

# Lookfantastic Training Limited

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 53697

**Name of lead inspector:** Richard Beaumont HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 24 June 2011

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** Unit A1  
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## Information about the provider

1. Lookfantastic Training Limited (LF) became a subsidiary of the 'e' commerce group, The Hut, based in Manchester in November 2010. At the previous inspection in November 2007, LF traded under the name NVQs.com Training Group. LF has traditionally offered work-based learning in hairdressing across Sussex and Kent, with one salon in central London. In 2009/10, LF enrolled 112 apprentices, 38 advanced apprentices and 78 Train to Gain learners. At the time of the inspection, Train to Gain provision had ceased. All provision is funded by the Skills Funding Agency.
2. Based in Hove, Sussex, LF has three training centres in Hove, Worthing and Dartford. All learners attend off-the-job training, mostly for one day a week. LF employs 15 staff of whom 6 are part-time employees.
3. LF has very recently enrolled 42 learners from The Hut's own staff based in Manchester on advanced and apprenticeship programmes in customer service. This area of training was not included in the inspection. From August 2011, LF will become the lead partner of a consortium of five work-based learning providers based in and around Sussex.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
<b>Employer provision:</b> Train to Gain Apprenticeships	78 learners 150 apprentices

## Summary report

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

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

## Overall effectiveness

4. LF offers learners an outstanding training experience. The development of learners' hairdressing, personal and business skills is good. Overall, the number of learners achieving qualifications is above that of other similar providers. However, in 2009/10, a number of factors, now fully resolved, resulted in a significant decline. The ability of learners to make informed choices about their health and well-being is outstanding.
5. Training is exceptionally well planned and flexible to allow learners to progress at their own pace. The quality of training in the salons and at LF's training centres motivates all learners to achieve their full potential and the highest standards required by the hairdressing industry. Learners really do enjoy the training and much effort is made to make sure they achieve. Personal support for learners is very good, although for some learners with additional learning or special needs, the support available and the tracking of progress are not always sufficiently clear.
6. The leadership and management of the programmes at all levels are outstanding. Communication to ensure that the learners' experience is as good as it can be is particularly effective. All employers, learners and staff have a good understanding of the progress learners make towards achieving their qualifications. Learners have a good understanding of being safe and equality and diversity. The views of learners are used well to support further

improvements, although no formal system is in place to gather the views of employers. Quality assurance arrangements are good, although some aspects lack detailed analysis. The management of resources to enhance the quality of provision is outstanding.

## Main findings

- Learners achieve well. The numbers successfully completing their courses have improved over the past four years. Although there was a dip in 2009/10 the figures improved the following year. More learners now successfully complete their studies than at similar providers.
- The development of skills is good. Overall, the standard of learners' work is good and very good at advanced level. Learners are highly motivated and develop good interpersonal skills and confidence. Progression to employment and the advanced apprenticeship programme is good.
- Learners enjoy the training, they feel safe and their attention to safe working practices is good. Opportunities for learners to develop an understanding of their health and well-being are outstanding.
- The training delivered at LF is outstanding. The training in the salons and at the training centres is planned particularly well. Learners are effectively challenged to develop their skills to include the latest trends and high industry standards. Teachers use their knowledge very well to motivate learners who benefit greatly from a low learner to staff ratio.
- Assessment is exceptionally flexible to suit the individual learners' and employers' needs. The review of learners' progress is especially effective. Learners know exactly what they need to do to achieve. They use the targets set at regular review meetings to manage their own learning and they have a good understanding of how to track their own progress.
- Learners receive very good personal support. Throughout the programme tutors and employers offer effective advice and guidance. Induction sessions are planned well and enjoyed by all learners who have a good understanding of the requirements of their apprenticeship. For some learners with specific additional needs, the planning of support and the monitoring of improvement are not always sufficiently effective.
- Leadership is very strong. Management of the quality of provision at all levels is outstanding. Communication between staff, learners and employers effectively ensures that learners gain an excellent training experience. Safeguarding arrangements are good.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. LF is very welcoming and inclusive and learners are very positive about the levels of respect they receive. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity. Much improvement has been made in closing the gaps in the achievements of different groups. The planning of equality and diversity in lessons is not sufficiently developed.

