

TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT
NOVEMBER 2000

ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE REINSPECTION
MARCH 2002

Leslie Frances



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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
- ◆ 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.

Grading

In summarising their judgements about the quality of provision in curriculum or occupational areas and about the quality of leadership and management, including quality assurance and equality of opportunity, inspectors use a five-point scale. The descriptors for the five grades are:

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

SUMMARY

The original inspection of Leslie Frances was carried out by the Training Standards Council's inspectors. The inspection resulted in less than satisfactory grades being awarded for hair and beauty, trainee support, management of training and quality assurance. These areas have been reinspected against the requirements of the *Common Inspection Framework* by the Adult Learning Inspectorate, which replaced the Training Standards Council on 1 April 2001. The sections of the original report dealing with hair and beauty, trainee support, management of training and quality assurance have been replaced with the findings of the reinspection. Also, the report summary, report introduction and introduction to the inspection findings have been updated and reflect the findings of the reinspection. Sections of the report, dealing with areas which have not been reinspected, have been left in their original form. The amended inspection report is published on the Adult Learning Inspectorate's website (www.ali.gov.uk).

Leslie Frances provides satisfactory training in hair and beauty. Learners work in good salons and the assessment is satisfactory. Retention rates are good, but some learners are making slow progress. Equal opportunities is satisfactory. The initial assessment process is good and effective action is taken to provide learner support. There is effective well-structured pastoral support for learners. Management of training is satisfactory. At the time of the original inspection, quality assurance procedures were very weak. At reinspection, although there has been some improvement, there are inconsistencies in the application of quality assurance arrangements to ensure good training provision. The self-assessment process is now an established part of the quality assurance procedures. Quality assurance is still unsatisfactory.

GRADES

| OCCUPATIONAL AREAS | GRADE |
|--------------------|-------|
| Hair & beauty | 4 |

| GENERIC AREAS | GRADE |
|------------------------|-------|
| Equal opportunities | 3 |
| Trainee support | 4 |
| Management of training | 5 |
| Quality assurance | 5 |

| REINSPECTION | GRADE |
|---------------|-------|
| Hair & beauty | 3 |

| REINSPECTION | GRADE |
|------------------------|-------|
| Trainee support | 3 |
| Management of training | 3 |
| Quality assurance | 4 |

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-resourced salons and training school
- ◆ flexible training programmes
- ◆ good retention rates
- ◆ good operational and strategic planning
- ◆ comprehensive financial control systems

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ few strategies to support learners with additional learning needs
- ◆ inadequate progress reviews
- ◆ slow progress for some learners
- ◆ weak management of on-the-job training
- ◆ incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ insufficient use of data to contribute to continuous improvement

INTRODUCTION

1. Leslie Frances was established in Barnsley in the latter part of the 19th century, when the current managing director's grandfather started business in the front room of a terraced house. Leslie Frances, the founder of the organisation, was the third generation of a family of barbers. In 1982, the organisation started training young people on government-funded schemes and was the first managing agent in Yorkshire. The organisation is a founder member of an international salon concept group which promotes quality in hairdressing and customer service, and is still actively involved. Leslie Frances bought its current premises in the centre of Barnsley as a derelict five-storey 1850s Victorian warehouse. Following extensive refurbishment, the organisation moved there in 1993. Its pavement frontage is professional and stairs give access to all facilities. On the ground floor is a large reception area serving the commercial salon. The adjoining retail area offers professional hair care products and other merchandise. To the rear is a barber shop. On the first floor is the large, commercial salon, where 22 stylists are employed. The second floor has an office suite, laundry facilities and a beauty salon. Two training salons and an administrative office are on the third floor. Above them is a large training and conference room, and an information technology (IT) suite with three computers and colour printers. There are three directors, six training staff, a training manager and an administration manager linked to training. A further 38 staff work in the hairdressing department, including 14 advanced modern apprentices. Most staff, including directors and all senior managers, have been trained by the organisation.

