

Span Training and Development Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		16–20 June 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Success rates for most apprentices are good and performance gaps between different groups of apprentices are closing.
- Most apprentices make rapid progress in developing employment-related and vocational skills.
- Progression from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships is very good and many apprentices take additional qualifications and higher-level courses in assessment and management.
- Good quality off-the-job training promotes very good levels of understanding and knowledge.
- Apprentices gain good communication skills and develop productive and professional relationships with staff, clients, and each other.
- Strong performance management and staff development measures support continual improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Quality assurance processes are thorough and lead to improvements that have a positive impact on learning.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough teaching, learning and assessment in hairdressing is outstanding.
- Tutors do not routinely help hairdressing apprentices improve their written English by correcting their spelling and grammatical errors.
- Trainers do not sufficiently enhance hairdressing apprentices' awareness and understanding of equality and diversity by using appropriate developmental questioning during training sessions and reviews.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for hairdressing apprentices by routinely:
 - providing written feedback and more detailed written targets to support apprentices' independent learning
 - ensuring that all spelling and grammatical errors in their work are corrected.
- Improve hairdressing apprentices' awareness and understanding of equality and diversity by using examples based on real-work situations, and through better questioning. Ensure that trainers and assessors are able to use work-related and broader scenarios confidently to help apprentices understand the relevance and importance of equality and diversity in the work place and beyond.
- Improve the understanding of key strengths and areas for improvement through fuller stakeholder involvement in the self-assessment process to help identify all the actions needed to improve the provision from good to outstanding.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for apprentices are good. Success rates reflect the fact that most learners are making good progress relative to their starting points and achieving their qualifications. Success rates overall and within planned timescales vary from significantly above national rates in early years and playwork, to around the national rates in hairdressing.
- Trainers and assessors set challenging targets for most apprentices. They provide helpful and detailed written and oral feedback that supports apprentices' swift progress and independent learning. A minority of learners make slower progress because the feedback they receive is insufficiently detailed. The majority of apprentices' work meets or exceeds the framework requirements and many apprentices gain useful additional qualifications.
- Apprentices enjoy their learning and feel very well supported by their tutors, assessors and the Span Training and Development Limited (Span) field service managers. Their attendance is good and they arrive on time for off-the-job and workplace training where they develop good employment-related skills, make good progress and produce high quality work. A good proportion of apprentices achieve English and mathematics qualifications at the appropriate level and a minority achieve at a higher level, which supports their progression to the advanced apprenticeship.
- Managers closely monitor the relative performance of different groups of learners, and the progress of individuals, using an effective locally developed management information system. As a result, they have recognised and taken action to arrest the decline in success rates for hairdressing apprentices and reduce performance gaps; for example, between learners with identified learning difficulties or disabilities and those without, and between 16- to 18-year-old apprentices and their older peers.
- Apprentices develop mathematics, English and information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively through off-the-job training sessions. However, hairdressing trainers and assessors pay insufficient attention to correcting errors in grammar and spelling. Apprentices also develop additional job-related skills, for example in perming. They also develop team working and communication skills through very effective group working during off-the-job training.

