

Michael John of Liverpool

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Since the previous inspection in 2003, the provision has changed to include nail services apprenticeships and a new contract to provide entry to employment (E2E) programmes. The highest proportions of learners are apprentices following hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes. The inspection focuses on these learners. The E2E provision contributes to the judgements for overall effectiveness, capacity to improve and the main findings.

Description of the provider

1. Michael John of Liverpool (MJOL) is a privately owned company offering work-based learning and E2E programmes in Liverpool and the Wirral. The company has two training centres, one in Duke Street, Liverpool and one in Liscard, Wallasey. Since August 2005, MJOL has run its own E2E provision. Before this, MJOL worked as a sub-contractor for Liverpool Community College providing training and assessment for the college's E2E learners. In partnership with 34 local schools, MJOL provides additional vocational training for 160 year 10 and 11 learners in both its training centres and an additional site in Prescott Road, Old Swan, Liverpool. Currently MJOL are working in partnership with a local school constructing a purpose built training salon on school premises. This will provide additional training for schools within that locality. MJOL provide training for a number of learners with additional literacy and numeracy needs. At the time of inspection 54% of learners were receiving some form of additional support.
2. Apprenticeship programmes include hairdressing, barbering, beauty therapy and nail services. The E2E programmes prepare learners for employment. Their main focus is the development of literacy and numeracy skills but learners have the opportunity to achieve units towards hairdressing and/or beauty therapy National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) units. Learners on the E2E programme attend the centre two days a week with two to three days in placement. All hairdressing and barbering learners are employed in local salons and attend the centre one day a week for off-the-job training and assessment. Beauty therapy and nail service learners attend the centre for one to three days per week with salon placements arranged as they improve their skills and become competent. MJOL works with approximately 216 employers within Liverpool and the Wirral. None of the salons has work based assessors actively involved in on-the-job assessments.
3. Two partners own the company but day-to-day management is the responsibility of the chief executive. The senior management team consists of the partners, chief executive, programme manager and data manager. The middle management tier includes three programme co-ordinators, two centre managers, two skills for life co-ordinators, an initial assessment co-ordinator and an employer engagement co-ordinator. In total there are 30 staff working between the two centres.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good: Grade: 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards, the quality of provision and leadership and management are all good. Provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy is also good. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The company's quality improvement processes have been effective in securing improvement. MJOL has made good progress in addressing the key issues identified at the previous inspection. The chief executive, director and other managers work very well as a team, and have a clear focus on learners' needs. Success rates for learners have significantly increased. Progress in implementing actions to bring about some improvements has been slow. It is too early to judge the impact of some recently implemented initiatives.
6. The self-assessment report produced in 2006 lists many strengths and areas for improvement but does not identify the most significant. Judgements are not sufficiently based on objective evidence or the analysis of existing information. The report was generally accurate in its identification of strengths and areas for improvement, although it overstated some of the strengths.

Key strengths

- Good and improving success rates
- Much good teaching
- Strong operational and strategic leadership
- Successful and innovative collaboration which benefits learners
- Open and supportive management culture
- Very effective quality improvement

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient facilities to meet the needs of all learners
- Insufficiently rigorous processes for monitoring the quality of learning
- Insufficiently managed on-the-job training and assessment

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

7. Success rates for all apprenticeship programmes have significantly improved and are now good. At the time of inspection, 67% of the 132 apprentices who left the programme between August 2006 and June 2007 completed the full framework. This is 32% better than the 2004-05 overall success rates. Success rates amongst advanced apprentices have also improved considerably. Of the 28 learners who have left the programme during August 2006 and June 2007, 71% have completed the full framework, representing a 58% increase on the success rates in 2004-05 and 47% improvement from 2005-06.
8. Learners currently on apprenticeships are making good progress towards their qualification. They have realistic achievement targets that are rigorously monitored by staff and managers, and they develop appropriate practical skills across a range of hairdressing and beauty therapy-related services.
9. Learners on E2E are progressing well, particularly since January 2007, when the programme was changed to focus more on the development of employability skills. Learners' attendance, punctuality and behaviour have improved. The retention of pupils aged 14-16 is good and they make good progress.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