2. Leslie Frances provides advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships in hairdressing. At the time of the original inspection, Leslie Frances had contracts with Barnsley and Doncaster Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and Wakefield TEC. Currently, Leslie Frances has contracts with West and South Yorkshire Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs). At the time of the original inspection, there were approximately 100 advanced modern apprentices and one foundation modern apprentice. There are currently 67 learners, of whom 48 are advanced modern apprentices and 19 are foundation modern apprentices. Leslie Frances provides training for its own learners and learners from other salons in Barnsley and the surrounding areas. All learners are employed.

3. In 2000, the unemployment rate in Barnsley was 5.4 per cent, compared with the national average of 3.3 per cent. In October 2001, the unemployment rate in Barnsley was 4.5 per cent, compared with the national average of 2.9 per cent and the regional averages for South and West Yorkshire of 4.6 per cent and 3.4 per cent, respectively. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers in Barnsley achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 34.9 per cent, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent. In 2001, comparable rates were 35.1 and 47.9 per cent, respectively. According to the 1991 census, the proportion of people in Barnsley from minority ethnic groups is

0.6 per cent, compared with the national average of 6.2 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

4. Leslie Frances produced its first self-assessment report in June 2000 and its third self-assessment report in October 2001. The self-assessment process was conducted in two parts, and with the involvement of all staff. The self-assessment report gives a full and detailed account of the origins and development of the business. Staff used the quality assurance criteria in the *Common Inspection Framework* to identify strengths and weaknesses. The judgements contained in the report were critical and the report accurately identified many of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment grades in hairdressing, trainee support and leadership and management. Inspectors awarded one grade lower in quality assurance than the self-assessment grade.

5. At the original inspection, three inspectors spent a total of 12 days at Leslie Frances. Inspectors examined documents held by Leslie Frances and the awarding body, and learners' national vocational qualifications (NVQs) portfolios. Inspectors interviewed 45 learners and visited 13 salons, where they interviewed workplace supervisors and employers. There were 13 interviews with Leslie Frances's staff and the managers of both TEC contracts were interviewed.

6. At reinspection a team of three inspectors spent a total of 12 days at Leslie Frances in March 2002. They conducted interviews with 24 learners and 23 staff, and visited and interviewed 12 workplace trainers and supervisors. Inspectors observed four training and assessment sessions. They examined 19 portfolios of evidence and 17 individual learning plans. They examined a range of documents, including the organisation's development plans, policies and procedures, promotional materials, and awarding body reports. Inspectors studied the organisation's self-assessment report, which was produced in October 2001.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at the original inspection

| | GRADE 1 | GRADE 2 | GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 | GRADE 5 | TOTAL |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Hair & beauty | | 1 | 6 | 2 | | 9 |
| Total | 0 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 9 |

Grades awarded to instruction sessions at reinspection

| | GRADE 1 | GRADE 2 | GRADE 3 | GRADE 4 | GRADE 5 | GRADE 6 | GRADE 7 | TOTAL |
|---------------|---------|----------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|----------|
| Hair & beauty | | 2 | | | 2 | | | 4 |
| Total | | 2 | | | 2 | | | 4 |

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Hair & beauty (hairdressing)

Grade 3

7. At the time of the original inspection, there were 81 advanced modern apprentices and one foundation modern apprentice. There were 46 learners from the area served by Barnsley and Doncaster TEC, of whom 35 were working towards hairdressing NVQs at level 2, and 11 were working towards NVQs at level 3. There were 36 learners from the area served by Wakefield TEC, of whom 22 were working towards hairdressing NVQs at level 2 and 14 towards NVQs at level 3. There are currently 48 advanced modern apprentices and 19 foundation modern apprentices working towards NVQs in hairdressing at levels 2 and 3. All learners are employed by salons in Barnsley and the surrounding areas. Most level 2 learners attend the training school for off-the-job training one day each week and level 3 learners can choose to attend for half a day each week. Several employers provide training on the job in their own hairdressing salons, and Leslie Frances provides background knowledge and key skills training. Some employers provide all the NVQ training for learners.

