

Reflections Training Academy

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 54096

Name of lead inspector: Phil Hatton HMI

Last day of inspection: 3 February 2012

Type of provider: Independent learning provider
Reflections Training Academy
Reflections House
26 Oakfield Road
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2AT

Address:

Telephone number: 0117 9064146

Information about the provider

1. Reflections Training Academy (Reflections) was established in 1985 under the name of 'House of Clive'. In 1997 the training division changed its name to Reflections. Two hairdressing training academies in Birmingham and Bristol serve 301 employers in the South West and Midlands. Reflections contracts with the Skills Funding Agency for 629 apprentices. Reflections provides hairdressing programmes for 152 14- to 16-year-olds in 52 schools. Since 2011, Reflections has subcontracted some provision to KTS Training and Upper Cut Hair Salons Ltd. KTS Training was not in scope for inspection.
2. Reflections has a managing director, a divisional company director, Bristol academy director and four senior managers. Each training centre has a manager, tutor/assessors and workplacement personnel. Reflections employs over 60 staff. Learners attend the centres for off-the-job training every two weeks for theory, key skills and practical training. They can attend weekly. Learners are observed and assessed either by salon or Reflections' assessors in the workplace either fortnightly or monthly. Some 94.5% of the work of Reflections is government funded.
3. Overall 37% of learners are recruited from areas of multiple deprivation, including half of the learners in the Midlands. Unemployment for young people aged 16 to 24 years is high at 33% in the West Midlands and 29.1% in the South West. Some 9% of learners are from minority-ethnic groups and 14% are male, both higher than the industry average.
4. The following organisations provide training on behalf of Reflections:
 - KTS Training
 - Upper Cut Hair Salons Ltd.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	250 part-time learners
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	596 apprentices

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision		Grade 1
Capacity to improve		Grade 1
		Grade
Outcomes for learners		1
Quality of provision		1
Leadership and management		1
Safeguarding		1
Equality and diversity		2
Subject Areas		
Hairdressing		1

Overall effectiveness

- Learners achieve their qualifications particularly well and complete them within the expected time against demanding individual targets. Learners develop very good work skills and improve their confidence in dealing with clients. Many progress from apprenticeships to advanced apprenticeships. They provide services for clients in their salons at an early stage and almost all progress to employment. They feel safe and work safely.
- Training and assessment are outstanding in hairdressing. Tutors are skilled, knowledgeable and respected by learners and their employers. Learners enjoy their practical and theory training and they are taught well in academies that reflect the highest industry standards. Learners and their employers are fully involved in setting targets during reviews. Assessors give very good support to their learners and outstanding specialist learning and personal support are readily available when required. Partnerships with employers, schools, other providers and external agencies are particularly effective, helping give learners very good training and employment opportunities. Reflections provides a range of additional training opportunities including higher key skills qualifications than required, which assist learners in progressing in their chosen career paths.
- Management of training at Reflections is outstanding. Success rates and the quality of training improve year on year. Staff share a desire to meet the needs

of learners and employers, working well together to achieve challenging targets. Staff know their learners and employers well and are responsive to meeting their needs. Processes to protect learners are particularly effective and outstanding safeguarding procedures are well established. Reflections collects and makes good use of extensive feedback from learners and employers, telling them what has been done in response to their comments. Quality improvement arrangements are particularly effective, informing self-assessment and quality improvement planning well. Tutors do not sufficiently reinforce equality and diversity to learners during reviews to develop their understanding further.

