Further Education and Skills inspection report

Date published: 12 March 2015 Inspection Number: 452613

URN: 53697



Lookfantastic Training Independent learning provider

Inspection dates	2–6 February 2015				
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3			
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good-2			
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement-3				
Quality of teaching, learning and as	Good-2				
Effectiveness of leadership and man	Requires improvement-3				

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- intermediate-level hairdressing and manufacturing apprentices, learners aged 16 to 18, women, and those with learning difficulties do not achieve well enough; they do not always receive effective initial advice and guidance to help them make suitable career or course choices
- only a minority of classroom based learners and intermediate-level apprentices go on to advanced-level apprenticeships, further education, or to gain jobs at the end of their course
- during sport lessons and engineering and hairdressing progress reviews, learners do not learn sufficiently about how equality and diversity apply to them, their customers, or the workplace
- managers do not analyse and evaluate data incisively enough, including achievement by different groups; this impedes their ability to set and monitor improvement actions for trainers and subcontractors
- leaders and managers do not have a good enough understanding of the quality of each subcontractor's training, which affects the accuracy of judgements they make in selfassessment.

This provider has the following strengths:

- engineering, sport, health and social care, administration, management and customer service learners' achievement is consistently good and has been for the past three years
- learners develop good vocational, practical and technical skills which they use well at work
- trainers make very good links between theory learning and practical activities; they plan interesting learning activities that inspire and motivate learners
- most learners receive good mathematics tuition which gives them the confidence to use these skills with a high level of accuracy at work
- courses are designed with the involvement of employers, learners and the community to ensure the relevance of the curriculum.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Establish more effective procedures, such as those for self-assessment, observations of teaching, learning and assessment and for reporting safeguarding complaints and feedback, to enable leaders and managers to oversee and improve the work of Lookfantastic and its subcontractors.
- Analyse retention, achievement, success and progression rate data, including by different groups of learners and subcontractors, more frequently and in greater depth to identify trends in performance at an early stage, set actions for improvement and monitor progress.
- Strengthen initial advice and guidance procedures, particularly for intermediate-level apprentices in hairdressing and manufacturing and classroom based learners, to ensure they are on the correct course for their current and future career needs, thus increasing progression rates and reducing the numbers who leave their course without achieving or gaining jobs.
- Increase the relevance and effectiveness of equality and diversity learning during hairdressing and engineering progress reviews, and in sport lessons, so that learners understand better how these topics relate to them, their work and customers.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Achievement rates require improvement for intermediate-level hairdressing and manufacturing apprentices, who make up around one sixth of all current learners. Managers attribute the low achievement rates to a range of factors, including the closure of the Worthing training centre and management changes. However, a significant minority of learners leaves without achieving because they no longer wish to study their chosen subject or have difficulties with their employer.
- Progression by intermediate-level hairdressing apprentices to the advanced-level programme requires improvement. This lack of progression inhibits their earning potential at work and the range of services they can offer within their salons.
- The majority of intermediate-level apprentices are female and aged 16 to 18; success rates for these learners are low. Learners with learning difficulties also achieve less well. Managers are unable to explain why this is the case. All other groups of learners achieve at broadly similar rates.
- Not enough adults on classroom based courses, which accounted for around two thirds of all leavers in 2013/14, gained jobs or entered further education or training. Managers do not collate clear information about the destinations of these learners and can only demonstrate that a small minority of these learners gained jobs or started an apprenticeship or college course. Where learners are successful, they often overcome significant barriers to employment, such as homelessness, to become effective team members in leisure and fitness centres.
- Most other learners achieve well, particularly engineering, sport, administration, management and customer service apprentices and classroom based learners. Their achievement rates are consistently good and have been for the past three years. The few workplace learning learners, particularly those taking health and social care qualifications, have excellent achievement rates.
- Advanced-level engineering, administration, management and customer service apprentices make good progress and gain qualifications on, or before, their planned completion dates. Learners' attendance at off-the-job training and classroom learning lessons is good.
- Many learners gain extensive additional qualifications. This aids their effectiveness at work and allows many to take on increased or more complex duties. Activity leadership apprentices who

gain the pool plant operations certificate increase the range of tasks they carry out at the swimming pools and leisure centres where they work, including acting in duty management roles.

