

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Keith Graham Academy**

**02 September 2005**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## **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 aged 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.

### **Pre-inspection analysis**

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

## Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

## Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Keith Graham Academy

### Contents

#### Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Key challenges for Keith Graham Academy	2
Grades	2
About the inspection	3
Key Findings	3
What learners like about Keith Graham Academy	7
What learners think Keith Graham Academy could improve	7

#### Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	8
Equality of opportunity	9
Quality improvement	10
Retail and commercial enterprise	13

## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Keith Graham Academy (KGA) provides work-based learning in hairdressing. Established in 1995, it is a private training provider with a head office in Folkestone, and with training academies in Folkestone, Maidstone and Ramsgate in Kent. The Folkestone and Maidstone academies operate on four days a week. The Ramsgate centre, which opened in 2005, currently operates on two days a week. The academies are in prominent positions on high streets in the town centres, and operate as commercial enterprises. KGA currently provides apprenticeship training in hairdressing for 134 learners from a wide geographical area. In 2001-02, it took over a number of learners from two failing providers in Kent.

2. KGA's director delegates operational responsibility to the training manager once strategic decisions are made. Both the director and training manager are salon owners. The training manager works part time at KGA and spends the rest of the week involved in the technical work and management of her own salon. Academy managers are responsible for the day-to-day activities at each centre, with the support of a team of trainer/assessors. In addition, there is a dedicated key skills trainer/assessor who also has responsibility for health and safety, an internal verifier, a member of staff who carries out all the workplace reviews, and a team of administrators.

3. All apprentices attend their designated academy on one day a week for background knowledge, key skills and practical training and assessment. The advanced apprentices attend one evening a week for background knowledge and key skills training.

4. KGA is funded through Kent and Medway Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

### Grade 2

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** More specifically, the training in hairdressing is good as are leadership and management and equal opportunities. Quality improvement is outstanding.

6. **The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process at KGA is well managed, thorough and inclusive. The current self-assessment report is KGA's sixth and was updated in August 2005. The findings of the inspection closely matched the self-assessment report. Inspectors found the self-assessment process and the development plan to be self-critical and highly effective in bringing about improvements in the provision. Staff have a good awareness of self-assessment. The process and the self-assessment report are regularly discussed and monitored at staff meetings.

7. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** Since the previous inspection in 2001, KGA has continued to raise its retention and achievement rates. Quality assurance, which was a weakness at the previous inspection,

## KEITH GRAHAM ACADEMY

has had vigorous attention. The close monitoring of training, prompt action and effective improvement measures have continued to bring about significant improvements across the provision. There has been significant ongoing investment in resources and accommodation which provide a good setting for learning. The provision has improved since the previous inspection.

### KEY CHALLENGES FOR KEITH GRAHAM ACADEMY:

- continue to improve the high standards of training that prepare young people successfully for employment in the hairdressing industry
- continue to raise retention and achievement rates
- offer more opportunities for learners to progress to higher-level qualifications
- further develop the arrangements for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support
- develop a more systematic approach to involve employers effectively in learners' programmes
- continue to raise the participation rates of under-represented groups

### GRADES

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate*

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		1

Retail and commercial enterprise			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b><i>Hairdressing</i></b>			
Apprenticeships for young people	134	2	2

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. KGA was last inspected in 2001, and at that time, it had 117 learners in hairdressing and 10 in customer service. Customer service training is no longer offered.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	42
Number of staff interviewed	17
Number of employers interviewed	11
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	15
Number of visits	1

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

9. **Apprenticeship completion rates have improved and are good.** In 2002-03, 61 per cent of learners completed their apprenticeship framework. In the previous three years, overall achievement rates had been less than 40 per cent.

10. **Learners produce practical work of a good standard** which prepares them well for salon work. They demonstrate good professional attitudes and client care during practical sessions at the academies, and show high levels of skill in the use of tools, equipment and products. Learners tackle advanced hairdressing techniques, which are beyond those required for the national vocational qualification (NVQ), with enthusiasm and confidence.

