

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Skegness College of Vocational Training Limited**

28 January 2002



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## 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 and in New Deal options. 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 **learn**direct provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

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.

## Inadequate provision

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

- one third or more of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas and New Deal options are judged less than satisfactory, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.



## SUMMARY

### The provider

Skegness College of Vocational Training Limited was established in 1975. It is a small, privately owned company based in Skegness, providing work-based learning for young people in hairdressing, management, administration, engineering and customer service. Currently, there are 43 learners working towards advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships, and national vocational qualifications at levels 1, 2, 3 and 4. Twenty-two of these learners are in hairdressing, nine in engineering, seven in customer service and five in management and administration. Numbers in engineering, customer service and management and administration were too low to be within the scope of the inspection. All learners are employed. Off-the-job training is carried out at the college's premises, with the exception of engineering, which is subcontracted to two further education colleges.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The quality of work-based learning in hairdressing and beauty therapy is satisfactory. The leadership and management of Skegness College of Vocational Training Limited, including its approach to quality assurance and equal opportunities, are satisfactory.

## GRADES

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	3

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

## KEY STRENGTHS

- good monitoring of subcontractors
- effective links with other training organisations
- good use of work-based evidence in hairdressing

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- no active promotion of equal opportunities
- poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- ineffective individual learning plans

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more specific target-setting in the development plan
- more effective internal verification feedback for work-based assessors

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of three inspectors spent a total of 11 days at Skegness College of Vocational Training in January 2002. They observed and interviewed 21 learners, and carried out 15 interviews with employers and supervisors and 10 interviews with staff. They visited 13 work placements and observed two learning sessions. They examined a range of documents including learners' portfolios of evidence, policies and procedures, awarding body reports, minutes of meetings, internal verifiers' files and other management papers. Inspectors studied the self-assessment report of Skegness College of Vocational Training Limited, which was produced in September 2001.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. Skegness College of Vocational Training Limited was originally established in 1975 as Industrial Training (Skegness) Limited. The name of the provider was changed to its current form in 1997. The college is a small, privately owned company based in Skegness, employing four full-time and eight part-time staff. It provides work-based learning for young people in hairdressing, management, administration, engineering and customer service. It is also a subcontractor for a further education college, providing a variety of courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy, administration and customer service. This training was outside the scope of the inspection. Currently, there are 43 learners working towards advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships, and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1, 2, 3 and 4. Twenty-two of these learners are in hairdressing and beauty therapy, nine in engineering, seven in customer service and five in management and administration. The number of learners in engineering, customer service and management and administration was too low to be within the scope of the inspection. All learners are employed. Off-the-job training is carried out at the college's premises with the exception of engineering, which is subcontracted to two further education colleges. The work-based learning is funded through the Lincolnshire and Rutland Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

3. Skegness is a popular seaside resort in the district of East Lindsey in Lincolnshire. The major industries are leisure and tourism, but motor vehicle, hairdressing and retailing employ significant numbers. Much employment is seasonal. In September 2001, the unemployment rate in Skegness was 2.5 per cent, compared with the national rate of 2.9 per cent. Less than 1 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic groups. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers in East Lindsey achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 50.0 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.



### **Work-based learning for young people**

4. Work-based learning is satisfactory. Retention and achievement on the advanced modern apprenticeship programme rose between 1999 and 2000. The retention and achievement rates on the foundation programme fell over the same period. The rates for learners on NVQ programmes are broadly in line with modern apprenticeship rates. Learners in hairdressing are enthusiastic and well motivated, and demonstrate a clear understanding of their training programmes and individual learning goals. All learners receive an initial assessment of their key skills. Key skills are developed within the context of hairdressing training through centre-devised activities and assignments. Resources for learning are satisfactory. The workplace salons are modern and of good quality, but the college has only one small salon, which is mainly used for training purposes and has a limited range of clients. Learners have good opportunities for additional learning both in the college and in the workplace. Work-based assessment is an integral feature of the provision and the college has encouraged and promoted the acquisition of assessor awards by local employers. These employers, however, are largely unaware of the training programme being followed by learners and the training provided by employers does not contribute to individual learning plans.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