10. Teaching and learning are good. Of the sessions observed during inspection 60% were graded good and 40% satisfactory. Teaching sessions incorporate highly effective learning activities that motivate and engage learners. Good use is made of e-learning and worksheets are interesting and well-presented. Initial assessment and pre-entry interviews link effectively with helpful advice, guidance and the planning of any additional support. Well-planned, interesting schemes of work integrate key skills, equality, diversity and aspects of every child matters within vocational teaching. Good monitoring of learners' progress and achievement includes frequent in-centre review and target-setting, supplemented by 12-weekly employer reviews carried out in the salons. Learners receive good support from tutors, who often help them through very complex personal crises. Many learners are referred to other staff or appropriate external agencies, including Connexions, for specialist support. Learners attending either Duke Street or the Liscard centre have no social areas or easy access to drinking water. At lunch and break times all learners have to leave the building. Although computers and reference books are available to learners interested in self-study, they are inaccessible when tutors are using the learning centre for teaching or one-to-one additional literacy and numeracy support.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. MJOL has strong strategic and operational leadership. Directors set a clear and appropriate direction for the company, responsive to local, regional and national objectives. Strategic planning is consultative, building on good practice identified through collaborative partnerships and set within a culture focused on improving the experience of learners. Directors are supportive and effectively monitor financial and other aspects of provision. However, monitoring the timely progress of improvements to the provision is not sufficiently rigorous.
12. There are successful and innovative collaborative partnerships that benefit learners. The chief executive has been pivotal to many innovative developments within the local training community, including the Merseyside Hairdressing Forum. The forum has initiated many useful measures, such as an employer contract, a skills for life strategy and the implementation of specialist diplomas and foundation degrees. MJOL works extremely successfully with over 30 schools in Merseyside and Wirral. From September 2007, the company will provide training for a number of local schools in a purpose-built salon developed by MJOL on school premises in partnership with Broadgreen school. Agencies such as HABIA and the LSC seek the views of company staff on issues such as the hairdressing curriculum and delivery of work-based learning.
13. Staff value the supportive and open management culture of MJOL. As the previous inspection report identified, communications are good and teamwork is very effective. Staff induction, mentoring and development are well planned and linked effectively to appraisal. There are regular observations of staff at work and supportive individual meetings with managers that lead to robustly monitored action plans. However, there is a lack of clarity between the role of mentor and line manager.
14. One of the key company objectives is continual improvement. There are a number of very effective quality improvement processes. MJOL has effectively addressed most key challenges identified in the previous inspection report. Support for learners with additional learning needs is improved, as is access to and use of data. Success rates are much improved. Areas for improvement identified in the 2006 self-assessment report have progressed but is slow in some cases. Mentoring and the monitoring of staff performance have started to lead to improvements.
15. The promotion and monitoring of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Equality and diversity are well promoted in the curriculum and monitored effectively in the workplace. The recently-developed equality audit tool has identified ways in which policy and practice can be further improved, but an action plan has still to be produced. The previous inspection identified good initiatives to attract learners

from under-represented groups. MJOL is still successful in recruiting and supporting learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, but measures taken to attract learners and staff from other under-represented groups have been unsuccessful. The provider is aware of this and revised procedures are completed but awaiting action.

16. The company has very thorough processes for the monitoring and investigation of accidents and incidents. There are good initiatives for promoting health and safety to learners. A recent initiative has significantly raised awareness of the dangers of dermatitis. A system for risk-banding salons has been developed but not yet introduced. All staff are Criminal Records Bureau checked, and arrangements for child protection are satisfactory.
17. The processes for monitoring the quality of learning are insufficiently rigorous. There are regular and frequent spot checks of teaching, learners' progress reviews, the delivery of skills for life and general standards. However, there is insufficient emphasis on learners and learning. Observation checklists do not identify key strengths and weaknesses clearly enough and actions to improve lack detail. There is no systematic process by which the results of learner and employer feedback, observations of the learning process and the views of verifiers are brought together to objectively evaluate the quality of provision.

What learners like:

- The very approachable staff – ‘they treat you like adults’
- The interesting and enjoyable training
- The presentation of achievement awards to recognise good progress
- The good support for learners who want to achieve quickly
- The varied activities in theory sessions
- The tutors - ‘very supportive and always have time for you’
- ‘Theory lessons are fun – teachers use smart boards and make lessons interesting’
- ‘The way you are trusted to work independently on clients’

What learners think could improve:

- Access to computers outside timetabled classes
- Social and refreshment facilities
- Opportunities for learners to voice their concerns – there are not enough of these at present
- The availability of additional support – some learners have to miss classes to access this
- Access to clients and products in the training centre
- Opportunities for additional training

Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy

Good: Grade 2

Context

18. There are currently 140 apprentices and 38 advanced apprentices. There are 79 learners following beauty therapy programmes, 87 on hairdressing and 12 on barbering programmes. Approximately 8% of learners are male, 4% are from minority ethnic groups and 54% have additional learning needs.

