

Central Training Group (CTG)

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		2–6 March 2015
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:

- the vast majority of apprentices successfully complete their qualifications and become good hairdressers or administrative employees; they are highly valued by their employers
- a very high proportion of trainees and study programme learners gain qualifications and progress on to apprenticeships, employment, further education or training
- learners develop very good personal and vocational skills, allowing them to work confidently in busy professional offices and high quality hairdressing salons
- tutors are enthusiastic and use their occupational expertise really well to inspire learners and encourage them to achieve high professional standards in their work
- good support and mentoring from tutors help learners solve personal matters so that they can attend regularly, build their confidence and succeed
- learners develop good communication skills; they learn appropriate descriptive language to sell hair products and services to prospective and regular clients
- CTG's own intermediate apprentices achieve English and mathematics qualifications, typically passing at the first attempt and at levels exceeding the qualification requirements
- managers set high standards and have created a supportive culture that ensures staff and learners develop and succeed
- the curriculum meets the needs of learners, employers and the community very well, providing valuable routes for learners to progress into apprenticeships, employment and further education.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- on adult and barbering courses with smaller numbers, too many learners leave their programmes early
- not enough study programme learners on employability programmes are able to apply and further develop skills in external work placements
- tutors do not always agree sufficiently challenging and specific targets for learners, or involve employers, during progress reviews to ensure apprentices complete in the timescales expected
- processes to track all learners' progress and to evaluate and improve teaching, learning and assessment are not sufficiently robust.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the analysis and use of data, and processes for tracking and monitoring learners' on-programme progress, to identify any variations in different groups of learners and ensure early and successful intervention to rectify underperformance in their own and subcontracted programmes.
- Increase the opportunities for study programme learners on employability programmes to apply their personal and vocational skills in external work placements so that they understand what employers expect of them.
- Ensure tutors agree sufficiently challenging and specific targets for learners, and involve employers during progress reviews to ensure apprentices complete their qualifications in the timescales planned.
- Improve the standards of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring staff have the skills and confidence to:
 - systematically correct spelling and grammar in learners' written work
 - explore how learners apply the principles of equality and diversity in their workplaces.
- Review the robustness of the processes to evaluate and improve the teaching, learning and assessment skills of subcontractors and their own staff and ensure all policies and procedures focus on improving the quality of the provision.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
------------------------------	------

- Outcomes for learners are good, with success rates high and above national averages for administration apprentices. The large majority of the provision is intermediate hairdressing apprenticeships and although qualification success rates have declined slightly in the last three years, they remain above national averages. Success rates require improvement for the small number of apprentices on barbering programmes. Most of the small numbers of workplace learners complete their programmes successfully.
- Learners on traineeships achieve very good outcomes, with the vast majority progressing on to apprenticeship programmes in 2013/14. Most study programme learners make good progress, successfully achieve their learning aims and continue to further education, employment or apprenticeships. The small number of adult learners on classroom courses are less successful and too many leave before completing their courses.
- Success rates for functional skills in English and mathematics are high on all programmes. The vast majority of learners pass their tests first time and good quality coaching ensures that those who fail nearly always pass with high marks at the second attempt. The majority of CTG's intermediate apprentices, without GCSE at grade C or above, make very good progress. They work toward functional skills at level 2 even though their frameworks only require a level 1. However, subcontractors' intermediate apprentices are less likely to work towards level 2 functional skills.
- Attendance by learners is good on the study programmes and for apprentices at CTG's training centres, and has improved in the last year through closer monitoring of learners and prompt, effective action taken by tutors. Learners on employability programmes do not have sufficient opportunities to demonstrate their good attendance and further develop other employability skills, such as team working and communications, in external work placements.
- Learners develop good personal and vocational skills and are able to work confidently and efficiently in busy professional offices and hairdressing salons. Learners work effectively with clients and colleagues, using good written and verbal communication skills; administration learners write bids for construction and refurbishment contracts and hairdressers confidently discuss hair products

and services. Hairdressers develop high levels of practical skills, such as colouring hair, to create high and low light effects, and cutting short, sleek one-length styles.