## Grade 3

5. Skegness College of Vocational Training Limited is a small privately owned training company employing four full-time and eight part-time staff. There are two directors who act as the chairman and the managing director of the company. The chairman is not involved in the day-to-day operations of the college, but the managing director has a part-time role, taking responsibility for financial issues. A full-time manager is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre, as well as for co-ordinating the training and support for learners attending engineering courses at subcontracted further education colleges. The quality assurance of training in hairdressing, management, administration and customer service at the centre is managed by a full-time co-ordinator. A full-time senior hairdressing tutor, plus three part-time tutors, provide in-centre hairdressing training and assessment, and learner support. Two further part-time tutors provide support to learners with additional learning needs. A full-time administrator and part-time administrative assistant are employed to carry out general office duties, including the maintenance and updating of learners' records and the preparation of LSC contract returns. The college has a set of policies and procedures for equality of opportunity and quality assurance. Annual self-assessment reports have been produced since 1998 and the most recent report was compiled in September 2001.

### STRENGTHS

- effective links with other training organisations
- good support for learners and employers
- good monitoring of subcontractors

### WEAKNESSES

- ineffective individual learning plans
- poorly minuted meetings
- no active promotion of equal opportunities

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more specific target-setting in the development plan

6. There are effective links with other training organisations. The college's manager is a board member of a county-wide training association and the chair of a local training group. The managing director is the chair of a local learning partnership. The college has also formed working groups with several other local training organisations. These links provide an effective means of communicating with other providers and benefiting learners and provide opportunities for sharing good practice. In acting as a training consortium, local training organisations are able to offer learners a wider range of programmes. Skegness College of Vocational Training Limited has worked with other

training organisations to negotiate a high standard of service from the two subcontracted further education colleges.

7. There is good support for learners and employers. The college's manager has a clear understanding of the requirements and implications of legislation relating to disability and discrimination, and a positive approach to adapting the college's premises to ensure they are accessible to all learners. The manager is also qualified and experienced in basic skills tuition, and teaching staff are able to identify and respond to the numeracy, literacy, and other support needs of individuals. The college has an effective health and safety policy and ensures that employers' premises meet health and safety requirements. Employers are particularly positive about the high level of support they receive from staff at the college.

8. The learners' individual learning plans are ineffective. They do not reflect the needs of the learner and are not used to plan the learner's individual learning. They are not updated to take account of learners' progress and achievements. New individual learning plans have been implemented for a minority of learners, but although these are a considerable improvement on the former model, they are time-consuming to update. The college recognised this weakness in its self-assessment report and a further review of individual learning plans is scheduled for April 2002.

9. There are satisfactory systems for collecting management information and a range of reports which analyse this information is produced. These reports are discussed at managers' meetings and there are satisfactory arrangements for following up issues raised. However, meetings at the college are poorly minuted. The minutes of meetings are insufficiently detailed and action points are not specific enough to be effective as a means of managing the activities of the college. Similarly, although the development plan in the self-assessment report is satisfactory, it too is not detailed enough in terms of the targets set and actions required.

## **Equality of opportunity**

## **Contributory grade 3**

10. Skegness College of Vocational Training Limited has an equal opportunities policy which refers to all relevant legislation. It has been revised within the past 12 months, but there are no plans for regular revision. There is no guidance on how the policy should be implemented. The staff recruitment procedure refers to the equal opportunities policy, but there is no reference to it in the procedures for learner recruitment or placement. The college does not gauge the commitment which learners' employers have to equality of opportunity.

11. The college offers open access to all its training provision, within the constraints of its contracts with the LSC. The college is challenging gender stereotyping through discussions with the local Connexions service and through careers fairs at schools. It has recruited the only male hairdressing learner in Skegness. The college's promotional materials, however, do not refer to, or illustrate, equal opportunities. Monitoring of applicants by ethnic origin, disability or gender is not carried out routinely. There is no record of any substantial discussion within the college of equal opportunities statistics. There has been little recent staff training in equality of opportunity. It is true that learners generally feel safe and well protected in their work placements, but their understanding of wider equal opportunities issues is superficial. The college acknowledges that learners need training to raise their awareness and understanding in this respect, but the training has not yet been scheduled.