- Provision in hairdressing and in early years and playwork reflects local and national priorities well. The majority of hairdressing apprentices progress on to advanced apprenticeships. Employers value the vocational and broader employment-related skills developed by their employees during apprenticeships. Many of the salon assessors are former apprentices who have benefited from completing further courses that enabled them to achieve higher-level assessor and management qualifications.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- A clear focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has resulted in a positive impact on the progress of apprentices. Staff and employers provide effective levels of care, support and motivation leading to good outcomes. Apprentices receive good support through frequent reviews and assessments and their progress is monitored effectively in individual learning plans. Employers' premises are high quality and provide the breadth of services that give apprentices good opportunities to develop their skills.
- The quality of training and assessment undertaken by employers is evaluated and quality assured thoroughly by Span staff. Apprentices' skill development is good and many apprentices demonstrate skills above the level expected. For example, apprentices in early years and playwork quickly become confident at dealing with parents and at leading circle time with children, and hairdressing apprentices become adept at colouring.
- Training in the vast majority of employers' premises is excellent, with a clear focus on improving skills and progress. Off-the-job training is high quality and promotes good levels of understanding and knowledge. Apprentices arrive at sessions promptly and are ready to learn. Trainers are skilled and experienced; during sessions they make effective reference to vocational and professional examples to interest apprentices and extend learning.
- Varied learning activities, well managed by trainers, capture the interests of apprentices, and enable trainers to check knowledge and understanding. Apprentices demonstrate good levels of concentration and cooperate well in a range of learning activities, which they clearly enjoy. In one creative lesson, apprentices used smart phones to find images of specific haircuts, and emailed these to the trainer. The images were immediately projected for comment amongst the group, leading to a clear explanation of cutting techniques from the trainer.
- Staff treat apprentices fairly and ensure each has the opportunity to succeed. For example, trainers gave extra care and support to a young single parent to help her successfully continue with her training following maternity leave. Extra reviews support apprentices with additional learning needs, and any who may be falling behind with their assessments. Concern for safe working is strong in early years and playwork. However, protective equipment is not used consistently well in all employers' salons.
- Initial and diagnostic assessment are thorough and these usefully inform the planning of training. Staff meticulously monitor the progress of apprentices. Apprentice reviews are frequent; the targets for progress are recorded in well-organised portfolios of a high standard. As a result, most apprentices are well aware of their progress and the remaining targets they need to achieve.
- Assessors carry out frequent high quality assessments on employers' premises, encouraging apprentices to improve relevant technical and commercial skills. Targeted questions are used well to check apprentices' knowledge and understanding. Apprentices speak highly of the support they receive from Span staff and their employers. However, written comments and feedback do not always provide apprentices with clear information on how they can improve their skills. A minority of targets are insufficiently challenging to ensure apprentices reach their full potential.
- Staff spend productive time with apprentices on the employers' premises supporting them to achieve their functional skills and enabling completion of their framework. In the off-the-job training sessions mathematics is integrated well. Apprentices understand the relevance to their studies, for example in cutting angles in different hairstyles. However, trainers do not routinely

or adequately correct spelling and grammatical errors in written work included in hairdressing apprentices' portfolios.

- Apprentices talk confidently about their work and their wish to progress to higher levels of learning; they are inspired by staff to consider a good range of career opportunities. The vast majority of them remain in employment and progress to advanced apprenticeships.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement in hairdressing but is outstanding in early years and playwork. Early years and playwork apprentices have a thorough understanding and are able to apply this knowledge in their practice. In hairdressing training sessions and during reviews, trainers and assessors miss opportunities to develop apprentices' awareness and understanding.

Early years and playwork

Apprenticeships

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment in early years and playwork are outstanding, as reflected in success rates that are significantly above national rates. Employers value highly the training their employees receive. Apprentices quickly increase their confidence and develop highly effective social, teamwork and employability skills through their training. They are able to take on additional responsibilities early in their training and the vast majority receive permanent contracts of employment on completion of their advanced apprenticeship.
- Support for apprentices is outstanding throughout their training, which enables them to make excellent progress. Assessors' visits maintain motivation and drive outstanding progress. Employers are involved in reviewing apprentices training, assessments and in monitoring and reviewing their progress. Assessors and functional skills tutors identify and meet apprentices additional support needs well. Assessors agree comprehensive learning targets with apprentices, but they do not always write these down in sufficient detail, which can hinder independent learning.
- Assessors plan personalised learning programmes that motivate apprentices to make excellent progress. They use a wide range of appropriate teaching, coaching and assessment methods, meeting the diverse needs of apprentices. Assessors check apprentices' progress thoroughly in all sessions and this helps them develop a deep understanding of topics. Frequent assessments relate well to the workplace and challenge apprentices to extend and develop their knowledge.
- Resources at the subcontractor, Haydon Training Services Limited, are very good. Classrooms for functional skills delivery are well equipped and allow appropriate access to information and learning technology. Apprentices are directed to useful textbooks and websites to support their independent studies. Those who do not have access to computers can borrow a laptop to use for research and in completion of their assignments.
- All apprentices undergo initial and diagnostic assessment that assessors use well to plan detailed personalised learning programmes. Assessors provide outstanding learning support alongside the main programme and this is effective in helping apprentices to make rapid progress.
- Assessors give excellent detailed verbal and written feedback to apprentices, which they find helpful. Work is marked and returned promptly. Apprentices are fully aware of what they have achieved and can confidently describe where they need to improve further in order to succeed.
- The integration of functional skills into learning is highly effective, resulting in apprentices' outstanding development of these skills within a vocational context. Apprentices who need to improve their English, mathematics and ICT skills undertake these studies sequentially. This enables them to concentrate fully on these important skills and results in a high proportion completing them during the apprenticeship.
- Information, advice and guidance are outstanding. Assessors and a specialist careers adviser give highly effective support to apprentices, enabling them to make appropriate career choices.

