

INSPECTION REPORT

**J & E Training Consultants
Limited**

08 July 2004



**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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

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

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

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.

INSPECTION REPORT

J & E Training Consultants Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. J & E Training Consultants Limited (JET) was established in 1998. It is a private limited company based in Basildon, Essex. JET provides work-based learning for young people in hairdressing. It originally provided training as a subcontractor to another provider, but since August 2003 it has held a contract with Essex Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships. Most learners are employed and work in hairdressing salons throughout Essex. Off-the-job training is provided by JET, mostly at employers' premises.
2. JET employs four full-time and five part-time staff. It has a senior management team made up of a managing director, senior training co-ordinator and business development manager. The managing director is responsible for strategic management and quality assurance. The senior training co-ordinator is responsible for the management of training and equality of opportunity and the business development manager is responsible for administration and the numeracy and literacy programme. JET has policies and procedures for equality of opportunity, quality assurance, and health and safety. The company produces a yearly business plan. It produced its first self-assessment report in March 2003. Its most recent self-assessment report and development plan was produced in March 2004.
3. In May 2004, the unemployment rate in Essex was 1.7 per cent, compared with 2.3 per cent nationally. The proportion of the local population from minority ethnic groups is 2.9 per cent, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

4. JET has 85 learners. Fifty-seven are foundation modern apprentices and 28 are advanced modern apprentices. Most learners are recruited by referrals from salons or Connexions or through personal recommendations. JET provides an induction and initial assessment for all learners and identifies any needs for additional learning support. Eighty-three of the 85 learners are employed and most vocational and key skills training takes place at work. Learners attend JET occasionally for practical training and training in background knowledge. Between them, the 34 salons with JET learners employ 15 qualified assessors. JET's training co-ordinators visit learners fortnightly to carry out training, assessment and progress reviews.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	16
Number of learner interviews	32
Number of staff interviews	13
Number of employer interviews	10
Number of visits	10

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality assurance are satisfactory and training in hairdressing and beauty therapy is good.

GRADES

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

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

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hairdressing</i> - Work-based learning for young people	85	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. **Learners are making good progress through the units of their qualifications.** Some learners have completed all the units of their qualifications before their expected completion date. Learners are awarded certificates for completing each unit, which they find motivating and rewarding. Learners are making good progress towards their technical certificate and key skills qualifications. Their practical skills are satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	2	5	1	0	0	0	8
Total	0	2	5	1	0	0	0	8

7. **Training in background knowledge is well planned and effective.** Training co-ordinators make effective use of resources, including information and communications technology (ICT) and various visual aids. Learners are taught individually or in small groups. This enables training co-ordinators to take into account their individual needs. Background knowledge is effectively linked to learners' experiences at work.

8. **Learners receive very effective support.** Training co-ordinators visit the salons frequently to provide training and assessment and to review learners' progress. Learners' inductions are particularly effective. Training co-ordinators support learners who need help with literacy or numeracy. These learners are also offered individual support at JET from the business development manager, who has a qualification in teaching literacy and numeracy. Learners receive good support in dealing with personal difficulties.

9. **Employers value the training programmes and provide effective support for learners.** Learners work in modern, well-equipped salons and benefit from working with a wide range of clients and hairdressing products. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are suitably qualified and update their knowledge and skills regularly. Learners use well-presented learning materials and a range of useful booklets on key skills.

10. **Learners are offered a satisfactory range of extra activities.** JET holds a yearly hairdressing competition, which is well attended by learners. Learners are helped to prepare for the competition and can practise for it in JET's workshop. Learners have opportunities to develop skills in hair extension and Indian head massage.

11. **Learners do not receive enough written feedback.** They often receive constructive verbal feedback during practical training, but they do not receive enough written feedback on their completed work. Learners cannot refer to the feedback provided to reflect on their learning and develop their skills. Some written feedback on learners' assignments lacks the constructive criticism required for improvement.

