

# Keith Graham Academy

## Inspection report

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Unique reference number: 52824

Name of lead inspector: Diane Stacey HMI

Last day of inspection: 9 July 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Unit 12  
Heron Business Centre  
Henwood Industrial Estate  
Ashford  
Kent  
TN24 8DH

Telephone number: 01233 664171

## Information about 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 Ashford, Kent and with training academies situated in Folkestone, Maidstone and Ramsgate. The academies operate five days a week and are in prominent positions on high streets in the town centres. They operate as commercial enterprises. Currently 227 learners are funded by the Skills Funding Agency and follow apprenticeship programmes. Of these, 36 are advanced hairdressing learners and 9 learners are following a new area of training in nail services. This programme is subcontracted to a Folkestone based company. In addition, KGA provides young apprenticeship training for 55 learners who are between the ages of 14 and 16 and are funded by the local authority. Young apprentices attend academies for one day a week and are on work placement in a salon for one day a week.
2. Keith Graham Academy's director delegates operational responsibility to the operations manager and quality assurance to the quality manager. Both the director and quality 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. There are two review officers who are responsible for reviewing learners' progress and coordinating on- and off-the-job training. Their job role also includes reviewing health and safety in the work placement and conducting safeguarding risk assessments. Designated tutors in each academy are responsible for key skills. Two administrators work at the head office.
3. All apprentices attend their designated academy on one day a week for background knowledge, key skills and practical training and assessment. Advanced apprentices attend the Folkestone academy for theory training once a fortnight and those advanced apprentices who attend the Ramsgate academy are able to attend weekly for theory and practical assessments.
4. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the provider:
  - That Nail Place Ltd.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14–16	40 part-time learners
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	121 apprentices

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject areas	Grade
Hairdressing	2

## Overall effectiveness

5. The overall effectiveness of KGA is good. Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are good for National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 learners and satisfactory for learners on level 2 programmes. The development and standards of practical hairdressing skills are very good. Learners make good progress on their programmes. The majority of young apprentices move into full apprenticeship training. Learners develop very effective employability skills alongside their hairdressing skills.
6. The quality of training and assessment is satisfactory overall. Practical training is very good and theory training is satisfactory. Learning resources are good. The teaching and support for literacy and numeracy skills require further improvement. More work needs to be done to ensure that for level 2 learners training plans are shared with employers and more assessment takes place within salons. Reviews of learners' progress are regular but targets set are insufficiently detailed. KGA has expanded its provision effectively to engage with, and to meet the needs of, wider groups of learners. Individual support from KGA staff is good.
7. Leadership and management are good. Staff, employers and learners share the company's vision and managers set clear objectives within the business development plan. Communication between managers, staff and employers is

effective. Arrangements for safeguarding and equality and diversity are good. Arrangements for improving the quality of the provision are satisfactory.

## Main findings

- Success rates for advanced apprenticeships are good. Progression routes for 14- to 16-year-old pupils on the young apprenticeship programme are good. The new subcontracted nail services training for a small number of learners is already producing exceptionally high completion rates. Success rates for level 2 learners are satisfactory.
- Learners' practical hairdressing skills are very good and above the required level expected in their hairdressing qualification. Learners produce creative and highly skilled techniques when cutting and colouring hair.
- The teaching of hairdressing practical skills is very good and tutors provide very effective individual support and clear and constructive feedback. However, for level 2 learners, training plans are not shared with employers and insufficient assessment takes place within the workplace.
- Theory teaching is satisfactory but lacks variety and does not always engage learners fully. KGA has been slow to respond to improving its literacy and numeracy provision. Target setting does not include all aspects of learners' activities or needs.
- Keith Graham Academy meets the needs and interests of learners very well and offers a good range of provision from young apprenticeships through to advanced apprenticeships. All learners have the opportunity to participate in extended activities including hairdressing competitions and visiting exhibitions.
- Learners receive good individual support from tutors who are caring and sensitive to their needs.
- Leadership and management are good. KGA has diversified well and has responded very well to local priorities. It has expanded its provision through very effective links with local schools and employers that benefit learners particularly well. While staff share the company's vision, the strategic plan is out of date with no current key performance indicators.
- Staff have good opportunities to expand their knowledge and expertise through an extensive range of training events. The majority of teaching staff have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications but no one is qualified to level 3 in basic skills.
- Arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of learners are good and learners feel safe. A new safeguarding risk assessment, specifically for checking employers' understanding and practices, has been implemented. New and highly regarded training units, developed by KGA, improve the understanding of learners and staff about safeguarding practices particularly well.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff training is current. Thorough checks take place to ensure learners' understanding of equality and diversity during reviews and through the implementation of two new teaching

units, specifically developed by KGA. Data are collected, analysed and used well to inform managers of any shortfall in its provision.