Guidance is detailed and realistic, which enables apprentices to investigate their options fully. The vast majority of apprentices remain in employment on completion of their framework.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Assessors ensure their teaching, coaching and assessment sessions are personalised to meet individual needs. Apprentices have an exceptionally good knowledge of equality and diversity that they apply well to their vocational practice. For example, one learner described how role play had enabled pre-school children to develop their understanding of the importance of inclusion within the play.

Hairdressing

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and lead to good outcomes for apprentices. Apprentices work in high quality hairdressing salons, conduct themselves professionally, work to industry standards and benefit from access to the up-to-date techniques delivered at commercial seminars. Staff are excellent role models, have high expectations of their apprentices, and promote their ambition and aspirations well.
- Apprentices work professionally and competently on a range of practical hairdressing services. Apprentices are able to section hair cleanly, cut hair with confidence and apply tints with expertise, obtaining good results. In particular, intermediate apprentices routinely carry out technical haircuts and colours on the shop floor and work well independently, requiring little supervision.
- Apprentices talk confidently about the cutting angles they use for various haircuts and can describe the ratios used to mix permanent tints and their mixing agents such as hydrogen peroxide. Apprentices know the development times of permanent colours and bleach, and are able to select colours based on their own consultations.
- Training in the workplace is good and some is outstanding. Trainers use detailed questioning to test understanding, enabling apprentices to improve skills such as applying foil highlights and freehand colouring techniques. They inspire, motivate and support apprentices who, as a result, work enthusiastically and quickly develop the confidence to work independently.
- Assessment is good. The vast majority of the training and assessment occurs in the apprentices' workplace, providing many opportunities for assessment and enabling apprentices to develop strong commercial awareness. Salon assessors take pride in offering their apprentices additional resources to improve their learning, such as handouts about colouring and mini tests. Oral feedback during training and assessment is clear and motivational. However, trainers do not write down this useful feedback, so the apprentices are unable to refer to it at future assessments or reflect on its detail.
- Health and safety practices in salons ensure that apprentices are safe. However, in a minority of salons apprentices do not use protective gloves when applying foil highlights to clients hair.
- The review process is thorough. Assessors set specific short-term targets that apprentices work hard to meet. As apprentices pass assessments, they score points that assessors add at each review. Apprentices enjoy this process, which helps motivate them to meet their targets. They maintain their portfolios to a high standard.
- The development of apprentices' mathematics skills and knowledge is good. Apprentices routinely work out percentages when colouring hair, discuss precise cutting angles and calculate development times for colouring services. The approach taken to improving apprentices' English skills is less well developed. Apprentices significantly improve their spoken English through client consultation, and by giving presentations. However, the development of their written English requires improvement because tutors and assessors do not routinely correct errors in written work.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Staff ensure apprentices fully understand what to expect from the apprenticeship. Apprentices are assessed at entry and those with identified

needs are given extra individual support sessions by staff who know them well, building their confidence and developing their knowledge. This focused and effective support enables apprentices with additional learning needs to make progress similar to that of their peers.

- Apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity requires improvement. Equality and diversity matters are covered well in induction. However, despite these being included in the review process, learners cannot sufficiently recall the wider aspects of equality and diversity and how they affect their vocational area.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. The quality of hairdressing provision has remained good since the previous inspection, and senior managers have worked closely with the subcontractor to provide outstanding teaching, learning and assessment for early years and playwork apprentices.
- Astute managers have ensured the viability of the company during a challenging period when hairdressing employers locally found it financially difficult to recruit apprentices. Senior managers worked effectively with a range of industry bodies, regional networks and other providers to promote the advantages of apprenticeships to employers. These partners value the highly effective relationships with Span, and the quality of training, both in the workplace and during off-the-job sessions. Good partnership working has led to a number of other benefits for apprentices, including the promotion of former apprentices to positions of responsibility within Span and the employers they work with.
- Operational management of the apprenticeship programme is good. Monthly management meetings focus strongly on the clear identification of targets for departments within the company to improve learners' outcomes. Managers use data well to check that apprentices are making good progress toward the targets set for them.
- Performance management of staff is highly effective. Managers support tutors and assessors well, evaluating and monitoring their performance closely through monthly performance meetings and annual appraisals. A comprehensive programme of training and development, allied closely to the outcomes of the very good quality assurance processes, results in continual improvements to teaching and learning.
- Tutors and assessors use their experience and knowledge of industry well to support and guide learners through their qualifications. Apprentices benefit from good resources, both in the training centres and in the workplace, which are instrumental in helping them to develop their knowledge and skills. Management of the subcontractor is good, resulting in effective sharing of best practice between both companies, particularly regarding ways to monitor and improve the provision.
- Senior managers know most of Spans' strengths and areas for improvement but do not have a full picture of the quality of the provision in each subject area because they do not take sufficient account of stakeholders', subcontractors', employers' and learners' views. As a result, the self-assessment report does not accurately identify everything that Span needs to do to improve further. Areas for improvement and the actions to rectify them in the quality improvement plan are insufficiently specific.
- Managers and staff at Span adapt training well to meet the changing needs of the sectors in which learners work; employers and learners contribute fully to this process. As a result, learners develop a good range of both sector-specific and transferable skills, ensuring their readiness for employment in a wide variety of salons and early years settings.
- Managers work closely with employers to provide a safe and welcoming environment for apprentices, many of whom had additional support needs and lacked confidence when they started training. Staff understand and apply an appropriate range of policies and procedures to safeguard apprentices. Training and recruitment cater well for different types of learner. Good

arrangements exist to protect apprentices from bullying and harassment and staff take effective action to tackle any poor behaviour.

- Span meets its statutory obligations for safeguarding apprentices. The designated safeguarding manager provides good staff training in safeguarding and health and safety. Span uses data well to monitor the additional support needs of learners and to assess the effectiveness of its work in minimising barriers to learning. Managers deal effectively with any safeguarding concerns that arise through close collaboration with local agencies.
- Equality and diversity are adequately promoted. Span has been successful in enrolling males to both the hairdressing and early years and playwork apprenticeships. Managers have a good awareness of the reasons for any previous gaps in the performance of different groups of learners. Apprentices receive appropriate induction at the start of their training so that they understand the importance of equality and diversity in the workplace. However, staff do not always reinforce their importance in the workplace sufficiently during training sessions and reviews.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Span Training and Development Limited

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Early years and playwork	1
Hairdressing	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16-18							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	558							
Principal/CEO	Mrs June North							
Date of previous inspection	January 2011							
Website address	www.spantraining.net/							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	92	25	47	60	-	1		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	-							
Part-time	-							
Number of community learners	-							
Number of employability learners	-							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Haydon Training Services Limited Unit 4 Triangle Business Park Quilters Way Aylesbury HP22 5BL 							

Contextual information

Span trains hairdressing apprentices for employers throughout the broader Thames Valley area and, through a subcontractor, early years and playwork apprentices in the Aylesbury area. Much of the region has survived the recent economic downturn reasonably well, but a number of urban areas remain more deprived. Hairdressing employment, in particular, has suffered in recent years, which has resulted in declining apprenticeship numbers.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Mark Shackleton HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the managing director as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the past three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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