12. The college has a group of learners, outside the scope of this inspection, who have learning difficulties and, in some cases, physical disabilities as well. Work-based learners are used to sharing the college premises and working with these other young people. This experience has helped to raise the profile of equality of opportunity among learners.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 3**

13. Quality assurance systems and procedures are satisfactory and cover most aspects of training. They are reviewed every six months. Staff are aware of quality assurance systems and procedures, but they do not always comply with them. Skegness College of Vocational Training Limited acknowledged this weakness in its self-assessment report. Observation of learning sessions takes place, both in the college and at subcontracted colleges, and the forms used to record observers' judgements are satisfactory. The observations now take place each term. Development issues, arising from observations, are insufficiently analysed.

14. There is good monitoring of the quality of the work undertaken by subcontractors. The working arrangements between the college and its subcontractors are thorough and based on detailed agreements. The college demands good-quality off-the-job training and learner support. The college monitors the quality assurance systems and procedures of subcontractors and undertakes regular observations of learning sessions at the subcontractors' premises.

15. Questionnaires are issued to learners and employers in order to obtain their perception about the quality of training provided. Many of the questions used in this process are poorly designed and do not provide managers with sufficiently detailed information. Response rates from employers had been poor in previous years, but improved to 60 per cent in November 2001. Response rates from learners are good. The views of college staff and subcontractors are not routinely sought in this manner.

16. The college's manager consulted with all staff during the self-assessment process and a detailed report was produced. The report lists several of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors, but did not reveal other significant strengths and weaknesses. The development plan arising out of the self-assessment process identifies many of the improvements that need to be made, but most of the actions are not specific enough.

17. Internal verification is well organised. Plans for selecting and checking a proportion of assessments and portfolios are clear and there is good monitoring of the standards set by assessors. In hairdressing, however, work-based assessors do not attend internal verification meetings. External verification reports are consistently positive.

Good Practice
<p><i>The college has well-planned arrangements to provide access for people with disabilities and additional learning needs, despite the fact that its premises are not new or purpose-built. Staff understand the requirements and implications of the Disability Discrimination Act, and have provided full wheelchair access. One of the toilets having been specially adapted. They have also provided special keyboards and computer screens when they have been needed, and have access to signers whom they call upon as necessary.</i></p>

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	22	3

18. Skegness College of Vocational Training Limited offers hairdressing NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 and a beauty therapy NVQ at level 2, as college-based courses and through work-based learning arrangements. The college currently has 22 work-based hairdressing learners. One is working towards an NVQ at level 1, two are working towards an NVQ at level 2, 10 are foundation modern apprentices and nine are advanced modern apprentices. All the learners are employed in local hairdressing salons within the Skegness area. There are currently no work-based beauty therapy learners.

19. The college participates in school careers events and promotional open days. The college also has links with the local Connexions service and receives requests for training directly from employers. The college arranges interviews with employers for learners who have been directly recruited by the college. Learners are placed with employers for a trial period to ensure both the employer and the learner are satisfied. Most learners start training in the summer, although arrangements are in place to accommodate late starters. All learners receive a one-day formal induction which covers the NVQ, key skills, health and safety, equal opportunities, appeals procedures and course requirements. Learners attend college for one, six-hour day for practical training, theory, and portfolio-building. Employers provide regular in-house training sessions for all their staff. The college provides timetabled sessions for key skills and has provided integrated assignments designed in-house to support their development. Learners who do not have work-based assessors on site are visited by a peripatetic assessor from the college.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	3		12		4		10									
Retained	3		8	67	3	75	3	30								
Successfully completed	0		2	17	3	75	3	30								
Still in learning	3		6	50	0	0	0	0								

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	6		12		8		8									
Retained	6		7	58	5	62	8	100								
Successfully completed	0		3	25	5	62	8	100								
Still in learning	6		4	33	0	0	0	0								

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training																
	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	2		6		6		9									
Retained	1		4	67	3	50	6	67								
Successfully completed	0		2	33	3	50	6	67								
Still in learning	1		2	33	0	0	0	0								