- The arrangements for learners to voice their views are good and these actively inform improvements to the quality of provision. However, the process to formally gather employers' views is not sufficiently developed.
- Quality improvement arrangements are good. The quality of the provision is constantly reviewed and improvements made. However, some aspects of performance are not sufficiently analysed to inform LF where even further improvements can be made. Management of resources is excellent and value for money is outstanding.

### **What does Lookfantastic Training Limited need to do to improve further?**

- Effectively plan and support individual learners' specific additional or special needs and regularly check for improvement.
- Further develop quality assurance procedures that clearly and accurately reflect the quality of provision and ensure actions for improvement are systematically monitored and inform self-assessment in a more detailed and robust manner.

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

#### **What learners like:**

- the opportunity to train with LF
- friendly staff who listen
- the outstanding personal support
- being treated like a colleague
- being able to ask the same question again and again without being made to feel inadequate
- not having to worry about making mistakes
- the opportunity to progress to advanced level
- attending the training centre.

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

- the planning of theory lessons to meet individual learners' needs
- more individual support in LF centre practical lessons.

### **Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What employers like:**

- the much improved communication since the new training advisers were appointed
- the support for learners experiencing problems
- the good training opportunities.

**What employers would like to see improved:**

- further consideration of employers' in-house training needs
- greater focus on attendance
- the standard of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) at intermediate level to meet commercial needs.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

7. Since the previous inspection, LF has made further improvements to the quality of provision and leadership and management. Three out of the past four years have recorded success rates well above national averages for similar providers. However, LF is fully aware of the reasons why the 2009/10 success rates were low and actions to improve them have been particularly successful. All staff are fully and effectively committed to the delivery of high-quality training and can clearly articulate how this has been achieved.
8. The findings of the inspection matched LF's self-assessment well. The report itself is too descriptive and, in places, it is not sufficiently clear how some grades awarded have been achieved. Successful actions have been taken in one of the two areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Sufficient models are now available for learners to practise on, but insufficient formal analysis of some aspects of performance continues to be an area for improvement.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

9. Prior to 2009/10, overall apprenticeship success rates were well above the national average. However, in 2009/10, success rates declined significantly to 61%. They have since much improved and are again well above the national average for similar providers. Most of the Train to Gain provision was delivered in 2009/10 and the success rate was well below the national average. Provider's data for 2011 indicate no significant variations in the attainment of different groups of learners.
10. Learners are highly motivated and develop good practical and interpersonal skills and confidence. Overall, the standard of learners' work is good, but it is particularly high at advanced level. Learners are continually challenged to develop and improve their skills. They enjoy their training and work in a professional manner. Progression to employment and the advanced apprenticeship programme are good. Many learners continue their career in the salons in which they have been trained.
11. Learners have a very positive attitude towards their training and feel particularly safe. They have a good understanding of what it means to be safe and how to report cases where their own or others' safety is compromised. Their attention to safe and hygienic working practices is good. Actions to develop learners' understanding of healthy living are outstanding. For example, learners have a good understanding of the physical demands of being a hairdresser and how they can improve their well-being through a range of actions, such as choosing a more balanced diet.