8. Inspectors judged many of the strengths in the hairdressing section of the first self-assessment report to be no more than normal practice and others to be weaknesses. They identified additional weaknesses and awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report produced in preparation for the reinspection contained four strengths and five weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with two of the strengths and found the other two to be no more than normal practice. They found two further strengths. None of the identified weaknesses were confirmed. The inspectors found three further weaknesses. Inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

At the time of the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ poor retention and achievement rates
- ◆ missed opportunities for assessment
- ◆ poor assessment practices
- ◆ poor training

9. Following the original inspection, retention rates have improved, and this aspect of the occupational area is now a strength. Some learners are still making slow progress. Assessors now visit learners in the salons every four to six weeks to carry out assessments and progress reviews. Some learners have completed their assessments in a shorter timescale than that agreed on their individual learning plans. Leslie Frances has reviewed its assessment practices and now provides learners with a realistic, commercial working environment. Learners have good technical skills and follow appropriate health and safety practices. Leslie Frances has installed a new reception area in the training salon, which has its own telephone line. All learners experience managing the reception area during

commercial sessions in the training school.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ well-resourced salons and training school
- ◆ good range of additional training
- ◆ flexible training programmes
- ◆ well-planned off-the-job training
- ◆ good retention rates

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ slow progress made by some learners
- ◆ weak IT key skills training
- ◆ poor assessment planning

GOOD PRACTICE

Learners are encouraged to enter both in-house and national hairdressing competitions. A learner recently achieved a place in the regional finals of a national competition.

10. Learners are employed in good, modern and well-equipped salons and work with a wide range of clients. Several of the salons use computers for recording payments, storing and retrieving client data, and managing appointments. Employers provide regular opportunities for learners to work on their own clients and with models. A wide range of professional retail products are available to complement the salon's own products. The training school is large and spacious. It has multipurpose training rooms and conference facilities, with both large and small training salons and a dedicated reception area.

11. Good additional training is available for learners at the training school and in the workplace. These include promotional events and manufacturers' technical training and seminars. These ensure that both staff and learners are up to date with new products and techniques. In response to a request made by employers, workshops for barbering and cutting long hair were provided for learners and employers. Demonstrations of specialist products are also a feature of the training school's programme of additional events.

12. Learners are provided with a good range of training options throughout the week to meet the commercial needs of employers. Learners can attend the training school for practical and background knowledge training. Leslie Frances's staff also visit salons to provide NVQ training. Several of the salons provide all the training themselves, with Leslie Frances's staff carrying out assessment if salons have no work-based assessors.

13. Off-the-job training is well planned. Session plans are comprehensive and contain detailed information to enable the session to be evaluated effectively. The session plans include objectives for both the trainer and the learner. They also identify any learning styles to be considered, and a summary and follow-on activity is noted at the end of the session. There is a range of textbooks and a video collection to supplement learning activities. All learners have a good understanding of their training programme. Each learner has a detailed annual plan

of weekly theory and practical activities. Communication and application of number key skills assignments are all clearly related to occupational activities.

14. Retention rates are good. The retention rate for foundation modern apprentices has increased over the past four years from 43 per cent to 80 per cent. The retention rate for advanced modern apprentices has increased over the past two years from 15 per cent to 91 per cent.

15. Some learners make slow progress. Assessment is not planned effectively to allow learners to achieve some units at an early stage in the training programme. After eight months in training, some learners have only completed one NVQ unit. Other learners, after one year in training, have yet to achieve competency in health and safety and reception. For example, although learners complete assignments in health and safety in the first months of their training programme and are practising good health and safety procedures in their everyday work, assessment of these activities is left until much later in the training programme.

16. The training for IT key skills is weak. Specific skills training is provided at the training centre at specific times throughout the year. Currently, however, learners are given a computer disc to complete the set tasks at home. To ensure the work is the learner's own, the trainer checks learners' understanding of how the tasks are completed. Some learners do not have a computer at home. In the larger salons, where there is more than one learner, the discs are shared between learners and individual work is delayed. Some learners do not attend any off-the-job training. These learners are trained in computer skills by a trainer, who visits learners with a laptop computer. The caseload for one trainer, given the wide geographical spread of learners, and in some cases, the unavailability of computers on which learners can practise their IT skills, is too great to effectively carry out this training.