Strengths

- Particularly good success rates for beauty therapy apprentices
- Good and improving success rates
- Good progress by learners
- Good range of teaching activities to motivate and engage learners
- Good monitoring and management of learner achievements

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient facilities to meet the needs of all learners
- Insufficiently managed on-the-job training and assessment

Achievement and standards

19. Overall success rates for the recently introduced apprentice programme in beauty therapy are particularly good. During 2005-06, overall and timely success rates are outstanding at 100% and 96% respectively. For the period August 2006 to January 2007, they remain very good at 77% overall and 91% for timely success. Success rates for hairdressing advanced apprentices were poor between 2003-06, but have significantly improved. Of the 17 learners who have planned end dates during 2006-07, 11 have successfully completed the full framework and no learners are still in learning. This, at 65%, represents a 44% improvement on 2005-06.

20. Success rates have also improved for hairdressing apprentices. During the period 2003-06 overall success rates were consistently poor. However, of the 78 learners with planned end dates during 2006-07, 46 have completed the full framework and one learner is still in learning. This is a 19% improvement on 2005-06.

21. Learners make good progress in achieving their individual learning targets. Timely successes have significantly improved during 2006-07, to 44% for advanced apprentices and 65% for apprentices. Tutors understand the importance of learners completing their individual achievement targets within an appropriate timescale. Fewer learners remain in learning past their expected end date. At the time of the inspection, two learners were still in learning compared with 25 learners at the same point during 2004-05.

22. Learners work confidently and professionally, using good communication skills to discuss clients' requirements and explain to them the range of services available. All learners satisfactorily meet their clients' styling requests, sometimes with additional tutor assistance. The more competent amongst them take a systematic and precise approach to styling, cutting and colouring, achieving fashionable finishes.

Quality of provision

23. Tutors plan a good range of teaching activities to motivate and engage learners. Experienced and knowledgeable tutors integrate e-learning, well-produced worksheets and the use of three-dimensional models to underpin and extend learners' related background knowledge. Good techniques of repetitive reinforcement help learners remember the bones of the body. There are good strategies for checking learning throughout the teaching sessions. In practical sessions, tutors plan activities effectively to match learners' individual needs. Learners are animated during discussions, and participate well. Highly motivated, they work confidently. Learners systematically follow health and safety practices, protecting themselves and their clients.
24. Off-the-job training effectively incorporates aspects of *Every Child Matters* and key skills. Learners benefit from a wide curriculum content including, employment rights, health, equality, diversity and citizenship. The development of key skills is itemised on all lesson plans and integrates well in most lessons. However, tutors do not share the key skill objectives with learners and learners' understanding is insufficiently checked.
25. Assessments are well planned and carried out. After completing assessments learners receive written feedback containing very useful tutor comments and summarising any further skill development required. Internal verification is well planned and thorough. Observations of assessment are frequent and effective in improving good assessment practice.
26. Initial assessment and pre-entry interviews link effectively with helpful advice, guidance and planning of additional support. Responsive specialist staff effectively support learner's literacy and numeracy development during one-to-one mentoring or as additional support in teaching sessions. Tutors offer learners good personal and practical support. The monitoring of learners' progress and achievements is regular and thorough.
27. There are insufficient facilities to meet the needs of all learners. Learners are required to leave the building at break and lunch times as there is no space within the centres to relax or eat lunch. Drinking water is available but accessible only in toilet areas. Learners are able to use a good range of reference books and computers in the resource centre. However, books are not available on loan and access to the learning resource centre is restricted when individual support or teaching sessions are taking place.

Leadership and management

28. MJOL have recently introduced rigorous and very effective processes to monitor the progress and achievement of learners. Targets for learners' retention and achievement are set during annual staff appraisals and monitored during monthly one-to-one meetings. Appropriate actions are taken to support staff not meeting these targets including additional line management support, mentoring and staff development. Staff are fully conversant with the importance of early identification of learners falling behind target and the importance of learners achieving in a timely fashion.
29. Although all salons agree a contract stating they will, in partnership with MJOL, develop the skills of learners, not all provide training. MJOL does not sufficiently record or risk-assess the quality of their learners' experiences in salons. No employers act as work-based assessors. Learners can request MJOL assessors to visit their salon to complete assessments. However, assessment is by request only and not part of an assessment strategy to increase the opportunity for in-salon assessment. MJOL are not able to offer all beauty therapy learners early access to placement salons. The provider is aware of this and has recently recruited extra staff to increase partnerships with local beauty salons.

Annex

Learners' achievements

All Apprenticeship Programmes	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	31	13%	31%	10%	21%
		timely	32	9%	19%	6%	13%
	04-05	overall	23	17%	31%	13%	22%
		timely	20	5%	22%	5%	15%
	05-06	overall	21	29%	36%	24%	29%
		timely	24	29%	24%	25%	18%
Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	61	44%	45%	41%	32%
		timely	69	26%	24%	23%	18%
	04-05	overall	85	39%	46%	35%	36%
		timely	74	8%	30%	8%	23%
	05-06	overall	107	58%	54%	56%	50%
		timely	110	55%	38%	53%	34%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'