11. Ninety-four per cent of the learners who started the apprenticeship programme in 2004-05 are still in learning. The retention rates in 2001-02 and 2002-03 were 44 per cent and 70 per cent, respectively. Learners are making good progress towards completion of the framework. A trial period in the salon before they join the programme gives them a good insight into the industry and the requirements and pressures of a hairdressing apprenticeship.

### The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Retail and commercial enterprise	1	4	2	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

12. **Practical training at the academies is good.** Learners benefit from the skills and subject knowledge of their trainers. The trainers have current occupational knowledge and competence, and many still work in the industry. A good supply of clients allows learners to develop their skills and confidence with a range of products and services. Learners

receive good individual support and tuition during practical sessions, and trainers make good use of questioning techniques to explore their knowledge. However, the planning of background knowledge sessions does not focus sufficiently on individual learning outcomes and differentiated needs.

13. **KGA's academies operate as highly commercial training environments.** Located on town high streets they reflect a realistic work environment with the normal pressures of a working salon, and provide a good setting for learners to develop the skills of the trade. They are fitted to a high standard, and furnished with up-to-date equipment. A computerised client booking and payment facility gives learners the opportunity to experience state-of-the-art technology that may not be available in their own salons. They are encouraged to promote services and retail sales to clients.

14. The workplace progress reviews are satisfactory and provide an opportunity for the sharing of information between the academies and the workplace.

15. Learners' induction takes place over one day and prepares them adequately for the apprenticeship. KGA encourages parental involvement by inviting parents/guardians to participate in the learners' initial interview.

16. Assessment practice is thorough, and learners are given good verbal and written feedback on their practical and background knowledge assignments. Trainers use an effective continuous assessment process which gives clear guidance on areas of strength or weakness before the final assessment. KGA ensures that learners get sufficient opportunity to practise each skill area before attempting assessment, for example by attracting sufficient clients for techniques such as permanent waving. However, too little evidence from the workplace is used for the NVQ. Most assessment takes place at the academies and there is little use of testimonials from the salons.

17. **Initial assessment results and learners' support needs are not recorded in enough detail.** Initial assessment adequately identifies learners' literacy and numeracy levels, but there is insufficient evidence to show that the planned support is appropriate or timely.

### **Leadership and management**

18. **KGA has a clear strategy for its business and the hairdressing provision is managed effectively.** Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and meet regularly to share good practice. There is a strong emphasis on standardisation and staff development to meet the future needs of the business.

19. **KGA provides good support for the professional development of its staff.** Two members of staff have completed the certificate in education and six others are intending to start the course. There is good internal training, and the company closes for one month each year to provide time for a range of staff training events.

20. **KGA has promoted its programmes well to under-represented groups.** Promotional materials have a good mix of images of male, female and minority ethnic learners and they are trendy and appealing to young people. There has been a substantial increase in the number of men participating in training, from 4 per cent in 2003-04 to 14 per cent today.

21. **Very effective quality assurance arrangements** ensure that training is regularly monitored and continually improved. There is a strong emphasis on standardisation of teaching and assessment through the use of comprehensive work procedures and training materials. Observations of teaching, learning and assessment practice take place regularly. Staff receive constructive feedback that leads to improvement in their performance.

22. The self-assessment process is well established, inclusive and effectively leads to improvement in the provision. Staff value and have a good understanding of self-assessment. The self-assessment report identified many of the same strengths and weaknesses as the inspection. The development plan is managed well and is monitored monthly by the quality team.

23. Equality of opportunity is introduced adequately to learners at induction and regularly reinforced during training sessions and reviews. **KGA provides good support to employers to raise their awareness of equality and diversity.**

24. **KGA does not involve employers sufficiently in the learners' programmes.** Planning of learning does not take account of the tasks that individual learners carry out at work. Employers do not fully understand the NVQ and are unclear how they can support the learners' progress.

