

Hair Academy South West

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 52095

Name of lead inspector: Phil Hatton HMI

Last day of inspection: 25 November 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 120 East Reach
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Information about the provider

1. The Hair Academy South West (HASW) is a private limited company with its main academy site in Taunton, Somerset. The company was established in 1987 and contracts with the Dorset and Somerset Skills Funding Agency for apprenticeship training. The company originally traded as the Sarah Hodge Group providing training to its own group of nine hairdressing salons. During 2004, training was extended to include external employers under the name HASW. There are 50 external salons. In 2007, HASW began training in Berkshire and Devon.
2. Off-the-job training is delivered at academies in Taunton, Barnstaple and Reading for learners employed in salons throughout Somerset, Devon and Berkshire. There are 10 tutors, 25 assessors, 2 internal verifiers and 2 directors. There are currently 94 apprentices and 25 advanced apprentices. Apprenticeship contracts account for 85% of HASW's training provision. HASW provides level 1 hairdressing qualifications to 8 pupils in Years 10 and 11. Privately funded learners also attend the academy.
3. The South West is essentially rural with low unemployment rates. There are few people from minority ethnic groups, making up only 1.2% of Somerset's population, compared with 9.1% nationally. In 2009, 49% of young people in Somerset achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including mathematics and English, compared with 49.8% nationally.
4. The provider provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Castle School, Taunton
 - Wadham School, Taunton
 - Great Torrington School, Barnstaple.
5. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the provider in Reading:
 - Forresters4Hair

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	11 part-time learners
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	150 apprentices

Summary report

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

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

Subject Areas	Grade
Hairdressing	2

Overall effectiveness

6. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Overall success rates are consistently high. Learners enjoy their studies, gain increased confidence, employability skills, work safely and demonstrate appropriate levels of hairdressing skills. The number of learners making good progress and successfully achieving apprenticeships in a timely manner is particularly high.

7. The teaching of hairdressing practical and theory is good. Learners are taught in small groups and receive high levels of individual tuition and support. There is particularly good use of information learning technology to enhance teaching of hairdressing theory. Learning in practical and theory is checked regularly. HASW staff effectively monitor the progress of each learner and, where necessary, they provide additional training to help learners achieve. Arrangements to identify and support learners' literacy and numeracy needs are satisfactory and those who require it receive satisfactory support that helps them achieve. Good information, advice and guidance, focused on careers in hairdressing, help learners understand the progression opportunities available to them. Progression to advanced apprenticeships and employment are high. Resources to support training are good and accommodation at the main centre is outstanding.

8. Managers lead staff well and promote a culture of teamwork. Good communication helps staff focus on meeting the training needs of their learners.

The promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity are satisfactory and learners have a satisfactory understanding. Employers' and learners' views are collected regularly and have influenced positive changes to the programme. Processes to protect learners from bullying and harassment are very effective and good safeguarding procedures are well embedded. Quality assurance and improvement planning are good and fully inform an effective self-assessment process.

Main findings

- Overall combined success rates for apprenticeships are good, being consistently above national averages. Within these, advanced apprenticeship overall success rates are higher than those for apprenticeships. Timely success rates are very good, being the same as overall success rates and well above national averages. Success rates for 14- to 16-year-olds are good.
- Learners have good employment skills, they display confidence and enjoy their work. Professional standards of client care are high, all learners display good inter-personal skills when working with clients. Learners' practical hairdressing skills at all levels are at least satisfactory and good at the academy in Devon. All follow good health and safety practices to protect their clients.
- Learners state that they feel safe and know who to report problems to. They have good awareness of safe working practices within their salons and at the academy. HASW supports learners' awareness through good training on feeling and staying safe. Good sessions on harassment and bullying were observed. Learners understand their rights and responsibilities at work particularly well.
- Teaching and learning are good. Group sizes are small. Good one-to-one coaching is used very effectively. Information technology is used particularly well, with internet-based resources reinforcing current topical issues. Training in the workplace is at least satisfactory. Tutors do not always correct spelling and grammatical errors on learners' written work.
- Resources are good with projectors and smart boards at all centres. The facilities at the main Taunton Academy are outstanding. This academy is new, purpose built, and in a good location and has state-of-the-art resources. There are high numbers of clients. Teachers work in salons and display current commercial skills which are beneficial to the learners.
- Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. Assessors use good questioning techniques to check learners' in-depth knowledge when learners complete practical assessments. Learners make good progress, although most assessment takes place at the academies.
- Reviews meet contractual requirements and check the welfare of learners effectively. Targets agreed with learners in individual learning plans are closely monitored and drive high timely completion. The targets agreed with learners at reviews are too broad and less effective. Employers receive good progress reports on their learners but do not receive academy training plans.
- Learners have very good progression opportunities. The company offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships and a high proportion of learners

progress to advanced apprenticeships. Learners understand the career pathways within their salons, industry and into teaching. Almost all learners progress into employment. Learners have satisfactory enrichment activities during training.