- Apprentices develop very good sector specific skills that ensure employers value their contribution and the vast majority remain in permanent employment once their training is complete. Most hairdressing apprentices stay with their original salons, whilst a minority move to become stylists at another salon.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
---	------

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as are the outcomes for the large majority of learners. Current learners are making good progress and developing good skills. The standard of their practical work, particularly in hairdressing, is very good.
- Tutors and assessors are experts in their field, enthusiastic and have high expectations for learners. This motivates learners who work hard in learning sessions and assessments to achieve the professional standards set by their tutors. One senior hairdressing tutor has recently rewritten the approved hairdressing textbook to reflect current industry requirements.
- Tutors plan and structure learning sessions using a wide range of good activities to interest learners. As a result, sessions are lively and learners quickly develop new skills that help them in their workplaces or to progress towards their career aims. However, in a small minority of employability sessions, the pace is too fast and learners are unable to consolidate and confirm their new learning because the session has already moved on.
- Good learning activities help to develop learners' independent learning skills, ensuring learners take responsibility for their own development. For example, hairdressing learners created a men's cut on a blockhead based on images of modern celebrities.
- Hairdressing apprentices benefit from working in high quality salons where they receive good additional in-salon training on different products and services. Administration apprentices learn a wide variety of business techniques in their workplaces and quickly take on specific roles and responsibilities, performing them to a high standard.
- Learners look and behave professionally, both in the training centres and at work. They work at a brisk pace to industry timings, often exceeding the standards of the assessment, and consequently make very good progress.
- Care and support for learners are good. Learners with challenging personal circumstances have very good mentors who help learners improve their attendance, progress and achievement rates. Good one-to-one coaching effectively supports those learners who require additional help with their practical skills development.
- Learners have frequent assessments and reviews, with good verbal feedback that helps them understand what progress they are making and what they need to do to complete their programme. However, written feedback is often too brief and targets in reviews usually only refer to assessment requirements and not to the development and improvement of skills. Too many targets lack specific actions and clear time constraints, slowing the progress of some learners. The majority of employers are not sufficiently involved in reviews or setting targets and are often unsure what they need to do to support learners' development.
- Learners develop good English skills in training sessions, using sector specific vocabulary confidently and accurately. They demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills with clients by speaking articulately. However, not all tutors routinely correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in order to reinforce the need for accuracy in all written work.
- Tutors integrate mathematics well into most training sessions and learners apply numerical problem-solving skills to everyday and work scenarios. A few tutors lack confidence in teaching mathematical techniques to support learners' skills development.

- The use of information and communication technology is not always sufficient. Not all learners have enough opportunities to use technology in their training to develop the skills and knowledge needed for an increasingly technical and diverse world of work.
- Learners receive good advice and guidance at the start of their programme and recruiters carefully match learners to the most appropriate employer and course. This helps learners settle in quickly and confidently on to their programme. However, learners do not always receive sufficient information during their programmes to help them consider and explore their next steps. Learners who aspire to achieve higher-level qualifications or develop their careers are sometimes unclear how to achieve this goal.
- Tutors' understanding of how to promote equality and diversity in learners' workplace settings requires improvement. Tutors do not routinely explore current topics relating to equality or discuss varied approaches to take with clients from diverse backgrounds.

Hairdressing

Apprenticeships

16-19 study programmes

19+ learning programmes

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in hairdressing are good because:

- most learners complete their qualifications and develop high standards of hairdressing and customer service skills that improve their long-term employment prospects
- tutors are expert hairdressers, have extensive experience and are excellent role models; learners respect and emulate the professional standards demonstrated
- apprentices are employed in good and outstanding hairdressing salons that are in prime locations; they benefit from highly effective in-salon training and have access to a plentiful supply of clients on whom they practise and further develop their skills
- teaching is good, with tutors interacting well with learners and ensuring everyone takes an active part in lessons, including group discussions
- assessment is good, flexible and carefully planned to meet employers' and learners' needs; clear verbal feedback following assessment ensures learners know how to improve their performance
- CTG works with good subcontractors who are well organised and have extensive experience in providing high quality hairdressing apprenticeships
- care, welfare and support for apprentices are good; vocational tutors ensure that learners receive the individual help they need to make good progress; class sizes are small, allowing tutors to give learners good one-to-one coaching
- learners enjoy their training, feel safe and benefit from a good range of enrichment activities that enhance their practical skills, such as photography shoots, attendance at exhibitions, hairdressing competitions and manufacturer courses, which further develop their skills and knowledge.

