

INSPECTION REPORT

Community Learning and Skills Service (CLaSS) Reinspection

30 April 2003



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE (CLASS) REINSPECTION

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

SUMMARY

The provider

Community Learning and Skills Service (CLaSS) has made some changes to the range of its provision since the original inspection in September 2001. Training in manufacturing is no longer provided, and the local community group providing sport now contracts directly with the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Work-based learning is no longer managed by the contract development manager, but is now managed by curriculum managers whose remit includes work-based learning as well as other types of provision. The contract development manager's role has now changed and involves ensuring compliance with the LSC's contract. There are currently 50 foundation modern apprentices, 56 learners on national vocational qualification (NVQ) only training programmes and a further 12 on a Life Skills programme. There are 13 foundation modern apprentices in hairdressing and two learners working towards NVQs at level 1. The community education service's professional development co-ordinator now has a full-time contract. There have been no other significant changes to staffing levels. The service continues to use the same subcontractor for off-the-job training.

Overall judgement

The ALI's inspection in September 2001 found that training in hairdressing was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

Grades awarded

	Original	Reinspection
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3

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THE REINSPECTION

1. Two inspectors spent a total of six days examining the provider’s work-based learning provision in hairdressing. They observed seven training sessions, carried out 15 interviews with learners and seven with staff, examined 16 individual learning plans and 13 portfolios of work, visited four sites, interviewed two employers and the subcontractor, and visited five work placements. They also studied the development plan produced following the original inspection.

Grades awarded to learning sessions at the original inspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Business administration, management & professional	1	0	2	2	1	0	0	6
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	4
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	4
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Health, social care & public services	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	5
Total	2	8	9	3	1	0	0	23

Grades awarded to learning sessions at reinspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	1	2	3	0	1	0	7
Total	0	1	2	3	0	1	0	7

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	15	3

2. CLaSS provides training in hairdressing leading to NVQ level 1 and foundation modern apprenticeships. There are 13 foundation modern apprentices and two learners working towards NVQs at level 1 only. Most salons recruit their own learners and request training from CLaSS. Some learners are referred to CLaSS from Connexions and some are recruited through advertisements. Learners can begin their training at any time of the year. All learners are employed. Off-the-job training is subcontracted to a local training provider. The subcontractor has flexible attendance arrangements to suit the needs and requirements of each learner and employer. All learners attend day-release training at the subcontractor's training centre once a fortnight for background knowledge, key skills and practical training. They receive assessments both on and off the job. The work-placement officer carries out progress reviews in the salon at least once a month. A team of four assessors from the subcontractor provides training and assessments. All have appropriate experience and qualifications.

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following key strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good progression from NVQ level 1 to foundation modern apprenticeships
- good on- and off-the-job training
- effective working relationships with employers
- good personal support for learners

WEAKNESSES

- poor learning support for learners with additional learning needs
- slow achievement of NVQ units

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater emphasis on good salon working practices
- better understanding of key skills by learners
- more specific target-setting at progress reviews

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- better use of recording systems

3. Retention rates are improving, with 67 per cent of this year's foundation modern apprentices still on programme, compared with 40 per cent in 2001-02. The trend in overall achievement rates is also improving. All but one of the learners are on target to complete the full framework. Both learners who started the NVQ level 1 programme in 2003 are still on programme. Most learners who leave early stay within the industry or transfer to other training providers.

4. There is good progression by learners from NVQ level 1 to foundation modern apprenticeships. Forty-three per cent of learners who are currently foundation modern apprentices have progressed from NVQ level 1. Learners who enrolled for NVQ level 1 in 2003 are also aiming towards becoming foundation modern apprentices. CLaSS provides additional time for learners to improve their skills and self-confidence, before moving on to the foundation modern apprenticeship.

5. CLaSS provides good on- and off-the-job training. Learners progress well with their practical work and enjoy their off-the-job training days at the subcontractor's premises. Learners can have additional training if required. There is a good supply of clients, which allows learners to cover the NVQ requirements. Employers actively seek models for the salon training so that learners can broaden their experience. Trainers at the subcontractors are well qualified and experienced. Learners often have access to more than one trainer during salon training sessions. However, there is not enough emphasis on good salon working practices. For example, learners do not wash used tint bowls and measuring jugs which are left at the basins.

6. There are good working relationships with employers. CLaSS keeps employers fully informed of business and employment issues, and provides them with good support throughout the learners' training programmes. Many of the salons who currently take on learners have also had a number of staff provided by CLaSS.

7. Both the subcontractor and CLaSS provide good personal support for learners. Progress reviews carried out by the work-placement officer include good pastoral support. A number of learners with severe social problems, have been provided with very good support and have completed their training. Employers provide good learner support. They work closely with both the subcontractor and CLaSS, contributing fully to learners' progress reviews.

8. CLaSS has improved the way it conducts progress reviews. The work-placement officer now collects records of learners' progress and action plans weekly from the subcontractor, in order to provide up-to-date information for the progress reviews which are carried out in the workplace. The progress review covers many aspects of learners' development, but does not include thorough target-setting. Records of previous reviews are not used to assess the learner's progress since the previous meeting.

9. Communications between CLaSS and its subcontractor have improved significantly since the original inspection. Good recording systems have been introduced to monitor learners' progress and this information is shared between both parties at regular meetings. These systems are not used adequately to monitor NVQ unit achievement. Where minutes of meetings refer to learners' progress, the information is often inaccurate, and the records are not analysed effectively to set targets for achievement.

10. CLaSS has worked well to improve key skills training and assessment. The assignments used are relevant, and some learners are producing work of a good standard that has helped them to gain confidence in the way they approach work in the salon. However, some learners do not fully understand key skills or how the work they do in the salon can be used as evidence for their achievement.

11. Learning support is poor for learners with additional learning needs. An initial screening test is used to identify learners' literacy and numeracy levels and place them on an appropriate learning programme. Learners with specific difficulties in either literacy or numeracy, such as dyslexia, may be on their learning programme for many months without having their needs diagnosed fully or dealt with effectively. CLaSS provides literacy and numeracy tuition at its own site, but this is poor. There is no connection between the basic skills activities and the key skills work required as part of the modern apprenticeship framework or the NVQ. Individual learning plans do not reflect the vocational context in which the learner is employed.

12. There is slow achievement of NVQ units. Although assessments are carried out regularly and learners progress well through their practical assessments, oral questioning, assignments and written tests are left to the end of the learning programme. The collection of key skills evidence is also delayed. Some learners have taken 10 months to complete one NVQ unit. Some learners with previous industrial experience have not had this taken into account. Learners who have almost completed their learning programme have a substantial number of oral questions, assignments and written tests to complete, and have not achieved many NVQ units.