- Learners develop good vocational, practical and technical skills. They work more effectively in teams and speak with customers and colleagues more confidently. Through completing personal learning and thinking skills projects, apprentices use their learning to be more effective at work and develop new business ideas. One group of ex-learners set up a self-financing 'open water swimming' company, another group helped design underwater computer tablets and a customer service apprentice has written a business plan to start designing ballroom dancing costumes.
- Learners make good use of the mathematics skills they develop. Engineering apprentices value the opportunities they have to increase their mathematics skills, as these help them progress on to higher level qualifications.
- Engineering learners' development of English skills requires improvement. Learners often lack the knowledge and confidence to use technical terms or spell accurately. However, most develop effective speaking and listening skills, which hairdressing learners use well during client consultations.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The subject areas reported on represent a sample of the most significant provision, which is approximately 80% of current learners. Teaching, learning and assessment are good overall, reflecting the good outcomes for engineering, sport administration, management and customer service learners, which account for most of the current learners. Teaching, learning and assessment in hairdressing require improvement, as do outcomes for learners in this subject.
- The quality of learning sessions is good. Learners benefit from very experienced and well-qualified trainers who challenge them to make good progress. They inspire and motivate learners through well-planned and interesting activities. Trainers use very effective questioning techniques to check and expand learners' subject knowledge.
- Trainers deliver highly relevant, and often individualised, tuition, which enables learners to apply successfully their theory learning to practical tasks at work. Customer service learners take on increasingly difficult tasks, such as monitoring project budgets to ensure there is no overspend. Engineering apprentices demonstrate exemplary safe working practices.
- Trainers incorporate technology well into learning sessions so that learners become used to using computers more easily in everyday life. Engineering learners use spreadsheets, software applications and computer-aided design programmes confidently. Hairdressing apprentices develop good independent learning and research skills through using the internet to complete projects.
- Learners receive good mathematics teaching. In learning sessions, trainers make mathematics relevant to industry which helps learners to apply their skills. Hairdressing learners measure ratios for mixing colours and cut hair at different angles with accuracy.
- Not all trainers develop learners' written English skills effectively. Engineering learners do not always learn the correct spelling and meaning of technical terminology. However, sport and hairdressing learners receive good English tuition. This helps sports learners working in leisure centres to give customers more effective gym inductions.
- Assessment for most learners is good and thoroughly planned. Trainers provide detailed and constructive feedback, which helps learners improve their work. Most learners receive frequent assessment at work because their trainers negotiate convenient times and assessment activities with employers that link well to each learner's course requirements.
- Arrangements for hairdressing assessments require improvement. Too many assessments take place in the training salon, missing the extensive opportunities that learners have to demonstrate, and be credited for, the skills they use at work.

- Trainers use the results of learners' initial assessment effectively to plan learning and arrange support, such as for dyslexia. Most learners have a good understanding of their targets, of the progress they make, and of what they still need to do to achieve their full qualifications.
- Most learners benefit from good initial information, advice and guidance. They have a clear understanding of what to expect from their programme and how this will aid their progression and career opportunities.
- Initial advice and guidance for intermediate level hairdressing and manufacturing technologies apprentices and classroom based sports learners require improvement. Too many intermediate-level apprentices leave their course because they no longer wish to pursue their chosen career or have problems with their employer. Classroom based learners' barriers to employment are not discussed fully and few learners have a plan that links their chosen courses to a job or further training.
- In learning sessions, trainers raise hairdressing and customer service learners' awareness of diversity by exploring a calendar of religious and cultural events. Hairdressing learners become more aware of local community issues and routinely take part in fundraising initiatives. Customer service learners demonstrate a high level of respect for the diverse cultural backgrounds of their colleagues.
- During sports learning sessions and hairdressing and engineering progress reviews, trainers do not increase learners' understanding of equality and diversity sufficiently by making topics discussed meaningful to the workplace or learners' personal situations. As a result, these learners do not appreciate how equality and diversity apply to them, their customers, and their jobs.