- Senior managers provide strong leadership and help raise expectations. Communication is good and teamwork is encouraged. Staff contribute very effectively to positive change, leading to improvements for learners. Staff have good development opportunities. HASW's safeguarding procedures are good. They are well communicated to staff and learners. Very effective strategies to protect learners from bullying and harassment are in place.
- HASW's approach to improving quality improvement processes is good. It uses peer review networks and a critical friend well. Several key aspects of the provision have improved since the last inspection. Self-assessment is well developed, presenting an accurate view of the provision. Observation of teaching and other training processes is in place but does not clearly identify good practice.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Clear and effective policies are in place. Good emphasis is placed on promoting equality and diversity during training, but opportunities to reinforce understanding during progress reviews are missed. Learners' understanding is satisfactory. Strategies to encourage participation of people from under-represented groups in training are good.
- HASW offers good value for money. Learners achieve in a timely manner and quickly become economically effective for their employers. The quality of resources is good and resources are used effectively to support learning. They have been continuously improved in response to learner views.

What does Hair Academy South West need to do to improve further?

- Further improve overall apprenticeship success rates to bring them in line with the very high advanced apprenticeship success rates by continuing to implement improvement strategies and rigorous target setting at learner progress reviews.
- Share HASW's training plans with employers to enable them to consolidate the skills their learners are developing at HASW, in the workplace.
- Produce a wider range of scenarios that further reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity during the review process.
- Establish a more self-critical approach to observation of teaching and other training processes that clearly identifies aspects of good practice to further improve the experience of learners.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the small group sizes
- the friendly staff
- doing theory and practical separately
- the tutors making theory understandable
- the one-to-one support
- the facilities at the Taunton Academy
- working on clients.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more live models to practise on.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the flexibility of training enabling apprentices to attend on different days
- the reports on learner progress and communication
- how smart and modern the new academy is.

What employers would like to see improved:

- more structured training
- not knowing what apprentices are doing at the academy each week without asking them.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

9. HASW demonstrates good capacity to improve. HASW has made significant improvements to their provision including the successful introduction of safeguarding. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, such as the reinforcement of health and safety with learners, have been rectified and many are now strengths. Previously inadequate arrangements for learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs are now satisfactory. The combined success rates of apprentices have continued to improve despite the size of the provision increasing. Timely success rates continue to be particularly high.
10. Leadership and management have improved. Clear strategic direction is given to staff. More data are collected and are better used. Targets for key performance indicators are set, most of which are met. Effective training and personal development planning for staff are embedded into the quality cycle to improve teaching and learning. All staff observed used learning technology well, a result of its well-managed introduction, giving learners an improved learning experience.
11. The self-assessment process is inclusive and makes good use of comprehensive learner and employer feedback to inform the judgements in the report. A Beacon provider acts as a critical friend. The resultant report presents a largely accurate picture of the provision with self-assessment grades matching all but one inspection grade. HASW has been self-critical in making judgements and identifying areas for improvement. Appropriate comparisons are made with other similar providers and to national data trends. Development planning is thorough and leads to improvements.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

12. Overall combined success rates for apprentices are good, consistently above national averages. In 2008-09 they were 74%. Rates for advanced apprenticeships are higher than for apprenticeships. Timely success rates are very high with no difference between overall and timely success rates. Historically, males underperformed compared to females but the gap is now minimal. The 14- to 16-year-old learners, who are mainly from pupil referral units, achieve well.
13. Learners display confidence and enjoyment in their work. They have a good attitude to employment, displaying high standards of client care. Learners have very good inter-personal skills and are highly professional with clients. Learners' practical hairdressing skills are satisfactory overall but good at the academy in Devon.
14. Learners say they feel safe and have good awareness of safe working practices. HASW supports learners' awareness through good training on feeling and

staying safe. Good sessions on harassment and bullying were observed. There is a high emphasis on health and safety in most practical lessons, including spot checks from managers that safe working practices are being followed. Learners have presentations by community support and crime prevention officers. Inappropriate internet sites are blocked.

15. Learners research alcohol and drug abuse and display results as posters on training room walls. Healthy eating is embedded within the curriculum. Each month a specific topic is covered in theory training on health issues. Vending machines have healthy options for learners to choose from.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