12. **Action-planning in progress reviews is weak.** Many short-term targets set during progress reviews are vague and are not directly linked to learners' current training. Some targets relating to the completion of units of learners' qualifications are insufficiently detailed. Employers are not always involved in progress reviews and are sometimes unaware of targets that have been set.

Leadership and management

13. **Strategic management is clear and effective.** JET has the clear goal of providing effective training in the workplace to meet individual learners' needs. The senior management team monitors the training effectively against targets that are linked to the organisation's goals as a business. Staff have a good understanding of JET's aims and are clear about their roles.

14. **Internal and external communications are good.** Staff have regular opportunities to share ideas and good practice. Internal communication focuses on improving learners' training and improving rates of progression and achievement. Links with employers are managed well by the training co-ordinators. Co-ordinators visit salons once every two weeks and work closely with employers to train and support learners.

15. **Management information systems are satisfactory.** They are used by the business development manager to monitor recruitment, progression and achievement. The senior management team makes effective use of reports on performance to make decisions and set targets. The management of resources is satisfactory. Learners work with a wide range of clients in modern, well-equipped salons and use a wide range of hairdressing products. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced and receive an effective induction. JET makes effective arrangements for staff development. It uses its resources effectively to promote learning.

16. **JET has no written strategy to help learners with literacy and numeracy.** It sets various tests for new learners to identify their needs. These include literacy and numeracy tests. However, the company has no written strategy for providing and evaluating suitable individual support. It has not done any detailed evaluation of the support that is provided. New learners and staff discuss equality of opportunity during their inductions. Staff are aware of current legislation, particularly the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Equality of opportunity is reinforced during learners' progress reviews. The company has done some analysis of data on participation in training by various groups of learners. However, it has not analysed the progress made by different groups of learners such as men and women.

17. **Learners have opportunities to be assessed by a range of methods that suit their particular needs.** They have extra opportunities for assessment in JET's workshop. Training co-ordinators reinforce learners' understanding of the appeals and grievance procedures well.

18. **JET does not adequately monitor employers' approaches to equality of opportunity.** It does not have written agreements with employers setting out how they should promote and monitor equality of opportunity at work. Nor does it have a system for monitoring employers' application of equal opportunities policies and procedures. JET has made several attempts to attract learners from groups that are under-represented in hairdressing. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is slightly higher than for the population of Essex as a whole. JET's premises and the salons provide satisfactory access for learners with mobility difficulties.

19. **JET uses learners' feedback well.** Learners evaluate the effectiveness of every training event and their responses are used to identify any weaknesses. All learners complete a questionnaire after three months to evaluate their initial assessment and induction. JET also carries out yearly surveys of all learners and employers. It has used learners' feedback to make various improvements to training.

20. **Self-assessment is satisfactory.** JET takes into account the views of learners and employers and uses data on progression and achievement to evaluate its provision. Staff have been trained in self-assessment and were encouraged to contribute to the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report, although they identified some strengths and weaknesses that were not reported. The development plan is detailed and is reviewed regularly.

21. **JET does not make enough use of data to achieve continuous improvement.** Although it gathers extensive feedback from learners, it does not analyse all this information to assess the effectiveness of its provision overall. Nor does it use the information to set targets or compare current data with previous data to assess improvements. The company monitors data on recruitment, retention and achievement but uses few other measures of performance. It does not assess the effectiveness of actions included in the development plan.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear and effective strategic management
- good internal and external communications
- good use of feedback from learners

Weaknesses

- no written strategy to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills
- insufficient monitoring of employers' approaches to equality of opportunity
- insufficient analysis and use of data for continuous improvement

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good progress by learners
- well-planned and effective training in background knowledge
- very effective support for learners
- well-managed links with employers

Weaknesses

- insufficient written feedback to learners
- weak action-planning in progress reviews

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT J & E TRAINING CONSULTANTS LIMITED:

