

Regis UK Ltd (Sassoon)

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 55215

Name of lead inspector: Lynda Cole HMI

Last day of inspection: 18 November 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Regis UK Limited
Lynchgate House
Cannon Park Centre
Lynchgate Road
Coventry
CV47 EH

Telephone number: 0247 684 0300

Information about the provider

1. In November 2002, Regis Corporation acquired Vidal Sassoon (Haircare Ltd). The company changed its name in 2009 to Regis UK Ltd but continues to trade as Sassoon. The company is one of the largest trainers of experienced hairdressers in the world as well as providing hair support to magazines and fashion shows. Sassoon employs approximately 360 team members throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Most team members are based in salons and they work with approximately 2,500 clients each week. As well as training apprentices funded through the Skill Funding Agency, Sassoon trains its own staff and around 140 other fee paying students on a weekly basis.
2. Currently, 21 learners are taking advanced apprenticeships and a further 39 are on apprenticeships programmes leading to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in hairdressing. Most learners are based in salons in London or Manchester. All training and assessment takes place in salons. Sassoon has 34 assessors and 20 training staff available in salons, and nine members of staff who are internal verifiers. Creative directors have responsibility for technical training and standards in the salons.
3. Approximately 3% of learners are of minority ethnic heritage, compared with 10% for the proportion in the population of England overall. A survey commissioned by the Hairdressing and Beauty Industry Authority (HABIA), the sector skills council, in 2008 noted that 93% of employees in the hairdressing industry were white and 90% were female. Seventy seven percent of Sassoon learners are female.
4. Regis UK Ltd provides salon placements on behalf of the following providers:
 - Hair and Beauty Training Provider (HABIT)
 - Strands Hairdressing Academy
 - Herberts of Liverpool Training Centre
 - J and E Training, Basildon
 - Total People
 - Partners 4 Training Ltd
 - Bedford College of Further Education
 - Worcester College of Technology
 - Carshalton College of Further Education
 - Bournemouth and Poole College
 - Grimsby College of Further and Higher Education
 - West Chester College
 - Middlesbrough College of Further Education

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	112 apprentices

Summary report

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

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

Subject Areas	Grade
Hairdressing	1

Overall effectiveness

5. The overall effectiveness of Sassoon’s provision is outstanding. The creative team works very effectively with management staff. Together, they use their extensive skills and expertise to guide and plan highly effective training across all the company’s salons. Staff in each salon provide consistently high standards of professional practical training and learners’ standards of work are outstanding. Overall success rates and the number of learners completing successfully by their target end date for 2009/10 was very high and much higher than the national average. The outcomes of those learners from minority groups are similar.
6. Learners are proud to work for Sassoon and the good training they receive enables them to progress very effectively to careers within the industry. Most learners progress to a range of different jobs within the company including teaching/training, international stage work and senior stylists. Clients receive exceptional standards of service in all salons. When qualified, learners are widely sought after by other employers.
7. The leadership team places the apprenticeship programme at the heart of developing the business. Quality improvement is an important part of the regular team meetings. The team regularly uses data to monitor aspects of training by each salon and across the company as a whole. However, quality

improvement does not routinely inform the self-assessment process and the report is insufficiently evaluative.

8. Arrangements for safeguarding are good. Promotion of equality and diversity is good. Whilst learners have a broad understanding of equality and diversity, the use of reviews is not always effective in reinforcing learning for this area after the start of their programme.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Overall success rates and the number of learners completing successfully by their target end date in 2009/10 were very high. Learners are highly skilled, creative and attain high technical standards, well above those required to achieve the NVQ.
- Learners work particularly effectively alongside staff in salons, providing exceptional standards of customer service to clients. As a result, learners gain outstanding employability skills, as testified by the high proportion of learners progressing to the advanced apprenticeship programme, more senior posts within the company and/or employment.
- Practical training is outstanding. Learning takes place in small groups with individual tuition by talented and experienced hairdressers. Learners work on a wide range of clients. However, trainers do not use information and learning technology sufficiently to enliven theory sessions.
- Learners take part in extensive enrichment activities and produce a prestigious annual show, which develops their ability in wider communication and hones team-building skills effectively.
- Sassoon has good partnership links with local schools and colleges, providing extensive work experience for these partners. They work closely with manufacturers, developing products and providing additional learning opportunities for learners.
- Learners gain good informal advice and guidance from more experienced learners, designated as 'buddies'. Stylists act as formal mentors providing good professional advice, guidance and support. However, although very few learners have literacy and numeracy needs, specialist support for literacy and numeracy is not available.
- Sassoon's leadership team sets high expectations for their learners and integrates them very well within the company. Highly experienced staff share their expertise and passion enthusiastically for creating exciting and inspirational hairdressing.
- The team uses teleconferencing very effectively to review learners' progress at their monthly meetings. This has improved communication and consistency, and ensures everyone involved with training has a better understanding of each learner's progress. The leadership team uses a good range of data reports to ensure learners receive support before they fall too far behind.