17. There is some poor assessment planning. Learners are not set sufficiently challenging targets to achieve their NVQ units. There are no formal assessment plans. Verbal agreements are made between the trainers and the learners as to what learners need to do to achieve their qualification. This is usually derived from what learners have achieved so far and what is left to do. There are no specific dates agreed for assessments to take place. There is insufficient forward planning in terms of what will be required of learners at their assessments. For practical assessments, learners are responsible for bringing in their own clients. If this is not possible, Leslie Frances books clients for learners. However, the services these clients require often do not correspond to the assessment needs of the learners.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 3

18. Leslie Frances has an equal opportunities policy which is reviewed annually. It is given to staff and learners at their induction. Data are collected to meet the

requirements of both TEC contracts. In the self-assessment report, three strengths were identified, relating to activities to update equal opportunities information and good use of visual images in marketing. There are three weaknesses, relating to the lack of formal monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace and the inconsistency of approach to learners' choice of programme. Inspectors awarded a lower grade than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good use of visual images and positive statements in organisational information
- ◆ good range of equal opportunities information for staff
- ◆ effective reinforcement of equal opportunities through customer service NVQ

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no access to programme for learners who are not employed
- ◆ no formal monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ poor access to training school for people with restricted mobility

19. There are good colour photographs in Leslie Frances's information leaflet to promote equal opportunities in relation to gender and ethnicity. The text has a detailed section explaining how the organisation ensures equal opportunities for all learners by giving them the same entitlements, while also recognising that all learners are not the same. The equal opportunities policy is clearly written and has a list of definitions attached.

20. There is a good range of reference materials relating to equal opportunities in a large file for staff. Information is taken from the Internet as well as collected from national organisations with an equal opportunities remit. There is a good range of relevant leaflets and booklets and a resource pack from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The training manager shares equal opportunities information at the trainers' meetings. Issues discussed have included behavioural problems, awareness of drugs misuse and *The Disability Discrimination Act 1995*. Two members of staff have attended a dyslexia-awareness session and have recently organised appropriate referrals for two learners with dyslexia. The administration manager, who is not a hairdresser, acts as a scribe for learners as and when required and the organisation has applied for funding for a trainee with dyslexia to have special glasses to aid reading. In 1997, the organisation introduced audiotapes and Dictaphones to record notes on theory.

21. There is effective reinforcement of equal opportunities for those learners working towards customer service NVQs. Learners work on case studies which require them to show how clients can be treated differently, according to their needs. This helps learners to relate equal opportunities principles to salon practice. Learners spoke enthusiastically about these activities to inspectors.

22. There is no access to training for those learners who are not employed.

Learners are required to be employed by the salon owners in order to join advanced or foundation modern apprenticeship programmes. Learners are confused by the attendance requirements and stop attending off-the-job training days while looking for new employment. Learners' training is interrupted and they miss some of their training and assessment.

23. There is no effective formal monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace. Staff do not systematically discuss and record issues relating to equal opportunities with learners and employers. The forms used at progress reviews in the workplace do not have a prompt to remind staff to monitor equal opportunities or health and safety issues. There is no formal monitoring of salon owners' advertising, recruitment and interviewing processes. The new evaluation form recently sent to employers has a question asking if they understand equal opportunities, to which they are asked to answer yes or no. This is poorly worded and not followed up by the training provider.

24. There is poor access to the training school for people with restricted mobility. The training facilities are situated on the fourth and fifth floors and are accessible only by stairs. There is no lift or suitable alternative facilities for theory training on the ground floor. The barbershop on the ground floor is also accessed by a few steps at the rear of the reception area. Learners can, however, be visited in their salon by their trainer to provide all aspects of the training programme.

