

INSPECTION REPORT

Stuart's Training

10 December 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 Jobcentre Plus programmes. 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
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training 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.

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

Stuart's Training is a small private company based in Chorley providing work-based learning for young people in business administration, retailing and customer service and hairdressing. There are currently 80 learners, of whom 47 are foundation modern apprentices, 25 are advanced modern apprentices and eight are on other work-based learning programmes.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Training is satisfactory in business administration but is unsatisfactory in retailing and customer service and hairdressing. Leadership and management and quality assurance are unsatisfactory. Equality of opportunity is good.

GRADES

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	4

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Retailing, customer service & transportation	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- good teaching and learning
- good working relationships with external agencies

KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficient long-term business planning
- poor matching of training programmes to learners' needs and interests
- poor retention and achievement rates
- poor target-setting in progress reviews

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of six inspectors spent a total of 23 days inspecting Stuart's Training in December 2002. Inspectors visited a partner training organisation during the inspection. They conducted 21 interviews with staff, and interviewed 45 learners, 23 employers and visited 23 work placements. They examined the portfolios of 26 learners, 21 individual learning plans, company paperwork, documents from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and awarding bodies. They observed and graded eight learning sessions. Inspectors studied the company's self-assessment report and accompanying action plan which were produced in August 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Total	0	1	6	1	0	0	0	8

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. Stuart's Training was established in 1978 as a secretarial college, trading from the home of the original provider. It moved to rented accommodation in Chorley, trading as Stuart's Commercial College. Subsequently it was approached by Manpower Services Commission to provide youth training. The company bought its own premises from which it currently operates in 1986, during which time one of the present partners joined the company. At this time, training was provided in administration, retailing and hairdressing and the company changed its name to Stuart's Training Centre. The other partner joined the company in 1991. The current joint partners have been running the company since 1998. The training centre is based in a former school, and comprises two training rooms, two information technology (IT) suites, a hairdressing salon, a reception room and offices, a games room, a staff room, kitchen and toilets. One of the toilets has recently been converted for use by people with disabilities. There are seven full-time members of staff. Stuart's Training currently has 80 learners, of whom 31 are in business administration, 35 are in hairdressing, and 14 are in retailing and customer service. Training is provided in-house and in work placements. The company receives funding from Lancashire LSC.

3. Unemployment rates in Chorley are currently 2.2 per cent, and 2.7 per cent in Lancashire as a whole, compared with the national average of 3.2 per cent. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Chorley is 1 per cent compared with 3.5 per cent in Lancashire and 6.2 per cent in England. The number of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSE) at grade C or above in Lancashire was 50.1 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

Work-based learning for young people

4. Retention rates are unsatisfactory for advanced and foundation modern apprentices in retailing and customer service, hairdressing, and business administration. In business administration, achievement rates have been falling since 1996-97. Achievement rates in retailing and customer service have averaged 14 per cent over the three years 1997-2000. In hairdressing, achievement rates are similarly low, and there are still learners in learning from 1997-98.

5. In business administration, there are good working relationships with employers. Progress reviews are effective and learners have access to good IT resources and training. In retailing and customer service, teaching is good and training sessions are well structured. Assessment procedures are good and there is good learner support. However, target-setting is poor in progress reviews. There is good interactive training in hairdressing, and good use of national vocational qualification (NVQ) standards in practical work. Portfolios of evidence are well structured. However, there is insufficient assessment carried out in the workplace, and individual learning plans are ineffective. There is not enough focus on occupational issues during progress reviews, which consist mainly of discussions about pastoral issues.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**Grade 4**

6. Stuart's Training is a private company owned and managed by two partners. One is responsible for financial management, marketing, budgeting procedures and managing the information and communications technology (ICT) systems, and the other for staffing, quality assurance, internal verification and the management of training. They share responsibility for equal opportunities. There are five other full-time members of staff. There are three training programme managers, one of whom manages both the business administration and the retailing and customer service training programmes, and two who jointly manage the hairdressing training programmes. There is one recruitment and liaison officer who arranges recruitment to the business administration and the retailing and customer service training programmes, and one secretary, who is also the receptionist, who provides administrative support for all training programmes. Stuart's Training also employs a freelance marketing consultant. All employees attend full staff meetings once every two weeks. There is a written equal opportunities policy which is updated annually. There is a set of documented policies and procedures which cover learning and administration. Self-assessment has been carried out since 1998. The most recent self-assessment report was produced in August 2002. The company produces a business plan which is updated annually.

STRENGTHS

- effective links with external agencies for marketing and recruitment
- effective staff development
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- good integration of equality of opportunity into day-to-day work
- wide range of feedback methods to gather information about training

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient long-term business planning
- ineffective progress in improving retention and achievement rates
- poor matching of training programmes to learners' needs and interests

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better monitoring of equality of opportunity at employers
- better use of procedures manual

7. Stuart's Training has effective links with external agencies, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. There are good arrangements with other local training providers to share resources. For example, joint presentations are arranged. There are good working relationships with local schools. For example, Stuart's Training provides a

special project to give young people aged 14 to 16 a combination of training days at the training centre, linked directly with work experience with local employers, before they leave school. Stuart's Training has developed a very good range of marketing materials, including leaflets, posters, audio-visual displays and presentations. These are used effectively at local careers fairs and school and college open days, as well as at parents' evenings, to promote work-based learning and occupational training. The material is updated effectively and is edited according to the particular event for which it is used. For example, where possible, the material used at individual schools contains short case studies on ex-pupils. Stuart's Training provides employers with accurate information on the requirements of the training programmes. This includes a comprehensive employers' information pack when learners are first recruited, which is updated accordingly. Employers are kept informed of the content of off-the-job training sessions and the requirements for learners to attend this training. Local employers are kept up to date with information on work-based learning, by telephone contact and personal visits to special events. Stuart's Training is very effective at helping potential learners to find employment quickly. Many employers use Stuart's Training as their preferred source of new recruits.