Main findings

- Outcomes for apprentices are outstanding. Overall success rates at intermediate and advanced level are very high and have continuously improved over the four years to 2010/11. The completion of the courses by the learners' planned end date is very high and learners make good progress against demanding targets. Younger learners attending Reflections from schools consistently achieve outstanding results.
- Learners' practical hairdressing skills at all levels are very good. Photographic competition work is outstanding. Learners have very effective interpersonal skills, work professionally and confidently with clients, increasing their employability. Learners feel very safe and benefit from extensive additional safeguarding training. Their attention to safe working practices is good.
- Key skills attainment is high and 11% of learners take key skills at a higher level than required by their qualification. Progression from school programmes for 14- to 16-year-olds is high. Progression to employment and advanced apprenticeships is good. Learners take part in extensive enrichment activities including shows. They are employed in good salons and benefit from inspirational role models.
- Learners have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Reflections provides breakfast at the start of the day and fruit during breaks. The company promotes healthy eating at twice-yearly events. Regular sessions develop drug, smoking, alcohol and sexual health awareness. Learners participate in extensive charity fundraising events and provide hairdressing services in care homes. Learners prevent unnecessary waste of materials and products.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Learners benefit from outstanding resources, excellent teaching in small groups, with extra staff support at key times in lessons. Highly skilled staff promote professionalism and high industry standards. Assessors promptly record learners' achievement on e-portfolios. Finished models are captured on professionally taken photographs. Workplace assessments are frequent and rigorous, providing motivational feedback.
- Reflections meets the needs and interests of users exceptionally well. Employers and learners benefit from the high standards achieved. Advanced qualifications are promoted well. Employers' feedback has led to the development of barbering and African-Caribbean options. Training and assessment are flexible,

meeting learners' and employers' needs. The company meets the needs of local schools well, keeping many young people in training.

- Partnership working with employers, schools, manufacturers and community groups is outstanding. Employers and schools are fully consulted about the design and management of programmes. Employers are highly committed and involved in the training of their learners. Reflections promotes training exceptionally well to learners at risk of underachieving, including those from areas of multiple deprivation.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are outstanding. Supported learners have higher success rates than unsupported learners. Individual learning support is provided exceptionally well. Initial assessment is very effective, identified needs are met well and continuously monitored. Learners who lose their jobs are supported back into employment. Learners are confident in seeking support and personal issues are sensitively dealt with.
- Reflections has excellent leadership and strategic management. Strategies are focused on meeting the needs of learners as well as national and local imperatives. Leadership is excellent with clear communication of company mission and goals to all staff. The management of hairdressing programmes is outstanding. Staff have very good development opportunities and a commitment to supporting the varying needs of learners.
- Arrangements to safeguard learners are outstanding. Reflections satisfies all necessary government legislation. The two designated safeguarding officers are known to all learners. They organise a variety of training events and the production of resources to educate learners in various aspects of safe living. Reflections promotes personal welfare very well throughout the provision. Several learners with significant safeguarding issues have been assisted very effectively.
- Equality and diversity have a very high profile. Reflections targets recruitment to encourage participation from potential learners from the most deprived areas, from minority ethnic groups and from men who are typically under represented. The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is satisfactory.
- Arrangements to engage with users to support and promote improvement are outstanding. The methods employed to obtain users' views are well planned and particularly effective. Prompt and effective actions are taken in response to users' views, with careful implementation of identified developments and improvements. Self-assessment is inclusive and very effective in improving the quality of the provision.
- Reflections' use of resources to secure value for money is outstanding. Almost all learners achieve their qualifications within the planned time. Many progress to further courses, into employment or develop their careers within their existing employment. The excellent accommodation has been extended and improved. Resources are of a high professional standard and information and communication technology equipment and support are excellent.

What does Reflections Training Academy need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of reviews to ensure that all learners have their understanding of equality and diversity checked and reinforced.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the small size of the groups and the individual attention
- the good training both in the academy and the workplace
- the high levels of support that help them learn and progress
- the fantastic hairdressing shows that allow learners to show what they can do
- the help from Reflections for learners to gain re-employment and keep them in training when it all goes wrong
- the great staff who make learners feel safe and ensure they enjoy their training.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the frequency of visits to the salon.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good support, guidance and communication from Reflections, nothing is too much trouble
- the fantastic competitions and shows that inspire employers and their apprentices
- the very professional approach that promotes high expectations and standards
- the Reflections teaching manuals for cutting and colouring which are used for all staff development
- the employer events that provide opportunities to develop the latest skills.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the frequency of visits to the salon.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