Trainee support

Grade 3

25. All learners attend the training provider for an interview and complete an initial assessment. Learners are generally recruited in the summer months. At the time of the original inspection, learners attended a three-day induction at the training school. At reinspection, learners attend a two-day induction at the training school. Learners who start at other times during the year have a half-day induction with a member of staff. The self-assessment report produced in preparation for the original inspection contained five weaknesses relating to trainee support. Inspectors awarded a grade lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

At the time of the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ poor individual learning plans
- ◆ lack of strategies to support learners with additional learning needs
- ◆ inadequate progress reviews
- ◆ no formal support to prepare learners for leaving the programme

26. Since the original inspection, individual learning plans are now good and reflect all aspects of learners' training programmes. Support is now given to help prepare learners who leave the training programme. This aspect of trainee support is now a strength. All learners who are dyslexic are provided with relevant support, although the training provider does not have staff who can provide support to

learners with other additional learning needs. Progress reviews are still weak. They do not take into account the needs of individual learners, and employers and workplace supervisors are not involved in the process.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good recruitment and systematic interviewing processes
- ◆ thorough initial assessment
- ◆ good support to prepare learners for leaving the training programme

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ few strategies to support learners with additional learning needs
- ◆ weak progress reviews

27. Prospective learners can attend a pre-employment training course, during which they attend the training centre for two days in school holidays, to meet staff and develop hairdressing skills. At the end of the training programme, they are given a certificate to put in their record of achievement. Staff attend careers conventions and school careers events, and focus mainly on pupils in year 10 and above. All learners are interviewed systematically using set criteria, even if they have already arranged employment in a salon. Three interviewers are involved to ensure fairness. Unemployed learners are sent to salons for interviews. All learners' employers are given a contract by Leslie Frances, which includes an equal opportunities statement.

28. All learners receive a thorough initial assessment of their learning needs. Assessments include the learner's entry level of key skills, basic skills needs and a test to determine colour blindness. An NVQ skills scan is also used to judge any previously acquired practical competences. A further assessment is made of learners' individual learning styles. The results from each assessment contribute to the individual learning plans.

29. There is good formal support and preparation made for learners leaving their training programmes. Learners are systematically given information and advice on further training or employment opportunities. A CD-ROM, produced by a hairdressing national training organisation, is used to advise learners of possible career options in the industry. There is readily available information provided in a leaflet produced by Leslie Frances for learners to get ideas for progression. Learners have interviews booked with staff as they get towards the end of their training. All learners receive a letter congratulating them on achieving their qualification. If learners leave their training early, before achieving all the targets on their individual learning plans, they are asked to complete a questionnaire to find out why they have left. This questionnaire is analysed. If a learner's problem relates to poor salon training or support, the salon is identified and noted by Leslie Frances as a possible unsuitable employer for potential learners.

30. Progress reviews are weak. Reviews are regularly carried out once every four

GOOD PRACTICE

On joining the training programme, each learner is given a stationary pack. When the learner has completed their NVQ at level 2 and are progressing to an NVQ at level 3, they are given £30 to spend on a wide range of equipment or text books to assist their learning.

GOOD PRACTICE

Additional support is given to a learner with dyslexia. All the handouts are produced in large print and an audio tape is made by the trainer which contains all the details required to complete the written assignments.

weeks, mostly during off-the-job training. However, insufficient consideration is given to whether or not this frequency is appropriate for individual learners. Employers and workplace supervisors are not included in this process. Some salons are not provided with a copy of the progress review. No clear targets are set and few learners agree dates for the completion of activities. Little consideration is given to the amount and type of practical activities the learner is experiencing in the salons. Issues relating to slow progress are not identified and dealt with. Most progress reviews contain passive comments on the learner's progress and are inadequate in helping the learner achieve their qualification.

31. The organisation does not have qualified staff to provide support to learners with literacy or numeracy problems, or strategies to use external additional teaching support. The results from the initial assessment tests are not used to plan realistic targets. However, the training manager is working towards a basic skills teaching qualification. Learners who are identified as dyslexic do receive suitable support. For example, a non-hairdressing member of staff acts as a scribe, if required, for learners with dyslexia.