- The satisfactory arrangements for improving the quality of training for learners rely too heavily on individual initiatives and less on a coordinated and well-planned approach. Records from teaching and learning observations are insufficiently evaluative and helpful in identifying actions for staff to improve.

### What does Keith Graham Academy need to do to improve further?

- Introduce training plans and assessment in the workplace for level 2 learners to help improve their success rates.
- Improve the quality of theoretical training so that learners receive more good teaching.
- Improve the setting of learners' targets, including within individual learning plans, to ensure that learners and employers have a better understanding of all areas of learners' progress.
- Develop and update the strategic plan and key performance targets to help managers to identify the progress being made.
- Continue to develop the literacy and numeracy provision and ensure a designated member staff is qualified to level 3 in order to improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills further.
- Develop improvement planning through more formal arrangements, better coordinated quality checks and revised procedures for observing teaching and learning to identify and make more rapid improvements where required.

### Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

#### What learners like:

- developing more self-confidence and being better prepared for the future
- attending the academies
- being motivated to try harder by the high expectations from KGA
- the supportive staff and their caring approach
- the plentiful number of clients on whom learners can practise their skills
- the immediate and ongoing support offered to help learners with dyslexia problems
- the development of high quality practical skills.

#### What learners would like to see improved:

- opportunities for level 2 assessments to take place in salons
- opportunities to spend more time in the academies

- the amount of training in salons for some learners.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good standard of the practical training
- the prompt communications with KGA staff
- the support for learners including application of number skills
- the good reviewing system
- the safeguarding advice and vetting checks that are carried out
- the training plans for level 3 learners
- the flexibility in training.

What employers would like to see improved:

- access to learners' training plans
- the amount of information on training for young apprentices and level 2 learners
- the consistency of approach by assessors, which is currently affected by too many assessor changes.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

8. Keith Graham Academy's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Outcomes are good overall and are particularly high for those learners on level 3 programmes. KGA has made a number of improvements to its provision and has expanded its training to a wider audience. It has continued to provide high standards of practical training that enhances learners' skills and their ability to progress within their chosen profession. Many learners progress to higher level courses and one successful graduate from the apprenticeship programme is now a member of KGA's staff. While there has been a focus on developing arrangements to support the literacy, numeracy and language needs of learners, these arrangements are not yet fully effective. Employers are now an integral part of learners' reviews but are still not fully engaged in, and knowledgeable about, the training needs of learners on level 2 programmes. Staff use the various team meeting forums very effectively to discuss and resolve any learner-related quality issues. However, quality improvement arrangements are not sufficiently well planned and there is an over reliance on individual initiatives.
9. Self-assessment includes the views of staff, learners and employers. Self-assessed grades generally match those found during the inspection. The grade for capacity to improve was over emphasised, however, and some aspects of provision identified by inspectors as requiring improvement are not included.

### Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

10. Outcomes for learners are good. There are no discernable differences between different groups of learners. Success rates on advanced apprenticeship programmes are good. They show consistent improvement over the last three years, with success rates in 2008/09 at 86%. Timely completions are particularly high at 25 percentage points above national rates. The young apprenticeship programme for 14 to 16 year old school pupils has good progression routes, with many learners progressing onto full apprenticeship programmes. KGA engages successfully with a beauty salon to subcontract nail services training. Of the nine learners who started, eight have completed successfully and one is on target to complete within their timeframe.
11. Success rates for apprentices at level 2 are satisfactory and have stayed around 77%, with a slight decline to 70.2% in 2008/09. Timely success is good and remains above national benchmarks.
12. Learners' practical hairdressing skills are very good and are above the required level of their hairdressing qualification. Learners work confidently when completing a variety of hairdressing processes. School pupils on the young apprenticeship programme get involved in competitions, producing very high standards of work.

13. Learners develop good employability skills alongside their hairdressing qualifications. The majority of learners who complete their apprenticeships remain in employment. Learners feel safe and have good awareness of safeguarding issues. Learners enjoy and value their training.
14. Tutors promote healthy eating and the well-being of learners during training. New training units promote sexual awareness and the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse very well. Learners get involved in fundraising events within the local community and donate the proceeds to selected charities.

