



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT APRIL 2000

Andrew Collinge Training

SUMMARY

Andrew Collinge Training offers outstanding training in hairdressing for trainees in Liverpool and the surrounding area. Trainees make rapid progress with their NVQs and demonstrate good skills in hairdressing. The training facilities are of outstanding quality. Equal opportunities is satisfactory and trainees have a good awareness of the relevant issues. Trainee support and management of training are good. There is a comprehensive induction process at the start of the first, second and third year of training. Although there is a high level of individual trainee support, additional learning support is not systematically planned. There is a strong management team which operates an open and consultative style. The company and the salons where trainees work all have a commitment to the training of young hairdressers. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. There is a culture of continuous improvement and effective action planning but quality assurance procedures need further development.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Hair & beauty	1

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	3
Trainee support	2
Management of training	2
Quality assurance	3

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ outstanding levels of achievement in hairdressing
- ◆ outstanding delivery of theory training
- ◆ good key skills development
- ◆ high levels of individual trainee support
- ◆ trainees have comprehensive individual training plans
- ◆ many improvements to performance as a result of quality assurance

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ missed opportunities for practical assessments in the first year of training
- ◆ equal opportunities policy is not comprehensive
- ◆ initial assessment is underdeveloped
- ◆ insufficient use of management information

INTRODUCTION

1. Peter Collinge founded the original hairdressing company over 50 years ago. After successfully establishing a nationally known chain of hairdressing salons, the company opened its training school in 1974. The company offered training to traditional apprentices and fee-paying clients who wanted to become hairdressers. In the 1980s, the company became involved with youth training. It was the first Merseyside training organisation to receive the Accredited Training Award in 1987. The hairdressing salons and training establishments within the group now all trade under the name of Andrew Collinge.

2. In 1994, the company moved its training headquarters to a refurbished Georgian Terrace in Liverpool, with a new training salon for second-year trainees close by. A training salon in central Birkenhead deals with the trainees based in the Wirral. Third-year trainees attend the Andrew Collinge Graduates Salon in Liverpool's city centre. Andrew Collinge Training contracts with Merseyside Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), CEWTEC and Manchester TEC. It has over one hundred trainees on youth training, national traineeships and modern apprenticeships in hairdressing to national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 and 3. Trainees consist of those from Andrew Collinge salons as well as trainees from 60 placement salons throughout the Merseyside area. CEWTEC is the co-ordinating TEC.

3. The city of Liverpool has a population of approximately half a million people, with a metropolitan area population of one and a half million. It is a large commercial and manufacturing city which lies at the mouth of the river Mersey. Liverpool is recognised by Europe as a designated objective one area, due to the high levels of social and economic deprivation. Minority ethnic groups make up 2.42 per cent of the Merseyside population. The unemployment rate in Liverpool is high at 17 per cent compared to the national average of 5.2 per cent. The number of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above in 1999 was 32.4 per cent compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. Andrew Collinge Training produced its second self-assessment report in January 2000. The report was compiled by the training manager and a small group of key training staff. It was a significant improvement on the first self-assessment report produced by the company. Weaknesses identified by the company had been acted upon before the inspection, particularly in quality assurance. A number of significant strengths were not identified. Two of the five grades awarded by inspectors remained the same as those presented in the self-assessment report, while three were graded higher.

5. A team of three inspectors spent a total of 12 days at Andrew Collinge Training during April 2000. Inspectors examined company and awarding-body documents. They met staff from Andrew Collinge Training and observed off-the-job training sessions in Birkenhead and three Liverpool training centres. Inspectors visited and interviewed 13 employers. Inspectors examined assessment records, trainees' work, and 37 portfolios. They observed three monitoring reviews and nine instruction sessions and interviewed 59 trainees. The following table shows the grades awarded to the on- and off-the-job training that was observed by inspectors:

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Hairdressing	7	5				12
Total	7	5	0	0	0	12