## Leadership and management

### Strengths

- clear direction to the business
- very effective support for staff professional development
- good internal and external promotion of equality and diversity
- very effective arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of the provision

### Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- insufficiently developed system to support the development of learners' individual needs in literacy, numeracy and language

## Retail and commercial enterprise

### *Hairdressing*

**Grade 2**

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement rate on the apprenticeship programme
- good standard of practical and work skills produced by learners
- good off-the-job practical teaching
- realistic commercial training environment

*Weaknesses*

- some deficiencies in the planning and recording of additional support for literacy and numeracy
- insufficiently strong links with employers to promote their involvement in learners' programmes

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT KEITH GRAHAM ACADEMY:**

- the staff - 'they are friendly and approachable', 'they treat us like adults'
- the academy - 'I like being a stylist', 'meeting friends'
- the practical teaching - 'learning new techniques'
- 'having the opportunity to work with a range of hairdressing clients at the academy'
- 'gaining self-confidence'
- 'completing the key skills qualification in communication'
- the reviews - 'they motivate me'
- the apprenticeship - 'it is good preparation for working in a salon'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK KEITH GRAHAM ACADEMY COULD IMPROVE:**

- 'the theory room is too small'
- the timing of the level 3 sessions - 'having to attend in the evening'
- access to assessment - 'the opportunity to get recognition for the work we carry out in our salon'
- the background knowledge sessions - 'they need to be more interesting'
- the variety of work and training at work - 'shampooing all the time is boring'

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

#### Strengths

- clear direction to the business
- very effective support for staff professional development
- good internal and external promotion of equality and diversity
- very effective arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of the provision

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- insufficiently developed system to support the development of learners' individual needs in literacy, numeracy and language

25. KGA has a clear strategic direction and the operational management of its training programmes is effective. It runs a number of closely related commercial businesses in hairdressing which are mutually supportive and benefit the learners. The three-year strategic development plan sets out a well-defined direction for the organisation which responds very closely to the local needs of learners and employers in the region. In line with this, KGA has recently opened a local centre in Ramsgate to improve local access for learners. Clear, measurable targets for success are set out both in terms of learners' achievement and in the financial outcomes. The three-year plan is supported by a detailed annual development plan which is constantly reviewed and updated by the management team. Managers make very effective use of a specially designed management information system to produce clear reports for consideration at the regular management meetings, for example on learners' progress and on equality of opportunity. Staff maintain good informal links with a large number of employers across the region. The sales team supports the development of new links and maintains regular contacts with a wide range of local employers and KGA issues a regular newsletter to employers which gives very helpful advice and guidance on changes and developments in training and legislation.

26. KGA provides good support for the professional development of staff. It sets high professional standards for its training, and maintains close operational links between its salon and its training academies. Staff are professionally competent and well experienced in their vocational area. KGA has an ongoing commitment to the training and development of its staff, and has a detailed annual training and development plan. It provides effective encouragement and support for all staff training which meets the company's business needs. Since 1999, KGA has held the Investors in People award, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. The award was re-accredited in 2005.

27. Staff have good progression opportunities inside the organisation. Most KGA staff have recently gained additional qualifications, and many have progressed over time to more senior positions with the organisation. For example, a former apprentice has become a trainer/assessor and has gained assessor and verifier awards. Two members of staff have

gained certificates in education in the past two years and six more are planned to begin the course in the coming year. In addition to supporting staff towards external awards, KGA provides internal training. For example, it routinely closes down for one month a year, during which it provides a number of training events for staff.

28. Internal communications are effective. The culture of the organisation is open and professional, and staff are encouraged to participate in its development. In addition to the frequent informal contacts between staff, there are regular scheduled meetings of the quality improvement team, internal verifiers, and assessors. Actions arising from these meetings are carefully noted, and are followed up systematically to monitor progress.

29. Managers and staff work closely together to ensure that learners receive good-quality, professional training in a realistic, commercial environment. Resources are good, and learners have access to modern equipment and salon facilities, as well as the latest commercial hairdressing materials.