16. Teaching and learning are very good. Learners work professionally. Health and safety are continually reinforced. Teachers are good facilitators to learning, using good general questioning techniques to check learning. In the best classes, the teachers develop a particularly good learning environment where learners feel confident to express themselves. Groups are small and good one-to-one coaching is used effectively by teachers. Information technology is used particularly effectively at all three centres, with topical resources from the internet reinforcing exploration of current issues. Grammatical and spelling errors on learners' written work are not always corrected.
17. Resources are good, with projectors and smart boards at all centres. There are plentiful numbers of clients, allowing learners to consolidate their skills and progress. The new purpose-built Taunton Academy is outstanding. Teaching staff continue to work as hairdressers, their current commercial skills benefit the employability skills acquired by learners.
18. Learners receive at least satisfactory training in the workplace. Employers receive good termly progress reports on their learners, but do not receive an academy training plan. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. Most assessment takes place at the academies, where assessors use good questioning techniques to check learners' knowledge when completing practical assessments. Most learners pass written tests at the first attempt.
19. Long-term targets and learner tracking on individual learning plans are good and used well by teachers to motivate learners to achieve before their planned end date. However, targets in learner quarterly progress reviews are broad and insufficiently detailed.
20. Learners have very good progression opportunities. A very high proportion of learners progress to a variety of career pathways within the hairdressing industry. Many stylists and trainers in salons have trained with HASW and are good role models to learners. Progression from apprenticeships to advanced apprenticeship in 2009-10 is very good at 75%.

21. Enrichment activities are satisfactory. HASW stages an annual competition and presentation event and learners have the opportunity to attend hairdressing exhibitions, photoshoots and shows.
22. HASW has satisfactory partnership links with local schools, organisations, manufacturers and other training providers. This facilitates working collaboratively to improve the quality of provision.
23. Support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. All learners are initially assessed. HASW has employed a specialist tutor since the last inspection who supports learners' numeracy and literacy requirements. The small number of learners who receive support do at least as well as those not requiring it. The director of education supports pastoral needs well.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

24. Managers provide strong leadership and clear strategic direction. Expectations of staff are high. Continual investment in resources demonstrates the commitment to improvement. Communication is good. An improved framework of meetings encourages teamwork for the benefit of learners. Staff are consulted through meetings and surveys, contributing to positive change. An appropriate, effective annual appraisal system leads to good development opportunities. All staff are encouraged to attend at least three training events from an annual schedule of activities. Staff enjoy working for HASW. They are ambitious for the success of the company.
25. Good arrangements for safeguarding are well embedded. Staff are trained and have an appropriate understanding of child protection issues. Learners receive a particularly well written HASW 'stop abuse' safeguarding leaflet which has been widely distributed to employers, who also receive a shortened version of the safeguarding policy. Lines of responsibility are clear. The education director is the designated safeguarding person and maintains a list of vulnerable learners. All staff undergo enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, updated every three years. They are recorded in a central register. Connections to safeguarding boards have been made and HASW maintains a detailed safeguarding research file. The safe use of information technology is clearly understood by learners. There is a strong emphasis on anti-bullying. Closed circuit television and fingerprint registration are used in the Taunton Academy to help learner safety.
26. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Policies are appropriate, regularly updated and cover current legislation. A leaflet for learners covers harassment, fair treatment and the law well. Aspects of equality and diversity, such as harassment and bullying, are reinforced in training sessions. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated. The complaints procedure is clear. Complaints are promptly investigated and resolved. Staff receive regular training. Strategies to widen participation in training for under-represented groups are good. HASW provides work-experience for schools. Male learners represent HASW at careers events and all publicity materials contain a range of

good visual imagery representative of the local community. HASW offers barbering specifically to attract male learners. Despite these strategies, the number of males and ethnic minority learners is low. Learner progress reviews do not adequately reinforce learners' understanding of equality and diversity. Learners have a satisfactory, but basic, understanding.

27. HASW's approach to improving quality improvement processes is good. An annual quality improvement cycle covers training well. Learners and employers are surveyed at key points throughout the year. HASW uses posters to summarise the views of users and what has been done in response to them. Peer reviews with a local and Northern Irish provider work well. Several key aspects of the provision have improved since the last inspection. The use of management information, including new electronic learner tracking systems, has improved. Self-assessment is well established, presenting a largely accurate view of the provision. It is used to set a series of improvement targets across a range of areas. Observation of teaching and other training processes is in place but does not clearly identify and facilitate the spread of good practice.
28. HASW offers good value for money. Learners achieve in a timely manner, quickly becoming economically active for their employers. Good resources are used effectively to meet the requirements of learners and support learning. They have been continuously improved in response to learner views. Staff and learners are responsive to using resources in a sustainable way. Recycled waste heat from air conditioning at Taunton is recycled to heat water used in practical training.

Information about the inspection

29. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's director of education, 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, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, 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 to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in the subject area the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Hair Academy South West

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 at the time of inspection			
Full-time learners	161	11	150
Part-time learners			
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2		
A. Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2		
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2		
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	1		
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2		
A3. How safe do learners feel?	2		
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	n/a		
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a		
B. Quality of provision	2	2	2
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2		
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2		
B3. How effectively does the provider use partnerships to develop its provision to meet learners' needs?	3		
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to attain their learning goals?	3		
C. Leadership and management	2	2	2
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	n/a		
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3		
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2		
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2		
C7. 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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