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Hair & beauty

Grade 1

6. There are 129 hairdressing trainees taking NVQ levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing, as well as the appropriate key skills qualifications. Seventy-one are modern apprentices, 54 are national trainees and four are on other youth training programmes. The trainees are based at Andrew Collinge and other hairdressing salons throughout Merseyside, Wirral, Cheshire, Manchester and West Lancashire. Of the 127 trainees, 44 per cent are in Andrew Collinge salons. Eight of the 129 trainees are male. First-year trainees attend a training centre in Liverpool one day each week for theoretical training to support their NVQ level 2. Trainees are also given practical training to develop the necessary practical hairdressing skills and commercial speed. Second-year trainees are placed in a dedicated salon in Liverpool or in Birkenhead where they are exposed to the pressures of a commercial salon. Those who progress to NVQ level 3 move to a third-year graduates' salon dedicated to NVQ level 3 hairdressing. There are a large number

GOOD PRACTICE

The following is an example of good practice in the production and maintenance of assessment evidence. Meticulous attention to detail is demonstrated in the portfolios which are very well maintained by both tutors and trainees. All necessary signatures are in place and all observations have a comment by the tutor. Assessments are accompanied by the appropriate client consultation sheets which are comprehensively record details of the client and the service that has been given.

of models who regularly attend the training centres, providing regular assessment opportunities for trainees. Most trainees achieve NVQ level 2 in 18 months, with a few taking two years. Most third-year trainees achieve NVQ level 3 in 12 months. All staff are well qualified and experienced with current occupational experience. Inspectors identified several major additional strengths, which were not identified in the self-assessment report. They awarded a higher grade than that given in the company's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-planned training scheme
- ◆ training facilities of outstanding quality
- ◆ well-qualified staff with high levels of hairdressing skills
- ◆ outstanding theory and practical training
- ◆ confident trainees with good practical skills
- ◆ good delivery of key skills
- ◆ outstanding achievement

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ missed opportunities for practical assessments in the first year of training

7. Practical training for NVQ level 2 is organised to be delivered in a different way for year one and two trainees. First-year trainees initially develop their practical skills through the use of hairdressing mannequin blocks before proceeding onto clients. Training is well-structured and trainees enjoy using the model heads to have their skills. Trainees are set demanding targets and complete hairdressing services in realistic working times. Performance is recorded and trainees' progress is clearly tracked against given tasks. Good progress is made by individual trainees. Trainees display high levels of skills in blowdrying, finger waving, pincurling, setting, perm winding and cutting. Once skills have been satisfactorily developed, trainees progress to clients. First-year trainees spend some of their time at the second-year salon once they are ready for assessment. The second-year salon has a wide range of clients available.

8. Theory training is of outstanding quality and goes well beyond the standards required for the NVQ. Trainees interviewed unanimously enjoyed this part of their training. There is a library of different textbooks, comprehensive handouts, videos and a wide range of hairdressing products. The books are used by trainees in assignments and for aiding descriptions of practical techniques. The theory notes are well structured, using incomplete handouts, unlabelled diagrams and questions to be completed by trainees. The information contained in the notes is well researched and clearly explains difficult areas such as tinting. The good quality of the theory training helps trainees understand how products work and enables trainees to discuss appropriate products with clients.

GOOD PRACTICE

The following is an example of preparing trainees for the different skills-level required between NVQ level 2 and 3. The company is committed to maintaining a high standard for trainees on NVQ level 3 hairdressing programmes. If their skills are not considered to be of the appropriate standard to enter the level 3 programme, trainees undergo an intensive period of practical training in the level 2 training centre. Their progress is carefully monitored and only when it is appropriate do they move to level 3. This helps trainees with confidence building as well as maintaining the high standard of the level 3 training.

9. Second-year trainees spend their training time either one day each week, or in blocks of two weeks at the training centre. The majority of employees who take advantage of the two-week training blocks are Andrew Collinge Training trainees. Salons have a wide range of real clients paying salon prices. Trainees begin to develop their own group of regular clients just as they would as stylists in a working salon. Trainees are regularly given step-by-step guidance by their tutors on advanced practical skills, particularly in cutting and colouring. There are a significant number of training staff available. Typically, there is a ratio of one tutor to six trainees in practical groups and trainees benefit from this high level of tutor support. Several clients observed in inspection were given hairdressing services which required second-year trainees to use skills well in advance of the NVQ level 2 standards.