30. Financial management is efficient and effective. Managers monitor expenditure and income closely using a range of financial reports.

31. There is insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Some of the informal links between on- and off-the-job training are very productive and regularly benefit the learners. For example, after training sessions at KGA, some learners advise their employers of what they have learnt, and receive additional training sessions in the workplace to consolidate the knowledge and skills they have gained. However, there is insufficient formal co-ordination by KGA of on- and off-the-job training, and some employers do not understand how they can best support their learners. For example, progress reviews are not used to identify or communicate specific learning opportunities in the workplace so that employers can support learners' off-the-job training more effectively. Learners' workplace experience is not recorded in enough detail to identify their progress or provide additional evidence towards their qualification. KGA has recognised this weakness and has a formative recording system, which is now being introduced. KGA's self-assessment report recognised the need for greater co-ordination of training with employers.

32. KGA has a satisfactory computerised system in place to identify individual learners' development needs in literacy, numeracy and language, and staff are clearly committed to helping learners, and they provide much additional individual support. However, the support system is insufficiently developed. Individual support needs are not recorded in enough detail, and the records of support given are not clear or focused enough to provide a clear picture of learners' progress. Too few staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to respond effectively to learners' specific development needs in literacy, numeracy and language, or to more specialist needs, such as dyslexia. Too little use is made of external support for specialist needs, and there are no established arrangements to guide learners to such support. KGA recognises this weakness and plans to provide additional training for staff.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

33. KGA's promotion of equality and diversity is good. It continually strives to attract members of under-represented groups into hairdressing. Data is used effectively, with regular monitoring and analysis to identify trends in the recruitment, progression and achievement of learners. Managers consider information on why learners leave early and

where they go, and strategies are put into place where appropriate. Reports on participation and achievement rates are discussed thoroughly at quality improvement team meetings. For example, learners' progress and achievement has been analysed to see whether there is any variation between areas or assessors.

34. KGA identified that few men were training as hairdressers and has worked well with schools in the area to break down gender barriers. Attractive promotional materials encourage greater participation by all under-represented groups. The new materials show a very positive, encouraging and professional image of the industry. They incorporate a well-balanced mix of photographs of KGA learners from a wide range of backgrounds, including men and members of minority ethnic groups. Learners' work used in the materials demonstrates clearly the creative, fashionable hairdressing achievements of KGA's learners, and the diversity of the industry. KGA identified that few men attended its regular open evenings, and set up a 'men-only' open evening staffed by male hairdressers to encourage greater participation by men. There has been a substantial increase in the number of men joining the programme.

35. KGA has a range of equality of opportunity policies, including clear policies on bullying and harassment in the workplace. Staff awareness of equal opportunities is raised and updated through regular training. Equality of opportunity is introduced at learners' induction and each learner receives a copy of the company policy. Learners' awareness of equality of opportunity is reinforced regularly. Regular training sessions ensure that learners have a good awareness of equality of opportunity, and of their rights and responsibilities at work and in their off-the-job training. KGA regularly reminds employers of their responsibilities with regard to employment law and equality of opportunity, and helps them to understand the benefits of being a good equal opportunities employer. KGA monitors employers to ensure that learners have a valid contract of employment. Equality of opportunity is also monitored through the internal verification process. Learners are interviewed by the internal verifier to check that they have fair and equal access to assessment and that they are aware of the assessment appeals procedure. KGA is supportive of learners whose progress is inhibited as a result of personal and learning difficulties. Staff give them additional individual attention at the academy and they attend additional training sessions.

36. In the academies, learners demonstrate professional courtesy and respect for their peers, trainers and clients. Learners are aware of the KGA code of conduct and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. There is an anti-bullying and harassment culture and learners work in a convivial atmosphere which is conducive to learning.

37. Access to most KGA premises is satisfactory. However, access to the first floor training facilities at one centre is unsatisfactory for those with limited mobility. KGA has recognised this, and has well-advanced plans to re-locate its training to the ground floor.

