not started until the second year of the programme. Some employers are unsure how key skills relate to the workplace and do not understand how they relate to the learners' progress. Some learners are unsure of the level of key skills they are on and of their precise progress.

15. Completion rates for the modern apprenticeship framework remains poor at 33 per cent. However, portfolio evidence indicates that many learners are on target to complete the framework within the expected timescale. Of the 106 foundation modern apprentices who were in learning at the time of the original inspection, 30 have subsequently completed the full modern apprenticeships and 40 are on target to complete. Of the 39 advanced modern apprentices in learning at the time of the original inspection, 18 per cent have completed the full framework and 23 per cent left with an NVQ at level 2.

16. The original inspection identified insufficient assessment in the workplace. NHTA is now working to develop an infrastructure of more work-based assessors. At the time of the reinspection, NHTA had significantly increased the number of work-based assessments, although there is still insufficient work-based assessment for learners who spend most their time in the workplace.