10. Third-year trainees work towards NVQ level 3 and complete their key skills. They undertake their training in an attractive busy city-centre salon referred to as the 'graduates' salon. This attracts a different range of clients and enables trainees to undertake a range of fashion work at the top end of the hairdressing market. The atmosphere and 'buzz' that the activity of the salon creates lends itself to the advanced work being undertaken. Trainees, many of whom have undergone additional training between finishing NVQ level 2 and starting NVQ level 3, are clearly ready for level 3 work and demonstrate high levels of practical skills. The salon is continually busy and the range of quality fashion models means trainees can progress at their own speed without waiting before undertaking advanced work. The quality of the work is well known amongst the local community.

11. The training centres are all well resourced in terms of décor, products, clients, equipment and staffing. There are few commercial salons that match the quality of the training salons. All hairdressing tutors are well qualified, with advanced hairdressing certificates, teaching qualifications and appropriate training and assessor qualifications. They have worked commercially at the top level of the hairdressing industry, including demonstrating hairdressing abroad. They work well together and deliver structured training that is flexible and meets the needs of different groups of trainees. Some trainees are fast-tracked through assessments while those who need it are given a higher level of support over a longer period of time. Care is taken to prepare trainees fully for practical and theoretical assessments. Trainees have access to a wide range of models on whom to practice their practical skills, both in the salons and in the training centres. Models are of all ages, with long and short hair and include both men and women. Tutors place great emphasis on professionalism and health and safety. Tutors check clients' protective gowning and the correct use of personal protective equipment, such as the wearing of disposable rubber gloves by trainees when colouring. Notes on the use of chemicals covered by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations are found in all trainees' portfolios and are regularly reinforced by tutors.

12. All trainees show commitment to their training. Many arrive well before classes and even attend during their holidays, rather than miss training. On the few occasions when models are not available, trainees work on assignments and write up their work for their portfolios of evidence. Trainees value the opportunity to learn skills in a commercial environment. They also appreciate the chance to undertake competition work in the first, second and third year of their training. This takes the form of competitions which all trainees enter. Salon training nights at the premises of employers are used for preparation and practice for the competition work. Trainees' portfolios are of outstanding quality at both NVQ levels 2 and 3, with comprehensive records of practical work undertaken including record cards, analysis sheets, descriptions of services plus some good photographic evidence. Many trainees use information technology effectively in their assignments.

13. Trainees receive a high degree of individual attention. Working relationships among trainers, trainees and employers are friendly, mutually respectful and productive. Trainees are encouraged to set their sights high and staff in the salons are also keen to play their part in supporting trainees. All staff show great enthusiasm for hairdressing. There are many examples of trainees who have quickly progressed to the kinds of positions that current trainees aspire to such as working on cruise liners, photographic stylists and as trainers.

14. Delivery and trainees' understanding of key skills are good. Staff deliver key skills effectively and have developed a comprehensive range of learning and support materials. Key skills are included at induction for first-, second- and third-year trainees. Key skills are included in individual training plans and trainees' action plans. Model sheets that record details of the hair treatments performed on clients are well designed and encourage the gathering of key skills evidence.

15. There is good on-the-job practical training in all salons. Trainees report back to their salons on the work that they are doing at the training centres and then practice their newly acquired skills on salon models. Most salons have staff who are responsible for training. Trainees are encouraged to observe stylists when advanced techniques are being used. These activities extend trainees knowledge and understanding of advanced hair styling methods. The majority of salons have formal training nights for their trainees. Trainees are also given time to practice their skills during quieter periods in the week.

16. Achievement at Andrew Collinge Training is good. In 1998-99 the achievement rate for NVQ level 2 was 67 per cent. Achievement for NVQ level 3 is outstanding. All of the 18 trainees in 1998-99 passed. This level of achievement is reflected in modern apprentices, 84 per cent of whom completed their frameworks in 1998-99.

17. There are missed opportunities for practical assessments in the first year of training. The emphasis on ensuring that all trainees receive a thorough foundation of training is sometimes at the expense of not completing practical assessments at

the earliest possible time. This would disadvantage trainees who left early who would not be able to claim a record of achievement that reflected their true ability. The problem has been recognised and measures have been put in place to send trainees to the second-year salon to complete assessments when they are ready to do so.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