- the well-organised training programmes
- 'learning at our own pace'
- the supportive, friendly and enthusiastic staff
- the use of ICT to teach background knowledge
- the extra workshops at JET's premises
- the practical training

WHAT LEARNERS THINK J & E TRAINING CONSULTANTS LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the notice period for extra workshops - to avoid clashes with bookings by clients
- the images in the learners' handbook

KEY CHALLENGES FOR J & E TRAINING CONSULTANTS LIMITED:

- introduce a written strategy to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills
- improve the monitoring of employers' approaches to equality of opportunity
- make better use of data for continuous improvement
- provide detailed written feedback to learners
- improve action-planning in progress reviews

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- clear and effective strategic management
- good internal and external communications
- good use of feedback from learners

Weaknesses

- no written strategy to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills
- insufficient monitoring of employers' approaches to equality of opportunity
- insufficient analysis and use of data for continuous improvement

22. Strategic management is clear and effective. JET has the clear goal of providing effective training in the workplace to meet individual learners' needs. The senior management team monitors the training effectively against targets that are linked to the organisation's goals as a business. Staff have a good understanding of JET's aims and are clear about their roles. Staff are encouraged to be creative and to contribute to the company's development. Since being awarded the contract to provide modern apprenticeships in August 2003, JET has experienced great change. Further change is planned, as the company will be part of a consortium providing training in the region from August 2004. The various changes have been handled well and have not affected training in hairdressing, which has remained good.

23. Internal and external communications are good. Staff work well as a team and have regular opportunities to share ideas and good practice. The senior management team meets once each month. JET also holds monthly meetings of all staff. Assessors meet frequently. Work-based assessors are invited to meetings to share information and to ensure that all assessments are done in the same way. Day-to-day communications among staff are effective. Internal communications focus on improving learners' training and improving rates of progression and achievement. Links with employers are managed well. Training co-ordinators visit salons once every two weeks and work closely with employers to train and support learners. They have attended meetings with staff at the salons to provide information and share good practice. JET has provided free training towards qualifications for staff at the salons who are not eligible for LSC funding. JET has good links with hairdressing experts. These are invited to demonstrate their skills to learners, motivating them and acting as role models.

24. Management information systems are satisfactory. They are used by the business development manager to monitor recruitment, progression and achievement. The senior management team makes effective use of information on performance to make decisions and set targets. However, it does not make enough use of data to assure quality.

25. The management of resources is satisfactory. Learners work with a wide range of clients in modern, well-equipped salons and use a wide range of hairdressing products. JET's workshop is adequate for training and assessing individuals or small groups. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced and receive an effective induction. JET carries out effective appraisals and provides good opportunities for staff development. It uses its financial resources effectively to promote learning.

26. JET has no written strategy to help learners with literacy and numeracy. It sets various tests for new learners to identify their needs. These include literacy and numeracy tests. Approximately 15 per cent of learners have identified literacy or numeracy needs. However, the company has no written strategy for providing and evaluating suitable individual support. Nor does it have a strategy for developing literacy and numeracy skills that are already satisfactory. Training co-ordinators provide individual support in the workplace. However, they are not qualified to teach literacy and numeracy and are unfamiliar with the core curriculum. Learners with literacy and numeracy difficulties are offered monthly individual coaching with the business development manager, who has a qualification in teaching literacy and numeracy. However, some learners do not take up this support. They do not have detailed plans to show how support will be provided. JET has not done a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of the coaching.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

27. JET has equal opportunities policies and procedures relating to staff and learners. These are reviewed each year. The policies and procedures are included in handbooks given to learners and employers. Learners receive the handbooks at induction and employers receive the handbooks when they first employ a learner.

28. Equality of opportunity is discussed during inductions for staff and learners. Staff have a good understanding of equal opportunities legislation, particularly the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. JET has made flexible arrangements to enable one learner with a long-term illness to stay in training and make progress. Equality of opportunity is reinforced during learners' progress reviews. The reviews are also used to monitor equality of opportunity in the workplace. JET has done some analysis of data on participation in training, but it has not analysed the progress made by different groups of learners such as men and women.