## The quality of provision

## Grade 1

12. Training is very well planned and draws upon emerging and current fashion trends to establish excellent links to the hairdressing industry. Learners are challenged and fully engaged in their learning and gain much benefit from a low learner to staff ratio. They acquire great advantage from highly professional in-salon trainers, with further opportunities to develop their skills at LF's training centres. Being able to make mistakes is part of the positive learning culture at LF. The development of learners' hairdressing knowledge is very good. In particular, learners on the advanced apprenticeship programme are encouraged to develop an understanding of hairdressing product content through planned scientific experiments. The development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills is incorporated well into the hairdressing curriculum. It is made especially relevant to the hairdressing industry and learners gain improved transferable skills which are relevant to their current and future employment. However, the planning of some theory lessons does not always appropriately coincide with all learners' development needs.
13. Learners have a very good understanding of the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve. All learners are fully conversant with short and medium term targets that are set at regular meetings. They use this information very well to manage and improve their learning and practical skills. Learners are adept at using their portfolios as a source of tracking progress. Assessment is good, exceptionally flexible and suits the needs of learners and employers well.
14. The needs of learners and employers are particularly well met. Where learners join the training without a work placement, LF carefully matches them to an appropriate employer, resulting in an effective working and training relationship. Upon the completion of training, many learners continue working for the same employer. Learners benefit from in-house specialist training and are able to develop their skills over and above those of the hairdressing qualification. Many employers confirm that LF is their preferred training partner and their involvement in the training programme is carefully planned and monitored to maximise the learners' experience. A good range of enrichment programmes enhances the development of learners' skills and employment opportunities.
15. Overall, care, advice and guidance are very good. Learners very much enjoy induction sessions and have a good understanding of the requirements of their apprenticeship from the outset. Learners at risk of not achieving or making slow progress are offered very good, and well coordinated, support from employers and LF staff. Tutors offer effective in-class support at the training centres. However, whilst initial assessment is used effectively to enrol learners on to the most appropriate level of qualifications, actions to support those learners with additional learning and/or special needs are not always sufficiently planned for or their progress monitored sufficiently. For example, for those learners who self-declare dyslexia, little diagnostic testing is available to assess the level of the condition or action taken to make appropriate arrangements to support the learner.



## Leadership and management

## Grade 1

16. Leadership is excellent and the strategic aims of the organisation are well understood by all staff. Management of the provision at all levels is very effective. All staff are very clear about their roles and responsibilities. They work enthusiastically as a well developed team to provide outstanding teaching and learning, improve the quality of the provision and successfully help learners to achieve their goals. Training staff inspire learners and very well organised communication between all users ensures the needs of learners are fundamental to the success of the business. The access to, and use of, data have much improved since the previous inspection and data are effectively used to monitor key areas of performance. LF's plans to extend provision into The Hut's Manchester operation and take the lead role in a local work-based learning partnership have been carefully developed to maintain LF's high training standards.
17. Safeguarding arrangements are good and safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive. A well informed senior manager is designated as the safeguarding responsible person. All staff have been fully trained and they further develop learners' knowledge in lessons and the review of their progress. Safeguarding has a high priority in all aspects of LF's provision. Actions to support learners with personal issues are well monitored and documented. Central Records Bureau checks are fully maintained on all staff who come into contact with learners. LF ensures employers are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and supports employers whose knowledge is not sufficiently developed. LF ensures that risk assessments are fully maintained.
18. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The key message from learners during inspection was that a very strong ethos of respect pervades LF. Learners new to LF experience a detailed and informative induction that clearly explains the key aspects of equality and diversity. This is further developed by the completion of the Equalities, Rights and Responsibilities qualification during the early stage of the learners' training programme. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity and what it means to them as hairdressers. LF closely monitors the performance of different groups of learners and has successfully reduced significant variations experienced in 2009/10, for example lower success rates achieved by male learners than female. LF is in the process of further developing the reinforcement of learners' knowledge with improved question and answer opportunities at the meetings to review learners' progress.
19. Overall, the arrangements to engage with users to support and promote improvement are good. Learners' views are actively sought throughout their training and culminate in an end-of-programme questionnaire. This is appropriately analysed and the findings used to inform the self-assessment process. Employers' views are canvassed, but no formal system is used to gather and analyse their collective views and has a limited impact on the quality of provision offered. This has been recognised by LF as an area for development.

20. The processes for monitoring and evaluating performance at LF are good. The cycle of continuous improvement is fully incorporated into the daily operation. The tracking of action plans is thorough and effectively managed. However, some aspects of quality assurance are not sufficiently clear. For example, the individual findings from the observation of teaching and learning are not analysed to show clearly what is good about the training at LF and what could collectively be improved.
  
21. The management of resources is outstanding. The progress learners make in meeting the needs of the industry is high. Success rates are well above the national average. Overall training resources are very good and staff successfully deliver high quality provision.

## Information about the inspection

22. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's Regional Manager, 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 and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
23. 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 each of the subject areas the provider offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Lookfantastic Training Limited**  
**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 <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>		
Full-time learners	170	170
Part-time learners		
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	2	
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
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	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	1	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2	
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
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?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
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>	-	
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?	2	
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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