## **Quality improvement**

## **Contributory grade 1**

38. KGA has very effective arrangements in place to monitor the quality of its provision, and these have led to some significant improvements in the programme. A set of detailed assessment and training procedures acts as a clear framework and reference point for the standardisation of trainers' and assessors' work. This has provided highly effective support

for new staff and a rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment practice. The involvement of the training manager in salon training and assessment sessions ensures that the individual performance of staff is very closely monitored against the framework. All staff are given continuous, constructive feedback on their performance against the KGA professional standards. In addition, KGA has a well-established effective formal system for the observation of training. All training and assessment staff are observed twice a year carrying out both practical and background knowledge training. A detailed written report of the observation provides the basis of a constructive discussion with the member of staff, and the reports are used in the six-monthly appraisal process. Training staff are also encouraged to reflect continually on their professional performance, using a recently introduced self-assessment log of strengths and areas for development. This provides valuable information that assists in the formulation of individual development plans and gives staff a clear indication of how they can improve their practice. Internal verification ensures that assessment procedures meet awarding body standards. Regular scheduled meetings of internal verifiers and assessors review developments, consider learners' progress, and share good practice. The internal verification procedure has been very effective in improving and standardising assessment practice. Novice assessors have a thorough induction and are supported well. A dedicated internal verifier has proved highly effective in supporting staff when there are changes in the qualifications. KGA found that the new occupational standards introduced in 2003-04 took longer to implement than was anticipated.

39. KGA uses data effectively to monitor trends. Managers recognised that the poor completion rates of advanced apprentices needed action. At the request of the LSC, a number of learners were transferred from two failing providers in Kent. Some had been on the wrong programme and were either struggling to progress or lacked the commitment to complete the work. KGA has dealt with this by ensuring that learners have the opportunity, ability and support from their employers to progress and achieve. A small group of learners who met the criteria were offered the chance to take the advanced apprenticeship framework. Regular evaluation took place, and retention and achievement rates have improved and are now good. KGA plans to extend the offer further. Early completion of key skills and online testing have improved the pass rates for external key skills tests.

40. KGA has a well-established, thorough and effective self-assessment process. The current self-assessment report, which was KGA's sixth, very closely reflected the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. Staff make a good contribution to the self-assessment report and development plan, and they discuss the new plan in depth at the annual training event. Each month the quality improvement team reviews progress thoroughly and updates the annual development plan. The team also thoroughly monitors and reviews the overall quality of the training provision against a clear, formal set agenda. New areas for improvement are effectively identified, agreed actions are recorded, and progress is closely monitored at subsequent meetings. Information from quality improvement team meetings is fed back to staff through meetings of training and assessment teams at each site.

41. KGA also makes good use of learners' feedback to improve its training provision. For example, progress reviews take place every 12 weeks and are used effectively to identify individual concerns. Prompt action is taken to deal with any issues raised. Learners complete an annual questionnaire and this has led to, for example, additional computing resources being made available. Feedback from employers is collected, analysed and acted

on. For example, more information has been provided on equality of opportunity as a result of the most recent survey.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Retail and commercial enterprise

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Hairdressing</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	134	2

42. KGA has 134 learners on hairdressing training programmes, 125 of whom are apprentices and nine are advanced apprentices. Eighty-six per cent are female learners. Learners are employed in hairdressing salons in the Kent and Medway area. Off-the-job training is provided in KGA's training academies in the centres of Folkestone, Maidstone and Ramsgate. Apprentices attend for one day each week for practical and background knowledge training, and advanced apprentices attend for background knowledge training one evening a week. Apprentices are usually assessed at the academies, and advanced apprentices in the workplace. There are 13 staff, seven of whom are trainer/assessors, three are internal verifiers, and one is working towards an assessor award. In addition, there are five work-based assessors. KGA work with 87 employers in Kent.