8. Reflections has maintained a consistent trend of improvement in success rates over the last four years which remain significantly above the national average. Strategic planning is well researched to meet national and local needs. The development of the company is clearly focused on meeting employers' and learners' needs. Improvement planning takes good account of previous inspection reports, with robust self-assessment reporting providing a realistic framework for improvement. Resources, previously outstanding only in Bristol, are also outstanding in Birmingham. Overall, the provision has improved significantly.
9. Leaders and managers communicate the mission and goals of the company very effectively to staff, inspiring them to meet challenging targets. Arrangements for quality improvement are now more clearly documented and there is a designated member of staff responsible for quality improvement. Reflections has formalised quality improvement arrangements, introducing a calendar and a systematic way of checking the progress of quality initiatives. The observation of teaching and learning scheme has supported the development of outstanding teaching and learning.
10. The self-assessment process is inclusive, using learners' and employers' feedback well. It is closely linked to the quality improvement plan and the provision continues to improve every year. The self-assessment report is thorough, appropriately judgemental and largely accurate.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 1

11. Apprentices and 14- to 16-year-old learners achieve very well, both in terms of very high success rates and the development of good hairdressing technical skills. All success rates have continuously improved over the four years to 2010/11 and are outstanding. The completion of courses by the learners' planned end date is very high, with learners making very good progress against demanding targets. The average time for an intermediate apprentice to complete their qualification is 17 to 18 months. All groups of learners achieve equally well.
12. Learners display high skill levels in hairdressing, working with confidence and enjoyment in their work. They have a positive attitude, displaying high standards of client care and good interpersonal skills. Key skills attainment is high, with 11% of learners taking key skills tests at a higher level than required by their qualification. Many learners have significantly improved their literacy and numeracy skills. All learners feel very safe and attention to safe working practices is good. Learners benefit from extensive additional safeguarding training.

13. Progression from school link courses to apprenticeships is high. Progression to advanced apprenticeships is also high. Many ex-apprentices have become salon owners and assessors. Learners take part in extensive enrichment activities including inspirational shows. Outstanding examples of their work are prominently displayed in the academies.
14. Learners have a particularly good awareness and understanding of healthy lifestyles. Reflections provides healthy breakfasts before training starts and fruit at break times at both academies. Learners contribute well to their communities, actively participating in fundraising events and providing hairdressing services for those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable.

The quality of provision

Grade 1

15. Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. Learners benefit from excellent teaching in small groups, with additional staff provided at key points in lessons such as during client consultations. Lessons are fast paced and interesting, inspiring learners to participate fully. Teachers provide excellent role models for learners in both their expertise and standards demonstrated. They make good use of the high-quality equipment and resources available, including information and learning technology. The teaching of key skills is particularly good. Learners quickly develop their skills in literacy and numeracy.
16. Learners work on a wide range of clients and are encouraged to be creative. Finished work is of a high standard and captured on professionally taken photographs. These are promptly recorded on e-portfolios and used for Reflections' own promotional documentation.
17. Learners have a good understanding of the assessment procedures and take responsibility for recording their progress. Tutors plan assessments carefully to enable prompt completion of units. Workplace assessments are frequent and rigorous. Links to theory are well made and useful feedback motivates learners. Internal verification is outstanding. Learners' progress and assessors' performance are closely monitored.
18. Employers contribute effectively to learners' progress reviews. Discussions are productive and evaluate all aspects of learners' programmes. Learners initially undertake a pre-review to set clear and measurable targets. However, tutors do not sufficiently reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity through questioning at reviews.
19. Reflections meets the needs and interests of learners exceptionally well. Learners have a high expectation of career progression within the industry. Tutors strongly encourage progression to advanced qualifications. Most learners participate in a range of high calibre activities, such as the inspirational hair shows which attract positive feedback from employers. Reflections responds

well to employers' views, for example developing advanced qualifications in barbering and African-Caribbean hairdressing.