18. Andrew Collinge Training has an equal opportunities policy which meets contractual requirements. The current policy and statement were updated at the beginning of this year. This statement has been issued to all trainees and is displayed in all salons used by the company. Employers have adopted the policy issued by Andrew Collinge Training. Equal opportunities forms part of the induction programme and is reinforced at the beginning of training each year. The company ensures that its recruitment literature contains suitable statements in the text which demonstrate its commitment to equality of opportunity. The images used also demonstrate a good gender and ethnic balance. At the time of the inspection, there were eight male trainees representing just over 6 per cent of the total. There were also two trainees from minority ethnic groups. The grade awarded was the same as that given in the company's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ positive action to promote training to under-represented groups
- ◆ well-implemented open-access policy
- ◆ trainees demonstrate good awareness of equal opportunities

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no formal monitoring of equal opportunities
- ◆ limited staff training in equal opportunities
- ◆ equal opportunities policy is not comprehensive

19. There has been positive action to recruit men. All marketing materials have been circulated to boys' schools and male tutors have been sent to careers events. Male trainees have been used to talk at these events. There has been a marketing focus on schools in deprived areas where local salons are available for placements. Effective links have been made with the Liverpool Compact group to offer work placements to school pupils in all areas of the city. This group has the responsibility for co-ordinating school work experience in the city. All applicants are interviewed and the process has been designed to promote equality of opportunity. The large number and wide variety of salons used to place trainees ensures salons can be

offered which are near trainees' homes. Applications come from all areas of the Northwest and every effort is made to accommodate the varying needs of the applicants.

20. Trainees demonstrate a knowledge of equal opportunities and are able to deal effectively with a variety of clients. Clients come from all areas of the city and include many tourists. Trainees remember the discussions on equal opportunities carried out during induction and are able to relate this to their work in salons. Trainees are treated with respect and are protected against all forms of harassment and abuse. A case of harassment did arise in the last year and this was handled appropriately. Trainees understand the appeals and grievance procedures which are discussed and reinforced throughout the programme. 'Cause for concern' forms are used for trainees with problems and a trainee-welfare book also covers complaints. All complaints are effectively dealt with and resolved.

21. The equal opportunities policy available is more a statement and is not comprehensive. There is no mention of legislation covering equal opportunities issues such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and little detail in the document. The supporting documents covering the procedures for appeals, grievance and discipline are clear and well designed for the trainees. The flow-chart used in the grievance procedure is explained to trainees and clearly shows the stages to be followed. The equal opportunity policy has recently been reviewed but reviews have not always taken place on an annual basis. A section was introduced this year on harassment and bullying.

22. There has been little staff development undertaken to cover equal opportunities. There are plans to train all tutors in equality of opportunity issues who are to cascade this training to employers in the area. There is little monitoring of equal opportunities data. Data is collected for TEC requirements relating to gender, ethnicity and disabilities. This data is not used for any other analysis and applications are not monitored although all are interviewed. There is no systematic method of using data to identify any equal opportunities issues arising during the selection process.

Trainee support

Grade 2

23. Trainees are recruited throughout the year. In the past, there has always been direct contacts from possible recruits or salons in the area and some contacts on local schools. The recruitment has been expanded in the current year to focus more closely with local schools and this has resulted in application numbers doubling. Staff have attended many schools careers events and Andrew Collinge Training have had over 20 school pupils on work experience at various salons in the past year. All applicants are interviewed, usually by the training director, where trainees are interviewed by other members of staff there are fully recorded interview procedures. Recruits are encouraged to bring a parent or other appropriate adult

with them to this first interview. Parents and guardians are invited to a social evening before the start of the training programme to ensure involvement and understanding of the programme requirements. Applicants are offered a taster period in one of the salons with no previous hairdressing experience. All trainees receive a full-day induction at the head office either as part of a group or sometimes on an individual basis. They also receive an induction programme before starting their second and third year of training to reinforce and check previous learning. While on-programme all trainees have a review every eight weeks. The company's self-assessment report accurately identified the company's strengths and weaknesses in this area. Additional strengths and weaknesses were also identified and the grade awarded was the same as the one given by the company.