Engineering Manufacturing technologies Good Apprenticeships 19+ learning programmes

Teaching, learning and assessment in engineering and manufacturing technologies are good because:

- a high proportion of engineering and advanced-level manufacturing technologies learners successfully achieve their qualifications
- learners develop good practical, technical and problem solving skills which help them become productive and valuable members of staff; they can carry out tasks safely and efficiently, such as programming and running complex and expensive computer numerical controlled (CNC) machinery and flight simulators
- trainers use interesting activities, including group and paired work, to challenge learners and help them make good progress; they explain difficult engineering concepts, such as Boyle's gas laws, well so that learners grasp these quickly
- learners' knowledge and application of risk assessment and safety at work are exemplary; during individual learning sessions and progress reviews, trainers routinely reinforce safe working practices and procedures
- trainers incorporate technology well within learning sessions; learners gain good experience and become increasingly more confident in using word processing, spreadsheets and software to graph test results and for computer-aided drawing
- mathematics teaching and learning are very good because trainers and subcontracted college teachers set well-devised learning activities and questions that are rich in mathematics examples; learners see the relevance of good mathematics within engineering and, for many, this gives them the foundations to help them progress on to higher level qualifications

- learners benefit from good quality and frequent assessment; they receive thorough and supportive written and verbal feedback which helps them understand what they need to do to improve
- learners and trainers agree very detailed targets which help them make good progress at work and with their apprenticeships; line managers take a very active role in discussing and monitoring their learners' progress and learning, providing them with highly effective support, where required
- advice and guidance are good for engineering learners; new learners complete thorough initial assessment to identify their support needs, future aspirations and expectations
- learners receive detailed and useful guidance about progression to higher level courses, which helps many go on to higher education; many learners use Sigta's website which showcases the diverse careers in engineering through interesting images and case studies.

Teaching, learning and assessment in engineering and manufacturing technologies are not yet outstanding because:

- advice and guidance for intermediate-level manufacturing technologies apprentices, which
 account for fewer than 10% of learners in this subject area, requires improvement because too
 many learners leave their course without achieving
- a minority of trainers and subcontracted college teachers fail to incorporate English teaching and learning effectively to ensure that all learners understand the meaning and spelling of technical words used in industry
- a small minority of the subcontracted college's teaching requires improvement to ensure learners acquire good levels of knowledge in electrical engineering.

Hairdressing	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement

Teaching, learning and assessment in hairdressing require improvement because:

- too many intermediate-level apprentices leave their programme without successfully completing their qualifications; over the past two years, most of these learners left because they decided hairdressing did not suit them or they experienced problems with their employer
- advice and guidance require improvement; during initial interviews, trainers do not explore in enough depth why learners want a career in hairdressing or their aspirations within the industry, so not all intermediate-level apprentices are placed on the most appropriate programme to meet their individual needs and expectations
- only a minority of intermediate-level apprentices progress on to advanced-level apprenticeships, which affects their earning potential and career prospects
- learners have insufficient assessment at work; too much assessment takes place in Lookfantastic's on-site salon, which does not sufficiently replicate the business pressures and techniques that learners experience in the salons where they work and slows the progress of more able learners

In hairdressing the provider has the following strengths:

- trainers use their extensive experience to make good links between theory and practice and set highly interesting learning tasks to extend learners' knowledge
- learners enjoy the individual support they get through attending learning sessions in small groups
- learners develop good critical thinking and creativity skills, for example testing samples of hair to see how the application of colour affected the hair structure; advanced-level learners

- experiment and practise different hair knots and rolls, make-up and dress design around a theme in preparation for their planned hairdressing show
- learners develop good English skills in a strongly vocational context and trainers challenge learners to improve their use of English, including how they speak to customers during consultation meetings
- trainers are effective in developing learners mathematics skills; learners use these well at work, for example in calculating the ratio of peroxide to use with colour and the correct angle for cutting hair
- the majority of learners who remain on the programme develop good hairdressing skills through working in high quality salons, completing a wide variety of colour applications and cutting techniques
- learners develop good independent learning skills and tutors provide learners with constructive feedback to help them improve their work.
- tutors encourage learners to gain confidence in using computers, through researching topics and projects on the internet.