### *Hairdressing*

Grade 2

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement rate on the apprenticeship programme
- good standard of practical and work skills produced by learners
- good off-the-job practical teaching
- realistic commercial training environment

#### *Weaknesses*

- some deficiencies in the planning and recording of additional support for literacy and numeracy
- insufficiently strong links with employers to promote their involvement in learners' programmes

### **Achievement and standards**

43. Achievement rates on the apprenticeship programme are good. They improved from 45 per cent in 2001-02 to 61 per cent in 2002-03. Many learners are on target to achieve their qualification early. Three of the five learners who started the advanced apprenticeship in 2002-03 have completed it, but this is too small a number to lead to any significant conclusions.

44. Retention rates on the apprenticeship programme have improved from 48 per cent in 2001-02 to 66 per cent in 2002-03. A further 5 per cent of learners are still in learning. Ninety-four per cent of the learners who started in 2004-05 remain in learning. Retention rates on the advanced apprenticeship improved from 35 per cent in 2001-02 to 60 per cent in 2002-03. There have been no early leavers in 2004-05.

45. Learners' practical work is of a very good standard. They show high levels of dexterity when handling tools and equipment such as scissors, combs and hairdryers, and enthusiastically carry out more advanced cutting techniques than those required for the NVQ. Learners were observed applying complicated colouring techniques using a series of colour combinations to a high level. They give a professional approach to their practical work and provide clear explanations of the techniques they are using. Learners are confident in their consultations with clients and use their communication skills to suggest different hairstyles. They have a good awareness of the importance of health and safety particularly when carrying out chemical treatments. They routinely ensure that working areas are kept neat, clean and tidy, and they wear appropriate personal protective equipment. Learners' portfolio work is satisfactory, and there is some good use of computers when producing assignments. Attendance at training sessions is good and is closely monitored. Employers are promptly informed of any non-attendance.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced apprenticeships	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-00					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	5		5		5	100	51	100	29	100	28	100				
Retained*	0		0		3	60	18	35	7	24	9	32				
Successfully completed	0		0		3	60	7	14	7	24	8	29				
Still in learning	5		4		0	0	0	0	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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-00					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	80		94	100	79	100	119	100	40	100	3	100				
Retained*	0		11	12	52	66	57	48	21	52	1	33				
Successfully completed	0		9	10	48	61	54	45	20	50	1	33				
Still in learning	75		46	49	4	5	0	0	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

### The quality of provision

46. Learners receive good off-the-job practical training. Seventy per cent of the teaching observed by inspectors was good or better. Trainers' occupational knowledge is good. Most have current commercial experience and are still working in the industry. Information and 'tips of the trade' are presented well and learners' questions are handled with authority by linking learning points to their salon experience. Trainers make good use of questioning to assess learners' subject knowledge and technical expertise, and offer appropriate further advice and encouragement when needed. The ratio of trainers to learners is very good. Learners receive effective individual coaching to help them develop their hairdressing skills. They have the opportunity to practise their hairdressing skills on a wide variety of

hairdressing clients. Trainers use effective visual images to help reinforce learners' understanding. They illustrate difficult techniques such as cutting angles and sectioning of hair for colour combinations. Trainers review learners' work at the end of each training session and give useful feedback on their work. They work together closely and effectively to benefit the learners. Practical sessions are well managed and planned. Learners are kept busy throughout the sessions and when they have finished work on their clients they are given meaningful, challenging practical tasks. However, lesson plans for background knowledge and practical sessions omit the details of key teaching and learning points and specific individual learning outcomes. Rooms that are used for background knowledge teaching are well equipped with a variety of resources. However, some classrooms are too small for the size of groups using them and difficult for learners with restricted mobility to access.

47. The academies are busy commercial training environments. They are situated in town centres and reflect the practices of a commercial salon. The training salons are fitted to a high standard and are well equipped with up-to-date equipment and facilities for learners to routinely use. All have an extensive range of good-quality hairdressing products. Learners gain valuable practical experience by advising on the products, and selling them to clients. An up-to-the-minute computerised booking and payment facility allows learners to experience modern salon technology that few have in their own workplace. Working areas have attractive wall displays which include product information, and illustrations of modern hairstyles that are of a good industry standard, some of which have been produced by learners.