GOOD PRACTICE

The following is an example of an effective strategy for helping and supporting trainees with spelling problems. When assignments are marked and spelling mistakes are identified, trainees complete a "dictionary" form. This form encourages the trainees to record the word with the wrong spelling and then the correct one in the next column. They also have to identify why the spelling was wrong. These sheets are retained in their portfolios as a reference. Several examples were seen in portfolios where the spellings of trainees had improved dramatically over several months.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good pastoral and vocational support
- ◆ comprehensive induction in the first, second and third year of training
- ◆ many additional training opportunities available to trainees
- ◆ high level of individual trainee support
- ◆ external agencies effectively used for additional support

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ additional learning support not systematically planned
- ◆ no formal procedure in place for the accreditation of prior learning
- ◆ initial assessment underdeveloped

24. All trainees receive effective individual help and support while on- programme. A wide variety of individual needs are met both in the training and personal areas. Tutors deal effectively with any problems that arise. All the training centres have a welfare book that records any issues that have arisen and the action taken. Problems are signed off in the welfare book when satisfactorily resolved. Some trainees have left the training programme for periods of time for a number of reasons, mainly pregnancy, and arrangements are made for these trainees to return and complete their programme whenever possible.

25. Trainees are very appreciative of the help they receive. Staff encourage and offer sufficient support for trainees to 'fast-track' through qualifications when they have to leave programmes early. For example, a level 3 trainee who was leaving to work abroad would not otherwise have completed her qualification. The range of salons and training centres within the training group aids flexibility to meet trainees' individual needs. Trainees can be moved to suit their needs at any time during their programmes. Trainees are encouraged to use external support such as the free telephone support line offered by the two TECs in the area. There are links with counselling services and homeless support groups which are used when problems cannot be solved internally. Andrew Collinge Training's staff have attended courses

on counselling, drugs and alcohol abuse.

26. Trainees have good recall of the induction process and this is reinforced by a second and third induction when progressing into the subsequent years of the programme. The induction documentation given to trainees is clear and offers appropriate information. As well as details of new buildings and timetables for the year, some subjects are repeated at all three inductions. These include health and safety, appeals and grievance procedures, action planning, portfolio building and equal opportunities. The induction programme is evaluated each year and appropriate changes made.

27. Trainees have many opportunities to enhance their programmes and expand their knowledge and understanding of the hairdressing world. They attend specialist perming and colouring courses organised by major manufacturers. A barbering day is organised and masterclasses are given by the Andrew Collinge Training artistic team. Many trainees visit national hairdressing exhibitions and all have the opportunity to participate in the internal annual hairdressing competition. All trainees have a review at least every eight weeks. These reviews may take place in the training centre or in the salons. The documentation used for reviews has been changed over the past year and the present forms have only been used for two months. These forms however involve consultation with the trainee, tutor and employer. They are used in conjunction with action plans and the individual training plans produced by the provider. The high staffing levels in the practical hairdressing sessions ensures that trainees are given effective support. In one group seen during the inspection there were three staff and seven trainees. There is always more than one member of staff for any practical session. This also ensures that trainees do not have to wait long for help with clients.

28. Until this year, initial assessment had not been part of the Andrew Collinge Training programme. All new trainees due to start and trainees progressing to the third year have now completed the basic skills agency test. Although trainees do receive additional learning support when necessary, this is not planned and there are no formal plans for the delivery of this support. This support is generally delivered on an individual basis by the tutors when deemed necessary. Many trainees join the company with previous hairdressing experience such as working as Saturday staff in salons. This previous experience is not used at the start of programmes to inform individual training plans. Trainees have to start at the beginning of their programmes even though they may have been carrying out hairdressing tasks for some time. There is an increasing early use of fast-tracking assessments for trainees where possible.

Management of training

Grade 2

29. Andrew Collinge Training has a clearly defined management structure, which identifies roles and responsibilities across the company. There is a training manager

who is one of the directors, three training salon managers and a team of experienced tutors working within each of the training salon centres. The company has support from a placement co-ordinator, an administration team and a guidance tutor. An appropriate strategic plan sets out short-term company goals. These are communicated throughout the company during the staff meetings or during individual appraisal discussions. A staff development plan identifies formal qualifications required by individuals in line with the company's goals. Individual training objectives and details of qualifications are held on personal staff files. The self-assessment report identified some strengths that are normal practice. The company accurately identified its weaknesses. Inspectors identified three additional strengths. An action plan addressing one of the weaknesses was already being implemented prior to the start of the inspection. The grade given by inspectors was the same as that given in the company's self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ open consultative management style
- ◆ good staff development opportunities
- ◆ good ratio of trainees to tutors
- ◆ trainees' individual training plans comprehensive
- ◆ strong links with external agencies

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ insufficient use of management information
- ◆ policies and procedures are not fully embedded

GOOD PRACTICE

This is an example of good practice in keeping trainees on target to complete their training. Trainees who normally attend the training centre on a Monday are expected to attend the centre on a different day of the week during weeks with a Bank Holiday within them. This ensures that they do not miss their normal weekly session and get behind on their targets.