- Safeguarding arrangements are good. All learners are employees, and health and safety is a key feature of their induction training. Sassoon ensures learners are well supported and protected from harassment and bullying. Learners say they feel safe, and are confident they have different members of staff to act on their behalf and intervene if needed.
- Promotion for equality and diversity is good overall. Sassoon has successfully recruited more males, who achieve at the same high level as female learners. However, the use of reviews is not always effective in broadening learners' understanding of wider equality and diversity issues or reinforcing the learning that has taken place during their induction.
- Since the previous inspection, Sassoon's quality improvement arrangements have been improved and are now more formal. For example, routine observations of training use a clear set of effective criteria to provide valuable feedback to trainers. However, overall arrangements remain too informal and the leadership team and staff do not use them well to inform the self-assessment process, which is insufficiently evaluative.
- Value for money is outstanding with a high ratio of trainers to learners. Learners have additional workshops; they are involved in many external events and take part in training opportunities that provide excellent insights into the high professional standards of the company across the world.

What does Sassoon need to do to improve further?

- Develop the use and availability of information learning technology to allow learners to see more visual imagery in theory sessions.
- Develop arrangements to provide specialist support for those learners with literacy and numeracy needs.
- Critically review provision using an annual self-assessment process to produce an evaluative report, supported by a development plan that contributes to more formal quality improvement arrangements.
- Reinforce information about equality and diversity with learners routinely and regularly after induction, to deepen their understanding.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- training by highly skilled professional trainers with outstanding reputations
- relaxed and friendly way all staff provide support and guidance
- working in salons and meeting new clients
- the way they are encouraged to be highly creative
- planning a creative annual show where they can express themselves
- being proud about training with the best.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more time to meet with other apprentices in other salons.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

9. Sassoon has maintained the high standards of training identified at the previous inspection. Learners' achievement and attainment have continued to be outstanding. However, in the last three years, success rates declined to below the national average. This was because learners were not completing the key skills units until the end of their training; learners left the programme and went into employment without completing this component. Senior managers have transformed the structure of the programme whereby learners have to complete key skills during the first 12 weeks of the programme; this has resulted in a substantial increase to success rates for last year.
10. Although actions taken by the leadership team have significantly improved aspects of training, quality improvement remains too informal. The leadership team carries out self-assessment and development planning regularly. However, it is not part of any formal quality monitoring arrangements. The report identified key strengths and areas for improvement in a critical way but the main part of the report was too descriptive.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 1

11. Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Apprentices' overall success rates, and the number that complete successfully by their target end date, were very high in 2009/10, well above national averages. All learners achieve at a similar high rate. Their practical skills are outstanding. Learners in their fourth month of training execute complicated technical haircuts well beyond what would be normally expected, and beyond the level required by the NVQ. Learners enjoy their training. They make good progress in completing NVQ units and are set shorter target dates for completion than is usually seen.
12. Employability skills exhibited by learners are outstanding. Learners present themselves professionally from an early stage in training both in their dress and attitude. They work well and are valued members of their salon teams. Learners' own and others' clients receive exceptional standards of customer service in all salons. Learners develop good skills for recommending and selling retail products to clients. They take great pride in their work and its contribution to the success of their salons.
13. Progression to advanced apprenticeships and employment is particularly good. Senior staff give detailed career development lectures during induction and set high expectations of what learners can achieve. Learners gain advanced qualifications and progress to a range of different job roles within Sassoon, such as teaching/training, international stage work and senior stylist positions. Once qualified, learners are widely sought after by other employers.

14. Learners report that they feel safe at work. Health and safety is continually reinforced. Learners demonstrate high standards of safe working. They are discouraged from smoking and receive advice from mentors on healthy eating. Most learners are involved in fund raising for charities.