29. Learners have opportunities to be assessed by a range of methods that suit their particular needs. They have extra opportunities for assessment in JET's workshop. Training co-ordinators reinforce learners' understanding of the appeals and grievance procedures well. A bright orange sticker on the inside cover of their portfolios reminds learners of their right to appeal. All the learners interviewed by inspectors were aware of the appeals procedure.

30. JET has made several attempts to attract learners from groups that are under-represented in hairdressing. For example, male learners have taken part in events to

promote training. JET has also sought approval to offer qualifications in barbering. Eleven per cent of learners are men, which is close to the national average for this area of learning. Learners' salons employ a good mix of men and women of a good range of ages, providing role models for potential learners. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is slightly higher than for the population of Essex as a whole. JET's premises and the salons provide satisfactory access for learners with mobility difficulties.

31. JET does not adequately monitor employers' approaches to equality of opportunity. It does not have written agreements with employers setting out how they should promote and monitor equality of opportunity at work. Nor does it have a system for monitoring employers' application of equal opportunities policies and procedures. Some salons visited by inspectors did not have copies of JET's equal opportunities policies and procedures. Most learners interviewed had a satisfactory awareness of equality of opportunity, but some were unsure about their employment rights.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

32. The quality assurance of training is satisfactory. JET's mission statement refers to continuous improvement and the company has specific goals relating to quality assurance. It has procedures to assure the quality of all the main aspects of training. Each procedure describes the quality of work expected. Some of the descriptions are detailed, such as the descriptions of assessment and internal verification. However, others do not contain enough detail for provision to be audited against them. JET has a yearly audit plan and has used it to identify and correct weaknesses. Much of the emphasis of the quality assurance arrangements is on compliance with standards and responding to identified weaknesses, rather than continuous improvement.

33. JET uses learners' feedback well. Learners evaluate the effectiveness of practical workshops, sessions on background knowledge and off-the-job training provided at the salons. This feedback is used to identify any weaknesses. All learners complete a questionnaire after three months to evaluate their initial assessment and induction. JET also carries out yearly surveys of all learners and employers. Learners complete a questionnaire when they leave in order to evaluate their programmes. The training co-ordinators gather comments from learners and employers during their regular visits to the salons. The business development manager gathers comments from learners and employers through telephone surveys. JET also gathers feedback from staff on its training. It has used learners' feedback to make various improvements to training. Over the past year, for example, it has increased the workshops it offers to learners.

34. Self-assessment is satisfactory. JET considers the views of learners and employers and uses data on progression and achievement to evaluate its provision. Staff have been trained in self-assessment and are encouraged to contribute to the report. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the most recent self-assessment report, but they identified some strengths and weaknesses that were not reported. The development plan is detailed and is reviewed regularly. However, the extent to which the actions in the plan have improved provision is unclear. Arrangements for assessment and internal verification are satisfactory.

35. JET does not make enough use of data to achieve continuous improvement. Although it gathers extensive feedback from learners, it does not analyse all this information to assess the effectiveness of its provision overall. Nor does it use the information to set targets or compare current data with previous data to assess improvements. The company monitors data on recruitment, retention and achievement but uses few other measures of performance. For example, it does not use data to evaluate the effectiveness of its literacy and numeracy support. Observations of training have taken place and have led to improvements. However, the company has not used the grades given to learning sessions to guide self-assessment. It does not assess the effectiveness of actions included in the development plan.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hairdressing</i> - Work-based learning for young people	85	2

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good progress by learners
- well-planned and effective training in background knowledge
- very effective support for learners
- well-managed links with employers

Weaknesses

- insufficient written feedback to learners
- weak action-planning in progress reviews