Management of training

Grade 3

32. Leslie Frances's training school has a strategic plan and a formal management structure, which is communicated to staff on joining the training school and on an annual basis. At the time of the original inspection, responsibility for the day-to-day management of training was held by the training manager and administration manager. At reinspection, responsibility is solely held by the training manager. At the time of the original inspection, Leslie Frances had direct contracts with two TECs. Currently, contracts are held with West and South Yorkshire LSCs. There are 37 work placements, based in the Barnsley, Rotherham and Leeds areas. Leslie Frances was first accredited with the Investors in People standard in 1994, and was re-accredited in 1997 and again in 2000. The Investors in People standard is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. There is an ongoing staff development programme linked to organisational and personal objectives. Development needs are identified every four weeks during appraisal meetings with all training staff. Trainers and assessors are deployed to suit the needs of the team.

At the time of the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ weak links between strategic and operational planning
- ◆ insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job activities
- ◆ lack of involvement by employers in training
- ◆ poor planning and use of training school's resources

33. The weaknesses in strategic and operational management, lack of employer involvement in training and poor planning, and use of training school resources, which were identified in the original inspection report, have now been remedied.

Strategic and operational management is now a strength. Insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training has been partially rectified. Inspectors identified three strengths and an additional weakness. Inspectors agreed with the grade given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good operational and strategic management
- ◆ comprehensive financial control systems
- ◆ good use of external networks
- ◆ full involvement of staff in range of useful meetings

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ weak management of on-the-job training
- ◆ inadequate recording and monitoring of key documents

34. Leslie Frances has developed a strategic plan which identifies the five strategic aims of the organisation. These are subdivided into objectives remedying short-, medium- and long-term goals. A key strategy has been developed that methodically deals with each of the objectives, identifying methods and persons responsibility for achieving each objective, and with realistic timescales and evaluation mechanisms. Some objectives have been partially achieved. All staff were consulted in the production of the strategic plan. The appraisal process is effective in identifying training needs, but fails to sufficiently link the organisation's strategic goals and objectives to the targets set for individual staff at appraisal.

35. A financial manager monitors all aspects of financial control related to the training provided by Leslie Frances. Job roles were reviewed after the original inspection. The management of the training school and financial contract management, which were previously the shared responsibility of two staff, are now carried out by separate individuals. The finance manager has developed comprehensive systems to effectively monitor performance against the allocated learner numbers and financial targets. The management information system, although relatively new, has enabled the organisation to compare previous performance against the allocated contract, to accurately predict future targets. Systems are currently being extended to collect additional information on the current learners, in a format that will provide useful information and data for the training manager on learners' performance.

36. As identified in the original inspection report, the training provider has maintained the strength in actively networking with external organisations and employers' groups to guide the work of the training school. One director has worked alongside the employers' group, dealing with issues relating to the minimum wage. The information gained from this work has been brought back to the training school and used to brief work-placement providers through an open

event for employers. Two of the directors continue to maintain links with the salon concept group, well recognised across the industry. Directors also attend and take an active role in other local partnership groups. They attend meetings of local training providers to discuss issues and share good practice. National organisations and commercial product manufacturers are encouraged to use the training school, often free of charge, as a venue to promote new developments in the industry to local hairdressing salons.

37. The training provider has maintained the strength of full involvement of staff in a range of useful meetings. There is effective teamwork and open communication between training staff and senior managers. Various meetings are held in the training school and involve staff at all levels. These meetings are used to communicate information which may affect day-to-day activities. Once a month, the training team meets with the manager to discuss any concerns or feedback gained from evaluating information. The manager meets with the directors on a monthly basis and all training staff take part in a one-to-one meeting with the training manager every month specifically to tackle individual concerns. All staff have a six-monthly appraisal, which gives staff the opportunity to meet with the directors to remedy future or existing concerns and to look more specifically at personal or career development. The staff training programme which developed as a result of these meetings is broad and takes into account personal needs for career progression, in addition to professional development. Staff have been given training in dyslexia awareness, key skills, equal opportunities and how to use specialist support for learners additional learning needs. Planned training includes a key skills practitioner award and management training.