48. Learners' progress is reviewed in the workplace at 12-weekly intervals. The review is sufficiently detailed and effective. Learners are set targets to help and support their progress, and given guidance to help them meet their targets.

49. Induction for learners is satisfactory and includes training on health, safety and equality of opportunity. Parents are encouraged to attend the initial interview with learners so that they too understand the requirements of the apprenticeship. Staff give clear guidance on the expectations of the programme and the assessment process.

50. Assessment is thorough and well recorded. Learners are given useful guidance on how to maximise their assessment opportunities and a clear explanation of the assessors' expectations. Assessors give constructive feedback and make good suggestions on how learners can improve their work. Learners have individual files in which to record continuous assessment, giving them a clear understanding of the progress they are making. Assessors in the workplace are required to attend KGA's regular assessor meetings to ensure a standard approach to assessment.

51. The monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Progress monitoring sheets are displayed prominently at the academies, and provide a good reference point for learners and assessors. Each learner has an effective monitoring chart which clearly identifies the units they have achieved and what they still have to do to complete units. The chart is routinely referred to during assessments and progress reviews. Learners have a continuous assessment log that is used in the workplace to give them a clear understanding of the progress they are making. However, employers do not fully understand how this works and how they could support the learners' progress.

52. There are deficiencies in the planning and recording of support for learners' literacy and numeracy needs. KGA does not ensure that the literacy and numeracy support needs of individual learners are clearly identified and that support given is recorded. All learners take an initial assessment to identify their literacy and numeracy levels, and the outcome of this is recorded. However, the assessment does not identify the learners' needs in enough detail. The targets set for learners are too general and it is difficult to measure whether the support planned will meet their individual needs. The effectiveness of the support is measured in terms of the achievement of qualifications, and not against the need identified by the initial assessment. When learners' have difficulties in completing written assignments, trainers readily offer additional individual guidance.

### **Leadership and management**

53. Staff meet regularly, both formally and informally, to share information and good practice. They have a clear understanding of the importance of driving up retention and achievement rates and this is considered at all formal meetings. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and their performance is monitored regularly. There is a clear understanding of the organisation's key objectives and mission, and a strong emphasis on maintaining a commercial training environment. Individual staff are set targets for the completion of qualifications and training to the benefit of the business. Staff are well supported in their personal development. There is good use of management information to monitor learners' progress.

54. The high professional standards expected at the academies create a good atmosphere of mutual respect between staff and learners. Client care is a high priority and learners conduct themselves in an appropriate professional manner. Equality of opportunity is monitored during the learners' progress reviews. However, some employers have a limited understanding of the wider issues relating to equality of opportunity. KGA has recently sent out some useful information, entitled 'being an equal opportunities employer', to help raise employers' awareness.

55. Internal verification is thorough and effective in standardising and improving the quality of assessment practice. Assessment practice is sampled regularly and planned well, and assessors receive comprehensive, useful feedback.

56. KGA's links with employers are not strong enough to involve them effectively in learners' programmes. There is no coherent, individualised programme that links the training taking place in KGA's training centre with that taking place in the workplace. Employers have little understanding of the NVQ process. They are not involved in helping learners collect evidence or progress towards achieving their qualification. Employers are unclear about the progress that their learner has made, what they still need to achieve and how they can support this process. Most employers provide good training at their salons. However, one learner complained that her employer was not providing sufficient on-the-job training and she was falling behind both in skills and confidence. KGA had taken no action on this.

57. All staff take part in the self-assessment process and have a clear understanding of the importance of good self-assessment. The self-assessment report accurately reflects the strengths and weaknesses identified during inspection. It is sufficiently self-critical and contains good evidence to support the strengths and weaknesses.