30. Management is approachable, and listens to and acts upon ideas from staff. A management style includes trainees who attend the head office on day one for their induction. At this time they are introduced to the guidance tutor who is permanently based within the reception area and who responds to trainees' needs as required. Employers and trainees are aware of the guidance tutor as the main point of contact. Employers reported regular contact concerning trainees' attendance. The training manager's room is located near to the head office entrance and the door is purposefully left open to encourage staff and trainees to approach management as necessary. All tutors are consulted during staff meetings in relation to the delivery of training programmes, assessment and internal verification procedures. Managers consult all members of the team regarding major changes that may be planned for the future, especially when the changes affect specific teams or individuals. Future plans for the expansion of the Birkenhead training salon and introduction of the level 3 programme have been discussed with all staff. The business strategy is simple but appropriately recorded and reviewed during staff meetings. The process of self-assessment has involved key people within the company and plans are in place to ensure further self-assessments take place at frequent intervals in the future.

Action plans are developed and updated with clear delegation of roles and responsibilities. Job descriptions are based upon the various functions required within the company. All staff work as a team, taking pride in their work and reinforcing professional hairdressing standards.

GOOD PRACTICE

The following is good practice in ensuring the partnership of employers in the training process.

Employers are only taken on if they provide good on-the-job training and are committed to the welfare of their trainees. Several employers commented on how difficult it was to gain a position with Andrew Collinge Training due to the stringent criteria laid down by the provider. It was likened by one employer to trying to get into a good restaurant which is heavily booked, feeling that there must be something good about it.

31. Staff development is recognised as a priority by senior management who encourage personal and work-related development. There is a staff development policy, which positively motivates staff to refresh and further develop their skills. Staff development is closely related to the business strategy with recorded training objectives identifying specific qualifications and skills required. There is an on-going programme to develop Andrew Collinge Training staff in the role of assessors, internal verifiers and accreditation of prior learning advisors. Fourteen Andrew Collinge Training staff are currently planning or completing their Vocational Assessors Award, three are planning to complete internal verification, three the accreditation of prior learning advisor award with one more member of the team completing the first unit of the accreditation of prior learning advisor award. Sixteen work-placement staff also intend to complete their vocational assessor qualification. Career progression is encouraged within the company. Qualified stylists receive support from colleagues to develop their teaching skills. A mentor is appointed and the trainee tutor shadows their practical work within the main first-year training salon. As confidence builds they are introduced as a member of the tutor team. A team approach to teaching is encouraged which enables a low ratio of trainees to tutors to be maintained. This ensures good individual support for trainees and access to a diverse skill and knowledge base. Team members are effectively deployed with management recognising the individual strengths and expertise across the company. The artistic team deliver demonstrations and specialist advice during tutor masterclass sessions. These are attended by the existing training tutors. These skills are then built into the training programmes to enhance programme content.

32. Each trainee takes responsibility for their learning by completing action plans reflecting target dates to achieve specific aspects of their programme. The individual training plans identify the learning objectives that the placement co-ordinator discusses during review visits. Individual training plans are updated regularly, reflecting the information in the trainees' weekly action plans. These are collectively used to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training. Trainees keep a copy of their training and action plans within their portfolio. They are encouraged to take this into their place of work and to keep their employers up to date of their progress.

33. Andrew Collinge Training maintains good links with outside agencies in order to keep its company abreast of quality issues and network with similar companies. Staff are given time to develop links with local networks for example, the level 3 co-ordinator is acting as the secretary for a local network called the internal verifier and assessor forum. This group has been set up to address good practice across the region.