## The quality of provision

Grade 3

15. The teaching of practical skills is very good. Tutors are highly skilled and share their knowledge very effectively. Learners work within real industry conditions and to good professional standards. They are well supported and provided with good individual tuition in the form of mini demonstrations. Tutors challenge learners very effectively, check their work at critical stages and give good constructive feedback on completed tasks. Teaching resources and accommodation in the academies are good.
16. The teaching of background knowledge is satisfactory. Teaching styles and the range of activities are insufficiently varied to engage learners fully. In some lessons, effective use is made of direct questioning but, in others, there is insufficient checking of learning.
17. The review process is satisfactory but target setting is insufficiently detailed to inform learners and employers of what needs to be done to improve learners' skills. New systems and staff training have been introduced to improve literacy and numeracy provision. However, the implementation of this has been slow and there is currently limited measurable impact.
18. The coordination of training and assessment in the workplace for level 2 learners is still an area that requires further improvement. Most learners receive practical training in their work placement but this is not sufficiently well planned or coordinated with the training they receive in the academies. However, a very effective colour-coded system is established which clearly identifies learners' levels of practical skills and which is used to match their training and assessment needs.
19. The provision to meet the needs and interests of learners is good. KGA offers progression from the young apprenticeship programme through to advanced apprenticeships. Training provision has expanded and now includes a nail services course. Training is flexible to enable learners to start their programme at any time. Learners take part in competitions and attend exhibitions. Some salons provide learners with additional training which is above the requirements of their qualification and which enhances their skills.
20. Keith Graham Academy has established a satisfactory range of partnerships with local schools, employers and other training-based organisations in Kent.

21. Individual additional learning support is good, particularly for learners who have dyslexia conditions. Learners respond very well to the support they receive and make good progress. Learners have a good understanding of their next step and progression routes for their future careers. KGA has introduced more comprehensive information, advice and guidance for learners at their first interview.

## Leadership and management

## Grade 2

22. Keith Graham Academy's senior team promotes a clear vision that is shared by staff and learners. A detailed business development plan sets challenging targets that are regularly reviewed. KGA has initiated a number of changes since the last inspection. Academies have been relocated or refurbished to a good standard; expansion of KGA's provision now includes very productive links with schools for the young apprenticeship programme, and a new subcontracted nail services provision is just completing its first year, very successfully. However, the strategic plan and key performance indicators, which help to monitor the provision and improvements, are not up to date.
23. There is much informal communication between the key managers and staff. All staff are involved fully in a regular timetable of formal meetings. Staff roles and responsibilities are clear with personal targets set and used to review and evaluate their performance. Opportunities and attendance at planned training events are good. The majority of training staff have gained, or are working towards, a teaching qualification. However, no member of staff has an appropriate qualification in basic skills at level 3.
24. Keith Graham Academy's safeguarding arrangements are good and meet government legislative requirements. Safeguarding is well promoted during induction, training and reviews. Appropriate procedures for the vetting of KGA's own staff and those of its subcontractor are in place. Checks and guidance are given to employers in the salons where learners are placed and formal safeguarding risk assessments have taken place or are planned for each salon. A safeguarding policy assists staff in understanding how to handle the disclosure of abuse. Staff are appropriately trained and two designated senior members of staff have attended external training. Three teaching units on safeguarding, internet safety, sexual health and drug and alcohol abuse, have been developed by KGA and implemented during learners' training.
25. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff are up to date in their training and one member of staff is currently enrolled on a dyslexia course. Salons have appropriate policies and employers take an active part in learner reviews during which equality of opportunity is promoted well. Learners complete the employment rights and responsibilities unit of their programme at an early stage of their training. Two new training topics, one relating to bullying and harassment and the other on general equality and diversity, have been developed and introduced during the early part of learners' training.

26. Data relating to enrolments, participation and outcomes for different groups of learners are collated and analysed well to identify any shortfalls in performance. Where there are gaps, such as low enrolment of males and learners from minority ethnic backgrounds, specific marketing activities are initiated. The website contains some useful case studies to highlight and promote aspects of equality and diversity. Arrangements for dealing with incidents and complaints are satisfactory and KGA is soon to implement a new electronic tracking document to replace manual records.
27. Arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory. Regular observations of training take place, but written reports do not contain sufficient judgements about the learning that takes place and are not sufficiently evaluative about all aspects of the session observed. KGA does not currently have an annual quality plan. Checks on the quality of learner activities and documentation do take place but are heavily reliant on individual initiatives rather than being coordinated and planned. KGA's business development plan does clearly indicate timely actions to improve the provision. Self-assessment proactively includes the views of staff, employers and learners.
28. Keith Graham Academy provides good value for money. Outcomes for learners are good. The development of practical hairdressing skills is particularly good through the high-quality and well-resourced salons and academies.

## Information about the inspection

29. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's quality manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the previous inspection report, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
30. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Keith Graham Academy**

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	227		227
Part-time learners	55	55	
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	3		
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3		
How well do learners progress?	2		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2		
How safe do learners feel?	2		
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2		
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2		
Quality of provision	3	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2		
Leadership and management	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	na		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2		

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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