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

- on the adult courses and barbering apprenticeships with smaller numbers, too many learners do not complete their programmes
- employers' involvement in reviews of learners' progress is not sufficient; employers do not ensure learners have specific targets relating to development of skills in the workplace
- not all tutors ensure learners use correct English in their written work or practise their mathematical skills when the opportunities arise
- tutors do not routinely promote equality and diversity in vocational lessons; there is insufficient reinforcement about how learners might adapt their techniques when working with clients from different groups and with a variety of hair and skin types.

Employability**16-19 study programmes
Traineeships**

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in employability are good because:

- a large majority of learners successfully complete their qualifications and develop a wide range of interpersonal and social skills, preparing them well to progress to the world of work
- tutors have high expectations of learners and they quickly ensure learners appreciate the importance of developing a positive attitude towards their studies and understanding how this can have an impact on their future career prospects
- learners benefit from high levels of attention from staff who are adept at identifying learners' specific support needs; staff work closely with appropriate agencies to provide timely support for learners when required
- teaching and learning are good and learners participate in highly engaging activities which make learning relevant and interesting
- initial assessment is good and thorough, identifying learners' skills development needs; learners work towards appropriately challenging targets to improve their personal, social, English and mathematics skills, using a sector-specific perspective with a focus on becoming employed
- learners receive good initial advice and guidance with in-depth information about options for achieving qualifications and developing skills that best suit their starting points, aptitudes and career aims
- tutors use their vocational knowledge effectively to develop learners' English skills as an integral part of their employability programmes; for example, childcare learners developed proof reading skills using an article about a nursery
- mathematics is well integrated, allowing learners to apply numerical problem-solving skills to everyday and work scenarios; GCSE learners use simultaneous equations to calculate the unit cost of products such as chocolate and sports clothes
- learners develop their understanding of equality and diversity well through the content of sessions and impromptu discussions; trainees explored the diverse needs of hairdressing clients and a group of learners gained greater respect for others after sharing their perceptions of obesity.

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

- plans to engage employers and organise work placements are underdeveloped; learners do not have sufficient opportunity to apply and develop their skills in a real work environment
- learners' achievements and progress are not recorded in sufficient detail and the outcomes of targets set at one review are not always followed up at the next
- learners do not sufficiently explore or debate how information and communication technology has an impact on their lives and the world of work
- learners do not receive sufficient information early enough to help them to explore potential next steps in further training, education and career pathways fully.

Administration**Apprenticeships**

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in administration are good because:

- the large majority of apprentices complete their apprenticeship successfully within the timescales expected, developing good work-related and personal skills such as effective time management, good customer service, tolerance and respect
- good initial assessments and inductions ensure programmes meet apprentices' career aims and that apprentices have a good understanding of employers' expectations, their jobs and training
- highly personalised learning programmes and training enable apprentices to develop good levels of business knowledge and skills relevant to their employers' needs, such as producing invoices, planning events and preparing bids for contracts
- apprentices are very engaged and involved in planning training and assessments; helpful individual support from assessors and employers is successful in increasing learners' self-confidence, as well as instilling in learners a desire to succeed
- assessors use monitoring systems well to ensure apprentices make good progress and produce a high standard of work
- the development and application of English skills are good; for example, one apprentice confidently proof reads and edits documents for a graphic design publisher
- apprentices develop good mathematical skills, such as calculating VAT on invoices, discounts for clients and analysing data, and also use their information technology skills effectively.

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

- assessors' helpful feedback is too often only verbal and apprentices do not have a written record of what they need to do to improve their performance and standard of work
- targets relating to the development of apprentices' personal and workplace skills are not sufficiently specific
- apprentices do not receive information about possible progression options until the end of their level 2 qualification, giving them too little time to consider their career options.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. Directors have clear strategic aims, which they communicate well to staff who understand the longer-term ambitions to enable more learners to succeed and to improve the learning and working environment. Directors and managers have high aspirations for learners, and staff, and there is excellent support in place to help learners achieve their ambitions.
- Partnership working with subcontractors is good. Directors have regular and effective communication with subcontractors that is mutually beneficial. Subcontractors value the support, sharing of information and ideas to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Directors frequently visit subcontractors to assess quality and monitor compliance with contracts.
- The analysis and evaluation of data require improvement to ensure managers routinely identify groups of learners who may perform less well. Directors and senior managers monitor the overall qualification success rates very well and they use this information to set targets for managers and subcontractors to improve provision. Processes to track learners' progress are in place, but not used well enough to make timely and positive interventions to ensure all learners achieve in the timeframes expected.
- Arrangements to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are not fully effective. Directors and managers observe lessons to assess the quality of teaching and learning. However, action plans arising from these are not sufficiently detailed or developmental to inform teaching