38. The weak management of on- and off-the-job training has only been partially rectified since the original inspection. Management of the off-the-job training is now satisfactory. However, a weakness remains in the management of the on-the-job training. The training provider gives all employers a copy of the scheme of work. Training issues are discussed at regular quality assurance monitoring visits and during progress reviews. There is an inconsistent approach to on-the-job training. The progress review and quality assurance monitoring processes have failed to identify that some learners are not given sufficient salon training or assessment. Attendance patterns in the training centre are dependent upon the requirements of the employer, the distance from the training school and if the salon has a work-based assessor. Some salons provide all their own training and the learners do not attend the training school for off-the-job training. Learners' progress is not monitored effectively. The progress review process has failed to identify that some learners are not progressing at a sufficient rate through their training programme and are given insufficient assessment in the workplace. The organisation does not provide employers with sufficient guidance on appropriate training schedules. No targets are set during progress reviews for learners to complete units towards their qualification or deadlines for achievement. Other learners who attend the training centre are making faster progress towards achieving their qualifications. Management is not taking responsibility for ensuring all aspects of the training programme have been considered to ensure

consistency and fairness in its approach for all learners. The organisation has not reviewed all aspects of the training programme or set performance indicators to monitor improvement.

39. The organisation has developed a number of systems and procedures to monitor the training. There are insufficient checks on key documents to ensure procedures are effectively implemented. For example, although trainers regularly visit work placement salons, employers, trainers and managers do not check key documents. Some contract agreements between the salon and the training provider are not signed or dated. Old documents are kept in the employer's file and it is unclear which is the current document. Many learners have not signed their employment agreement, although it is signed by the salon employer and by the training provider's staff. At an operational level, meetings are not recorded in sufficient detail and do not state what has been discussed and what action has been agreed. There is no indication of who is responsible for implementing the actions, the allocated timescale, or if action is followed up at future meetings. There are no standard agendas for meetings, and records show different agendas for the same meeting.

Quality assurance

Grade 4

40. There is a quality assurance system, which is recorded in its quality assurance manual. The manual, produced in 1992, is given to each new member of the training staff on joining the organisation. The manual was re-designed in 1995 using the guidelines of a national quality award, even though accreditation for the award was not sought. In September 2001, the quality assurance system was reviewed and the manual was rewritten to include actions identified in their development plan. Evaluation information is collected through a range of sources and analysed by the training manager. The self-assessment report for the original inspection identified normal practice in relation to each of the quality assurance statements in *Raising the Standard*. Inspectors identified two strengths relating to the appropriate style of the quality assurance manual and to evaluative information, and five weaknesses, which related to several quality assurance issues. At the time of the original inspection, inspectors awarded a grade lower than that given in the self-assessment report. At reinspection, the self-assessment report contained a grade for quality assurance which is a grade higher than that given by inspectors. Although many changes and improvements have been made to the quality assurance procedures and process, these often relate to the control of systems and procedures rather than ensuring the quality of the training programme.

At the time of the original inspection, the main weaknesses identified were:

- ◆ underdeveloped quality assurance strategy
- ◆ poor quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ poor use of data to guide continuous improvement

- ◆ non-compliance with TEC requirements for learners' progress reviews
- ◆ lack of established self-assessment process

41. Following the original inspection, Leslie Frances took steps to remedy a number of the original weaknesses. An external consultant was brought in to discuss quality assurance issues. Following this, all staff were involved in redesigning the quality assurance system and staff amended or designed new procedures. The quality assurance manual now covers all aspects of the training programme and the self-assessment process is now part of the quality assurance arrangements. However, quality assurance arrangements are still incomplete. For example, the quality assurance procedures do not monitor the content or quality of progress reviews. Data are still not used to contribute to continuous improvement.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good staff involvement in the development of the quality assurance system
- ◆ prompt action on evaluated feedback