34. Management-information data relating to progression, retention and achievement against targets is collected but is not used to draw up action or contingency plans to address concerns. The management-information system programme is not user-friendly and does not lend itself easily to the appropriate collection of management data to inform company planning. Reports printed off the system are geared towards meeting TEC requirements. A member of the administration team has received training to work with the system and accesses information in relation to TEC returns as necessary. This training has allowed the company to monitor trainees' destinations more closely and they currently know destinations of 94 per cent of their programme leavers. Andrew Collinge Training meets its contractual obligations with the three TECs with which it contracts. Formal company policies and procedures have recently been introduced, although there is no recorded procedure for staff recruitment, induction and appraisal. Many of the procedures are understood by the staff, although application sometimes varies. Management is currently discussing and introducing the formal procedures with staff and plans are in place to evaluate their impact. However, these procedures are new and have not been in place long enough to measure their effectiveness.

Quality assurance

Grade 3

35. Andrew Collinge Training is currently developing formal quality assurance policies and procedures. New internal verification procedures were introduced three months prior to the inspection. Self-assessment has involved key members of the training team with the development of action plans to address concerns. Some action points were already being implemented at the time of inspection. Formal feedback from trainees is gathered during trainees' review meetings and through the completion of trainees' evaluation questionnaires. The company currently meets all three TEC contractual requirements. The company has recently gained the Investors in People Standard. The self-assessment report identified strengths and weaknesses, some of which were considered to be no more than normal practice. Additional strengths were identified during the inspection. A higher grade was awarded by inspectors than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ firmly established culture of continuous improvement
- ◆ rigorous evaluation at different stages of training programmes
- ◆ many improvements to performance as a result of quality assurance

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ quality assurance procedures not fully recorded
- ◆ underdeveloped internal verification process

36. The company identifies with quality as part of every day culture and responds rapidly to change. Professional standards are expected and achieved by all. Quality assurance is addressed daily, on an informal basis, with Andrew Collinge Training standards being understood and maintained by the tutors working within the training environment. Trainees are enveloped in a culture of quality and professionalism on joining the programme. Standards are introduced at induction and continue throughout their programme. The process of self-assessment is valued as critical in maintaining improvement. Action plans are developed and responsibilities delegated among staff to address change. Regular meetings encourage discussion and monitor the progress of changes made, in particular, the impact on trainees' performance. Good practice is shared during these meetings and the ideas and views put forward by trainees and staff are fully explored.

37. Andrew Collinge Training makes good use of evaluative information which is systematically collected and reviewed during various stages of the training process. On completion of the induction, which is carried out for each year of the trainees' programme, a checklist is completed to ensure all trainees have received relevant information. A questionnaire is used to evaluate the process of induction and changes have been implemented as a result of this feedback. Trainees have a progress-review meeting every eight weeks. Discussions involve the work-placement supervisor and utilise the opportunity to address programme evaluation. On-going discussions happen on a daily basis between tutors and their trainees and relevant information is shared at staff meetings. At the end of the programme, trainees are invited to complete another questionnaire which is collated and analysed. Trainees identified a need to progress to working on real clients earlier in the first year of the programme. Trainees also requested cutting practice on blocks earlier. As a result of this feedback, changes have been made to the programme to reflect these particular requests.

38. Client surveys are completed within the training salons to review the effectiveness of the service offered. Information collected within this survey is recorded and results visually displayed on graphs within the trainee staff rooms in the training salons. Services highlighted as having low client awareness were evaluated collectively by the tutors to address improvements to their delivery in these particular areas. The most recent survey highlighted a lack of awareness of clients to the service of working with long hair. Through discussion the tutors recognised that this was an area not covered as thoroughly within their programme delivery and arranged to attend a master class with the artistic team to better equip themselves in ways of supporting trainees in their raising of client awareness to this service. The company is beginning to see the benefit of its improvements with achievement levels on the NVQ level 2 programme rising from 56 per cent in 1997-98 to 67 per cent in 1998-99. Acting on feedback and evaluation there are advanced plans in place to expand the Birkenhead Training Centre to encompass first-, second- and third-year training. This will avoid Wirral-based trainees needing to travel to Liverpool to access their level 3 programme.



39. The company does not have formal quality assurance procedures for quality assurance in place. Quality is inherent within Andrew Collinge Training as standards set are extremely high. Although the need for quality assurance is understood, procedures have not been formally addressed and, therefore, variances occur. The company has had problems previously with internal verification, issues being highlighted within external verifier reports. Changes to the management structure and positive steps to rapidly make improvements are already in place and although procedures are still developing, internal verification is now taking place on an on-going basis throughout the programme. Sampling plans have been put in place and additional verifiers are in the process of qualifying.