Sport	
Apprenticeships 19+ learning programmes	Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in sport are good because:

- learners' achievement of qualifications is good; learners take a broad range of additional courses which enable them to increase the duties they carry out at work and support their career prospects, they develop good work-related skills
- experienced and skilful trainers set challenging and enjoyable activities that push learners to develop an understanding beyond the level of the programme they are studying; in one session, learners training to be swimming teachers learned about the rules that apply to competitive swimming which they could use in the future
- trainers make good links between theory and practical skills development during lessons, enabling learners to develop a good understanding of concepts which they apply to their own swimming teaching
- trainers question learners skilfully to develop and check their knowledge and skills; in a
 particularly good theory lesson, the trainer gave learners adept prompts and demonstrations to
 help them explain stroke techniques in their own words
- learners benefit enormously by learning from each other's experience; in a lesson on the butterfly stroke, learners on the intermediate swimming teachers' programme shared ideas about the similarities between different swimming strokes
- trainers make learning relevant to sport so that learners develop good English skills and knowledge; in one session, learners increased their persuasion skills by promoting a charity event and in another they learned how to explain technical swimming terms, such as propulsion, to children learning to swim
- trainers encourage learners training to be swimming teachers to study in their own time, which helps learners extend their knowledge; many enjoy the opportunity to research interesting topics independently
- trainers use observation to good effect during assessment of learners' performance and skills;
 they give very clear, specific feedback and highly effective role modelling that prepares learners
 well to work as swimming teachers when they will be giving feedback to their own learners

- learners receive good quality individual additional tuition and guidance, often outside the scheduled learning session times; many unemployed learners, who face significant barriers to learning and employment, thrive in this nurturing environment
- apprentices receive good advice and guidance; trainers encourage them to develop additional skills such as those needed for business enabling many to become successful swimming teachers, fitness instructors or managers when they finish their courses.

Teaching, learning and assessment in sport are not yet outstanding because:

- initial advice and guidance for classroom based learners require improvement because trainers do not plan with learners the steps and courses they need to take to gain employment; trainers do not ensure they hold initial advice and guidance sessions with the privacy for learners to discuss sensitive information, such as barriers to work or health problems
- learners' mathematics skills development during lessons requires improvement; trainers do not explore mathematical concepts in a sufficiently relevant context to swimming or sport.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. In general, subcontractors manage the quality of their own teaching, learning and assessment well. However, Lookfantastic managers lack an accurate overview of the whole provision and do not analyse data or performance sufficiently.
- Managers have yet to understand fully why specific groups of learners achieve less well. They do not systematically collect information about learners' destinations, particularly the proportion of previously unemployed classroom based learners who gain jobs, start apprenticeships or take up further education. Managers have not set suitable actions and targets to improve success rates for under-achieving groups. Over the past year, managers have started to use management information to analyse why learners leave without achieving, and this is showing some early impact.
- Directors and managers have ambitious strategic plans and make significant investment in training and facilities. Although managers update directors frequently about learners' progress and subcontractors' performance, directors do not challenge them sufficiently about the impact of actions they take to manage and improve performance.
- Partnership working and cooperation with subcontractors are good. Managers have strong, mutually supportive relationships with subcontractors. This has helped learners move smoothly to one of the subcontractors and achieve after their original training provider ceased trading. Managers give subcontractors ready support and advice, including sharing ideas to improve the quality of teaching.
- Managers visit subcontractors frequently to check the quality of learners' paperwork, training, achievement rates and finances. Over the past year, they have strengthened the focus and use of data during these visits, but have yet to challenge sufficiently the underlying reasons why groups of learners underachieve.
- Managers systematically observe teaching and assessment sessions and provide trainers and subcontractors with useful feedback to help them improve. However, during observations, managers do not evaluate sufficiently the impact trainers have on learning or how this affects learners' progress towards achieving their qualifications.
- Trainers, including those with subcontractors, benefit from good professional development. As a result, trainers have relevant and up-to-date expertise that they use well to help learners develop industry-standard skills and knowledge. Managers hold effective annual staff appraisals, which identify areas where trainers can improve and receive further training.
- Self-assessment requires improvement. Each training provider involves trainers fully in self-assessment, but this does not always lead to a self-critical evaluation of the effectiveness of

teaching and assessment on learners' achievement, learning, and progression. Their judgements and quality improvement plans lack the rigour and depth to tackle all areas that require improvement. However, Sigta has a very detailed and honest quality improvement plan, which continues to strengthen outcomes and the quality of training.