The quality of provision

Grade 1

15. Practical training is outstanding. Learners benefit from being taught in small groups, typically one trainer to four learners. Trainers are highly talented hairdressers, skilled at demonstration. They check the work of individual learners frequently and provide good feedback that encourages improvement. Learners work on a wide range of clients and are continually stretched and encouraged to be creative in their work. However, little use is made of information learning technology in theory sessions.
16. Resources to support training are outstanding. Salons are very well designed and equipped. Learners use a wide range of excellent products. Training staff act as inspirational role models for learners. Learners work in Sassoon salons in senior positions and help create new styles in prestigious events such as the London Fashion Week.
17. Enrichment activities include visits to art galleries, trade shows, manufacturer's demonstrations and the chance to assist at photo-shoots and hair shows. Five learners had just returned from assisting at a show in Paris. The annual competition for learners develops skills such as managing a budget, lighting, choreography, clothes and makeup. All learners found it inspirational. This extensive range of additional training develops outstanding practical and employability skills.
18. Sassoon have good partnership links with local schools and colleges, offering extensive work experience. The company focuses on schools with learners from under-represented groups. Sassoon has extensive links with hairdressing product manufacturers and assist in product development. This provides learners and stylists, participating in demonstration and presentations, with additional learning opportunities.
19. Overall support for learners is good. Sassoon assigns new learners to 'buddies', who have had experience in routine operational matters, to guide and support learners day by day. Learners have a senior staff member as a mentor who supports their training and development needs well, and provides personal support. Mentors are changed every six months so learners can experience a range of approaches and different hairdressing specialisms. Although few learners are identified, through the appropriate induction procedures, as requiring specialist help with literacy and numeracy, Sassoon does not have any suitably qualified tutors to give learners this specialist support.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

20. The leadership team of the creative and colour directors, regional managers, salon managers and the human resource manager provide highly effective leadership and management of training. This team has a very clear view about how to maintain high standards in the salons. Highly experienced staff in salons share their expertise and passion for creating exciting and inspirational hairdressing that equips learners with outstanding employability skills. Sassoon staff set high expectations for their learners who are well integrated within the company as a whole. Learners gain extremely valuable professional experience through involvement in fashion and studio photographic shoots for magazines and national and internal fashion campaigns.
21. Promotion for equality and diversity is good. Sassoon's safeguarding arrangements are good. All learners, who are employees, receive health and safety training as a key feature of their induction to the company. Sassoon provide learners with 'buddies', who are more experienced learners, and mentors, who are stylists, that ensure learners are well supported and protected from harassment and bullying. The company has an appropriate child protection policy and risk assessments for the school children who attend the two week placement in many Sassoon salons throughout the year. Learners say they feel safe and are confident they have members of staff to act on their behalf and intervene if needed.
22. Learners receive effective training that ensures they are confident in adapting their practice to meet a wide and diverse range of clients' needs. Sassoon staff in each salon work well with local schools to promote training to under represented groups, including promoting training to a school for Muslim girls. Sassoon has been successful in recruiting more males into the apprenticeship programme. However, few learners are from a minority ethnic heritage. Sassoon collects data for monitoring the performance of different groups which shows male learners, who are in the minority, achieve at the same level as the female learners. Staff use reviews to make sure learners are treated with respect. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Learners were able to give examples of adaptations to services, such as Muslim women being offered a service in a salon area with no males present and wheelchair users having an adapted backwash and entrance ramp. However, the use of reviews is not always effective at broadening learners' understanding of wider equality and diversity issues or reinforcing the learning for this area that has taken place during their induction.
23. Sassoon has improved quality improvement arrangements which are now more formal. This was a key challenge at the previous inspection. Roles and responsibilities for staff involved in training are clearer. Managers and staff have rewritten and standardised lecture notes for particular aspects of theory training for trainers to use across all salons. Routine observations of training now take place using clear effective criteria. The company continues to improve planning of training and managers now meet more regularly to monitor the

work in the salons. Following a decline in success rates, senior managers introduced closer monitoring. They scrutinise a good range of data every month to ensure learners receive support before they fall too far behind.

24. The leadership team meets at regular intervals to appraise provision and has produced a self-assessment report. However, the timing of self-assessment is haphazard and it does not take place routinely as part of quality improvement. Senior managers were involved in formulating key strengths and areas for improvement, which they collate as a list of appropriately critical bullet points for the self-assessment report. With the exception of the bullet points, the rest of the report is not sufficiently evaluative and contains too much description. Grades in the recently produced updated report closely match those awarded at the inspection.
25. Value for money is outstanding with a high ratio of trainers to learners. Sassoon provide learners with additional workshops and are involved in many external and exciting training opportunities that provide excellent insights into creativity and high professional standards.

Information about the inspection

26. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's regional manager for London salons, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
27. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners had recently completed for the provider. They 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)
Regis UK Ltd
Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Leamer 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	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	60	60
Part-time learners	0	0
Overall effectiveness	1	1
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	1	1
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	1	
How well do learners progress?	1	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	1	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being?*</i>	2	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2	
Quality of provision	1	1
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	1	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
Leadership and management	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	n/a	
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?	1	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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