Achievement and standards

36. Learners are making good progress through the units of their qualifications. Some learners have completed all the units of their qualifications before the expected completion date. Learners have extra opportunities for assessment at JET's training salon. Learners are awarded certificates for completing each unit, which they find motivating and rewarding. Some learners who have transferred from other training providers have been accelerated through the programme to help them complete their apprenticeships within their funded training period. These learners are very pleased with their improved progress. Individual learning plans take into account previous hairdressing experience, enabling learners to make good progress. Learners are making good progress on the technical certificate and on key skills. Their practical skills are satisfactory.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2003-04															
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	47														
Retained*	13															
Successfully completed	9															
Still in learning	28															

*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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2003-04															
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	114														
Retained*	30															
Successfully completed	22															
Still in learning	57															

*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

Quality of education and training

37. Training in background knowledge is well planned and effective. Training co-ordinators make effective use of resources, including ICT and various visual aids. Computer-produced presentations are copied for learners with spaces for extra notes. Learners are taught individually or in small groups. This enables training co-ordinators to take into account their individual needs. Background knowledge is effectively linked to learners' experiences at work. Learners are encouraged to take part in discussions about their training and to relate their experience at work to both practical training and training in theory. Most of the practical training observed during the inspection was satisfactory.

38. Learners receive very effective support. Training co-ordinators visit the salons frequently to provide training and assessment and to review learners' progress. They make extra visits to learners who need additional support. Learners are given extra assessments if they are close to completing a unit of their qualification. Free transport is arranged if learners need to attend extra workshops at JET. Learners' inductions are particularly effective. Learners receive detailed feedback after their initial assessment and the training programmes are explained clearly. Training co-ordinators provide extra support to learners with literacy or numeracy difficulties. These learners are also offered individual support at JET from the business development manager, who has a

qualification in teaching literacy and numeracy. Learners receive good support in dealing with personal difficulties and can contact their training co-ordinators by mobile telephone out of hours.

39. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are suitably qualified and update their knowledge and skills regularly. Learners work with a wide range of clients in modern, well-equipped salons and use a wide range of hairdressing products. Employers value the training programmes and provide effective support to learners. Some salons offer extra training in using hairdressing products. The workshop at JET is adequate for training and assessing individuals or small groups. Learners use well-presented learning materials and a range of useful booklets on key skills.

40. Learners are offered a satisfactory range of extra activities. JET holds a yearly hairdressing competition, which is well attended by learners. Learners are helped to prepare for the competition and can practise for it in JET's workshop. Learners have opportunities to develop skills in areas such as hair extension. Training co-ordinators visit the salons to provide extra workshops in Indian head massage.

41. Learners do not receive enough written feedback. Although they often receive constructive verbal feedback during practical training, they do not receive enough written feedback on their completed work. Learners cannot refer to the feedback provided to reflect on their learning and develop their skills. Some written feedback on learners' assignments lacks the constructive criticism required for improvement. Learners are not always encouraged to improve weak responses to questions and some spelling mistakes are not corrected.

42. Action-planning in progress reviews is weak. Many short-term targets set during progress reviews are vague and are not directly linked to learners' current training. Some targets relating to the completion of units of learners' qualifications are insufficiently detailed. Some targets have dates five or six months in the future. Employers are not always involved in progress reviews and are sometimes unaware of targets that have been set. Although there is satisfactory monitoring of learners' completion of units, the monitoring of their development of key skills is insufficiently detailed.

Leadership and management

43. Training co-ordinators manage links with employers very effectively. They make frequent visits to the salons and communications are good. Some employers invite training co-ordinators to staff meetings at the salons to share information about learners. Off-the-job training is managed well and is arranged flexibly to suit the needs of employers. On- and off-the-job training are co-ordinated effectively. JET offers staff at the salons free training towards assessors' qualifications. Regular feedback on the effectiveness of training is sought from learners and employers. Employers receive responses to the feedback during visits to the salons and through a yearly newsletter. Learners have a satisfactory awareness of health and safety and equality of opportunity.