- Courses are designed with the involvement of employers, learners and the community to make the curriculum relevant. Subcontractors use their good links with the Local Enterprise Partnership, Jobcentre Plus, training provider networks, and industry bodies, to ensure the relevance of the courses they offer. EDF works closely with a charitable foundation that is inspiring disaffected young people to participate in apprenticeships. Sigta tailors its engineering apprenticeships to meet its employers' and learners' specialist requirements, such as developing flight simulators.
- Strategies to improve learners' mathematical skills are largely effective. Those for developing learners' English skills are less well developed, particularly in engineering.
- Managers and trainers promote diversity well on most programmes. Lookfantastic's own learners develop a good awareness of religious festivals and the needs of individual groups through a cultural calendar and exploration of events such as Gay Pride. Posters and publicity materials in the Hove training centre raise learners' awareness of disability and cultural difference.
- Learners and staff are mutually respectful. Through a good induction and continuing training, learners understand how to stay safe, including when working online. Generally, learners have a sound understanding of what constitutes fair treatment, including bullying, harassment and discrimination; they know how to raise concerns if they need to.
- Safeguarding of learners requires improvement. Lookfantastic managers do not always know early enough about concerns or complaints raised by subcontracted learners. Trainers, employers and learners are often unclear about the subcontractors' and Lookfantastic's role and the reporting procedures to follow. However, where incidents have arisen, individual managers have dealt with these effectively and ensured learners are not at risk.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Lookfantastic Training

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	3	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	-
Outcomes for learners	3	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	-	-	-	-	3	3	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment		
Engineering	2	
Manufacturing technologies	2	
Hairdressing	3	
Sport	2	

Provider details

ype of provider	Independent learning provider								
ge range of learners	16+								
approximate number of Il learners over the previous ull contract year	1,221								
Principal/CEO	Ms Jassie Williams								
Pate of previous inspection	June 2011								
Vebsite address	www.loo	kfant	astic.co	<u>om</u>					
Provider information at the time o	f the insp	ectio	n						
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or Level 2 below		Level 3		Level 4 and above				
Total number of learners	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
(excluding apprenticeships)	-	15	-	61	-	3	-	-	
Number of appropriate by	Intermediate A			Adva	vanced High			ıer	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19)+	16-18	19+	16	-18	19+	
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	56		34	76	72	-		-	
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)								
	 Sigta Limited Swim UK Limited The Employee Development Forum Limited (EDF) 								

Contextual information

Lookfantastic Training (Lookfantastic) is owned by The Hut Group. In August 2011, Lookfantastic joined with four subcontractors to meet the SFA's requirements for the minimum contract level, with Lookfantastic being the contract holder. One of these subcontractors, BHTA Limited, is no longer trading. Lookfantastic operates from its training centre in Hove, East Sussex, and offers hairdressing and customer service apprenticeships. Sigta has a training centre in Portslade, East Sussex, and delivers apprenticeships, workplace learning and classroom learning in engineering, business administration, health and social care, hospitality, and functional skills. Swim UK has two training centres, one in Brighton and another in Portslade. Swim UK specialises in training swimming instructors and offers apprenticeships and classroom learning in sport and health and social care. EDF is based in Horsham, West Sussex, and has engineering and manufacturing technologies apprentices. Apprentices are employed by companies across the south east and north west of England. Classroom based learners are mainly unemployed adults.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Janet Rodgers HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the head of training 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 last 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:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012

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Inspection report: Lookfantastic Training, 2-6 February 2015

13 of 13

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