20. Partnership working with employers, schools, manufacturers and community groups is outstanding. Employers are highly committed and provide a good standard of training for their learners. Reflections consults fully with employers and schools about the design and provision of programmes. Training is exceptionally well promoted to learners at risk of underachieving, including those from areas of multiple deprivation. Partnerships have provided improved opportunities for disengaged learners to explore vocational routes. Young apprentices do well, and develop a more positive attitude to mainstream education as a result.
21. Care, guidance and support for learners are outstanding. A comprehensive induction introduces learners to all aspects of their training programmes and ensures they have a good understanding of both personal and study support available. One-to-one literacy and numeracy support sessions observed were outstanding, with clear improvements to learners' skills apparent. Learners made redundant are supported well back into employment. Initial assessment effectively identifies learners' support needs which are continuously monitored. Supported learners have higher success rates than unsupported learners. Learners are confident in seeking support and many do. Pastoral support is outstanding.

Leadership and management

Grade 1

22. Leadership and management are particularly effective. Staff share a clear understanding of the strategy to expand and improve the provision, taking into account national and local priorities, while strongly focusing on meeting the needs of learners and employers. Communication is very good. Well-structured team meetings focus on the progress of learners and the management of the provision, as well as broader strategic issues. The design and operation of both academies are identical, facilitating good operational management and sharing of good practice. Excellent staff development is well managed, promoting good opportunities for progression within Reflections. Data are used well to inform staff about learners' progression and managers about the overall performance of the company. Challenging targets are set and closely monitored.
23. Arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding. Comprehensive, well-written policies and procedures on safeguarding are in place. Learners understand personal safety particularly well, including safe working practices. The safeguarding officer is known to all learners. Learners receive good information about safeguarding, reinforced using cards issued to learners and prominently displayed posters. Reflections promotes safeguarding through special events covering different aspects of keeping safe, such as safe sexual practices, drinking behaviour and safety aspects of going on holiday. Employers have a good understanding of safeguarding, reinforced during reviews with learners. Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding issues. They

undergo enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks, recorded in a central register. Managers and tutors have dealt with several serious safeguarding issues very effectively.

24. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Reflections is a very inclusive organisation with good representation from men, minority ethnic groups and those from areas of high social deprivation. All staff have received training in equality and diversity which is updated annually and at team meetings. Reflections provides good information to learners at induction. Many equality and diversity activities are integrated within course materials used during training, which explore stereotyping and challenge entrenched beliefs. However, tutors do not sufficiently reinforce equality and diversity during reviews and many learners' understanding is no better than satisfactory.
25. Reflections' approach to engaging with users and improving the quality of provision is good. Feedback from learners and employers is collected and collated regularly. Any negative feedback is followed up and acted upon. 'You said, we did' posters are prominently displayed in academies reflecting the better facilities and changes in the ways in which the training is provided.
26. The self-assessment process is thorough, inclusive and well informed by data and the views of learners, staff and employers. The report is well written, comprehensive, judgemental and largely accurate. A briefer synopsis of the self-assessment report is available to all learners, employers and other interested parties. The self-assessment report links well with the quality improvement plan and both are used effectively to improve the quality of provision. Data are used to monitor performance of all learner groups. Action plans have clear, realistic targets which are reviewed regularly, leading to improved performance.
27. Reflections offers excellent value for money. Most learners are successful in achieving apprenticeship qualifications within the planned time. They gain skills quickly, becoming economically active for their employers. Outstanding resources in Bristol have been further expanded to include more teaching rooms and recreation facilities for learners. The Birmingham site has relocated to new outstanding and well-resourced accommodation. Teaching resources, including information and learning technology, are high quality and used well.

Information about the inspection

28. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's Divisional Director of Training, 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 funding body, the previous inspection report, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
29. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners, employers, partner schools and the subcontractors. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, individual learning support sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in the subject area the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Reflections Training Academy

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full-time and part-time courses, Foundation learning, including E2E); **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 at the time of inspection			
Full-time learners	781	-	629
Part-time learners		152	-
Overall effectiveness	1	1	1
Capacity to improve	1		
A. Outcomes for learners	1	1	1
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1		
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	1		
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	1		
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	1		
A3. How safe do learners feel?	1		
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	1		
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2		
B. Quality of provision	1	1	1
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	1		
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1		
B3. How effectively does the provider use partnerships to develop its provision to meet learners' needs?	1		
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to attain their learning goals?	1		
C. Leadership and management	1	1	1
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1		
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	-		
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	1		
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2		
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	1		
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	1		
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	1		

*where applicable to the type of provision

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