## STRENGTHS

- good use of work-based evidence in hairdressing
- good enrichment activities

## **WEAKNESSES**

- poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more effective internal verification feedback for work-based assessors

20. In 1998-99, retention and achievement rates on the advanced modern apprenticeship in hairdressing were low. This was mainly due to a number of learners being placed on an inappropriate programme. There was a significant increase in both retention and achievement rates in 1999-2000. During the period between 1999 and 2001, the average retention and achievement rates on this programme were 69 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. Retention and achievement rates for foundation modern apprenticeships in hairdressing were 100 per cent in 1998-99. They have since fallen to approximately 60 per cent. Retention and achievement rates for NVQ training in hairdressing are broadly in line with those of the modern apprenticeships. In all, 11 learners started their programmes during the current year and 10 are still in learning.

21. Regular visits by the college co-ordinator ensure a close working relationship with employers. Work-based assessment is an integral feature of the provision and the college has encouraged and promoted the acquisition of assessor awards by the local employers. The participation rate in work-based assessment is high, with 86 per cent of employers either holding or working towards the assessor awards. The college has hosted several work-based assessor meetings but these were poorly attended. The internal verification plan includes the observation of work-based assessors, however, the internal verifiers have not always fed back their comments after the observations, so work-based assessors are unclear about their performance. There are no alternative arrangements for work-based assessors who are unable to attend meetings of the assessor team.

22. The workplace salons are modern, spacious and well equipped. They provide learners with a good-quality learning environment. A wide range of clients is available with most learners having their own appointment booking system. Work-based assessment provides opportunities for the learners to be assessed whenever they are ready, rather than waiting for an assessor to visit. The college has one small salon, which is mainly used for training purposes. Learners use a commercial product range for retail clients which complements the products used within the salon services. The college salon attracts only a small number of clients who provide a limited assessment opportunity. The classrooms are cramped and the decoration dispiriting. There is a communal area for socialising, a computer suite and lockers are available for learners. On the whole, resources are satisfactory. Learners use standardised NVQ work packages to support learning sessions. Learners' work is displayed throughout the college.



23. Learners are particularly enthusiastic and well motivated. They appreciate the support they receive from the college staff and their employers. Learners demonstrate a clear understanding of their programmes and individual learning goals. All learners receive an initial assessment of their key skills. Key skills are developed within the context of the hairdressing training through centre-devised activities and assignments. Learners value their key skills work.

24. Learners have good opportunities for additional learning, both at the college and in the workplace. The college arranges trips to trade exhibitions, organises technical training by manufacturers and encourages learners to participate in promotional activities. The induction programme includes a talk from a local employer on the expectations and requirements of the profession. Learners also benefit from activities which take place in their salons, including demonstrations of new techniques and new product launches. A number of learners take additional courses leading to qualifications in areas such as Indian head massage, first aid and nail care courses. The staff are well qualified and all have a strong link with the profession. The part-time staff are either salon owners or are employed in local salons. All staff maintain personal records of their continuing professional development which they use to further develop learner skills and techniques.

25. Employers are largely unaware of learners' training programmes. The co-ordination of training and assessment largely depends upon the learner. The college does not publish its training programme and so the employers do not know what their learners are going to be taught, or when. This means that they cannot provide extra practice or coaching in the new skills being learned. The college does not take account of the training provided by employers when planning training. Planning for assessment also involves only the college and the learner. When a learner requires assessment, a written plan is negotiated and agreed with the college. The learner informs the work-based assessor of the expected assessment activity and the appropriate resources are provided. This passive role prevents the employer from influencing the rate at which the learner can progress. Employers interviewed expressed a desire to become much more actively involved in the planning and provision of training.

#### Good Practice

*Learners following the advanced modern apprenticeship organise, plan, produce and promote an annual show. This activity provides evidence for three of the optional units of the level 3 NVQ. The show is held in a large town centre venue, such as a nightclub or hotel. Proceeds from the event are donated to a selected charity. These events attract audiences of between 100 and 400 and learners do all the planning, organising, promotional activity and supporting administration, generally without help from their tutors. The event is recorded on video for use by future groups of learners.*