staff how to improve their practice so that learners make better progress. Managers do not refer to developmental points identified during observations when conducting tutors' annual appraisals to ensure continued improvement of their training skills

- A strong culture of developing staff exists in CTG and continuing professional development activities are very good. Tutors and assessors complete relevant teaching and assessment qualifications and managers gain high level qualifications. Directors invite subcontractors to appropriate in-house training sessions to ensure they remain up-to-date, for example in teaching English and mathematics in a vocational context. Staff make good use of opportunities to improve their skills and stay current in their sectors, which ensure they are good role models for learners.
- The self-assessment process is thorough and includes the views of staff, stakeholders and subcontractors. Managers and staff accurately identify key strengths and most areas for improvement. However, managers do not systematically evaluate the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on the outcomes for different groups of learners. Managers gather feedback from learners, taking immediate and effective action when appropriate, but do not methodically analyse the information to identify trends or areas for improvement. Quality improvement plans are effective but do not focus on relentlessly improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for learners.
- The curriculum meets the needs of learners, employers and the community very well. Study programmes and traineeships provide valuable routes for learners to progress into apprenticeships, employment and further education. Managers carefully designed the curriculum to deliver English and mathematics using vocationally-relevant vocabulary and scenarios. This ensures learners appreciate and understand the significance of good English and mathematics.
- Directors, staff and subcontractors have excellent links with a range of employers, some of whom are very well known in the hairdressing sector. This provides exceptional opportunities for apprentices to develop high-level skills. CTG's Managing Director links effectively with the Local Enterprise Partnership to promote awareness of local and regional skills gaps and training priorities.
- Directors promote equality and diversity well. Plans and policies consider the impact on learners and staff, irrespective of background, belief or culture. Staff receive effective training and understand their role in relation to equality and diversity, although there is insufficient promotion of this in learning activities to develop learners' understanding thoroughly. CTG staff create an inclusive culture where bullying and harassment are not accepted.
- Safeguarding of learners is good. Managers ensure that learners are safe with robust health and safety and recruitment procedures. Staff and subcontractors have undertaken relevant safeguarding and child protection training and all CTG centres have qualified first aiders. Managers supervise new staff whilst awaiting relevant disclosure and barring checks. Despite many learners living in Prevent priority areas, staff and subcontractors do not raise learners' awareness of British values, such as freedom of speech, tolerance and democracy, routinely to promote the importance of these in our modern society.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Central Training Group

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Hairdressing	2
Employability training	2
Administration	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2116								
Group Managing Director	Mr Andy Wright								
Date of previous inspection	May 2010								
Website address	www.centraltraininggroup.com								
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+	
	156	-	28	38	1	7	-	-	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+		
	418	129	30	49	-		-		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	8		1		9				
Number of learners aged 14-16	-								
Full-time	-								
Part-time	-								
Number of community learners	-								
Number of employability learners	-								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Anne Caulton-Jones■ Antoniou Hair Ltd■ Best Practice Ltd■ Bosco Centre■ City of London Business College■ Harrington’s Hairdressing Ltd■ Jays Training Ltd■ Keith Hall Ltd■ Sean Hanna■ Shears Academy■ East London Beauty Academy■ LAFHAB								

Contextual information

Central Training Group (CTG) is a private limited company that consists of Central Training Academy Limited, delivering study programmes and apprenticeships in London and Essex, and Lifeskills Solutions Ltd delivering employability programmes to study programme learners in Leeds and Lowestoft. CTG uses its own, subcontractors' and employers' premises to deliver apprenticeships in hairdressing and administration, as well as classroom study programmes and adult courses.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Joy Montgomery HMI
-----------------------	--------------------

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of Data and Funding 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

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too.

To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk



Employer View is a new website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too.

To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and provider inspection reports, please visit <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user>.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store Street](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015