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- ◆ insufficient use of data to contribute to continuous improvement

42. All staff were involved in the redesigning and development of the quality assurance system. Although a quality assurance manual existed, all staff agreed, during meetings up to July 2001, that the whole system needed to be redesigned. An external consultant was brought in for one day to discuss quality assurance issues. Following this, staff amended or wrote new procedures. The internal audit system was also redesigned as part of this process. Other changes were introduced, including the introduction of a quality assurance team. A member of staff has been given the responsibility for carrying out quality assurance monitoring visits to employers. Additional one-to-one meetings between staff and the training manager have been added to the meeting schedule to review and monitor learners' performance. It is too early to judge the impact these initiatives are having on overall achievement rates.

43. The quality assurance manual is well written. Each procedure has a flow chart, which enables the reader easily to follow through a process. At the time of the original inspection, the manual had gaps in the procedures, with key processes in the training programme being completely omitted. The procedures now cover all aspects of the training programme. A number of points raised at the time of the original inspection have been dealt with satisfactorily. For example, procedures are now all kept in one file, and documents contain reference numbers and dates. Initial assessment materials are no longer held separately. As staff are so closely involved in the development and introduction of the quality assurance processes, there is a shared understanding and awareness of the system.

44. Feedback is collected from learners and employers and prompt action is taken

on the information. Once each month, learners are asked to complete a questionnaire at the end of one of their off-the-job training sessions. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gain valuable information relating to the style of the session and, where necessary, to deal with any general concerns about the training programme. The training manager monitors this process to ensure full coverage of all sessions given in the training school, and of all trainers. The information is collated and summarised, and a summary sheet is completed to highlight any strengths or areas of concern. This process works effectively in remedying concerns swiftly. In one specific instance, learners had raised concerns relating to a session by one particular trainer. The training manager followed up these issues with the individual concerned. If relevant, any information relating to a particular trainer may be raised at their appraisal meeting with the organisation's directors. A more detailed questionnaire is produced twice a year for learners to complete. This deals with broader issues, such as assessing learners' knowledge of the training programme and awareness of health and safety and of equal opportunities. At the time of the original inspection, employers were asked to complete an annual questionnaire. This system has now been changed and feedback is obtained through a member of staff carrying out quality assurance monitoring visits to employers every six to eight weeks. Comments are obtained and any queries are answered. In response to employers' and learners' requests, additional training sessions were arranged to meet learners' needs. Sessions were evaluated and all feedback was positive. All feedback gathered is analysed immediately by the training manager and appropriate action is taken promptly. Comments to staff are passed on immediately and in an informal manner. More significant issues are discussed during the one-to-one meetings which take place between the training manager and staff every six to eight weeks. There is a willingness and a commitment throughout the organisation to improve the quality of the training provision for learners and to meet the needs of employers.

45. Although the quality assurance system has been redesigned recently, it is still incomplete. The quality assurance system lacks clear criteria and standards that refer to the quality of training. When internal audits are carried out, the procedure is audited, but the quality of the process is not assessed. The original inspection identified that the training review procedure state that progress reviews should take place. No specific details on the content or the quality of the reviews are included. There were no performance indicators to benchmark quality and decisions were subjectively reached. Most quality assurance information was collected on a reactive basis following evaluation rather than taking a systematic approach to assuring quality. Trainers completed some of the documents inconsistently. The quality assurance process did not pick up these issues, and these issues have still to be remedied. Internal verification is carried out and the procedure is audited, however there is no internal verification strategy or policy, and the procedure does not contain any specific details.

46. Data are not used sufficiently to contribute to continuous improvement of the training. Leslie Frances collects data relating to NVQ achievement and retention, and destinations of learners. Graphs are produced to monitor achievement, but are

not used in the quality assurance systems. The information gathered from the quality assurance monitoring visits is insufficient to influence the quality of the training programme. There are very few exit questionnaires returned by learners. Of the ones that have been returned, the information was insufficient to allow any judgements or recommendations to be made.