8. There is an effective staff development programme, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. New staff are provided with a thorough induction to the company, its policies and procedures. There is an effective appraisal system. All staff receive formal feedback at least annually. Appraisal forms relate directly to the job description of each employee. Staff are well supported and are encouraged to take relevant external qualifications. For example, four members of staff have been trained to provide a psychometric testing tool used by the provider. Two members of staff are also fully trained to interpret the results of these tests. There is a good informal system of coaching which is used well to gradually expand the tasks staff can perform as their experience grows. There are effective procedures for internal communications. All staff meet regularly, in most cases at least every two weeks. The meetings are used to discuss relevant topics and actions for improvement. There is an effective system of bringing forward relevant correspondence to these meetings so that all staff are aware of changes being made by external organisations, such as the awarding bodies. Arrangements for financial management are satisfactory. The number of learners on training programmes at any time is carefully managed to match the staff resources available. Sufficient funding is always available to provide staff training.

9. There is insufficient medium- and long-term business planning. The business plan is updated annually, but contains only poorly detailed aims centred around maintaining current standards. These aims are often repeated from year to year, and are not used effectively to set clear strategic direction, or to establish priorities for improving provision. Staff are not sufficiently aware of business priorities or of other issues facing the organisation. They are not fully involved in identifying solutions to problems and challenges. There is inadequate planning of improvements or developments to the training programmes.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

10. There is good promotion of equality of opportunity. Marketing materials display positive images of people from under-represented groups. There is good promotion of hairdressing to men. All new learners receive an introductory pack which includes a comprehensive section on equality of opportunity and a copy of the company's equal opportunities policy. One member of staff has attended an equal opportunities training day organised by the local LSC, and has shared this learning with other members of staff. Staff induction includes the equality of opportunity materials used by learners in their induction. The company's mission statement opens with its commitment to assuring equality of opportunity. There is an equal opportunities policy which covers current legislation, and other relevant areas such as sexual orientation and ageism. Data are collected and analysed, and statistics are measured against local averages. A twice-yearly report on applications and participation breaks down figures in terms of race, gender and disability, and analyses trends. This system has been in place for three years. The provider has conducted research into directly contacting minority ethnic groups, and marketing concentrates effectively on schools and the careers service.

11. The induction process includes considerable equal opportunities information and activity. There are well-planned activities to raise awareness and promote discussion of issues. Case studies are introduced at induction, and are often based on situations encountered by previous learners. Staff and learners have a good awareness of equality of opportunity issues. Equality of opportunity is discussed during progress reviews through general questioning and the use of specially prepared questions designed to test learners' knowledge of broader issues, including legislation. Employers are fully involved in the review process. The employer is made aware of the learners' knowledge of their rights and responsibilities under the law. Approximately 20 per cent of the company's learners are classed as disabled, and the company has recently converted a toilet for use by wheelchair users. Stuart's Training operates a buddying scheme, whereby a learner experiencing problems is paired with another learner with a similar background who is able to provide help and support. Learners identified as at risk of leaving have been retained as a direct result of this scheme. The company does not work with employers who do not adhere to its equality of opportunity policy, and has successfully negotiated with employers to have inappropriate images removed from the workplace.

12. Employers are not required to have an equal opportunities policy to work with Stuart's Training. They are given a copy of Stuart's Training's own policy in their packs and are required to sign an agreement which states that they will abide by current legislation. The company monitors equality of opportunity among employers by means of an annual survey and by speaking to learners. Although this system is satisfactory, there is no other monitoring of equality of opportunity among employers.

13. The company's equal opportunities policy is comprehensive and refers to some current legislation. However, it does not refer to some legislation, such as the Race Relations Act (Amendment) 2000. Dates are not given for the Acts, making it more difficult for users of the policy to search for a specific piece of legislation.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

14. Stuart's Training uses a wide range of feedback procedures for collecting information about the quality of training. There is an effective programme of observation of training sessions. Written feedback is given to each trainer to improve performance. A good variety of questionnaires is used to collect learner and employer feedback. These questionnaires cover relevant issues, including learners' understanding of the requirements of their training programmes and the effectiveness of individual training sessions. The results are analysed effectively by individual trainers and the partners, and are used to introduce improvements. There is an effective programme of audits to monitor learners' and employers' files. The process verifies that the files have been updated correctly, that progress reviews have been conducted on time and have covered the relevant issues, and that appropriate contact has been made with employers. Where shortcomings are identified, these are notified to the partners and appropriate corrective action taken.

15. Stuart's Training has not taken effective action to improve achievement and retention rates. Results have been poor for several years in all areas of learning, and action to improve these has not been effective. For example, a good system for monitoring learners at risk of leaving has recently been introduced, but it has not yet had any significant impact. Prior to this, data on why leavers left had been collected, but had not been used to plan or implement recovery actions. Challenging retention targets are not set, monitored or reviewed for different learner groups.

16. There is poor matching of training programmes to learners' needs and interests. Many learners leave their training programme in the first few weeks of their training programmes. No effective action has been taken to rectify this. The induction process does not match learners to training programmes. Learners select their own training programme and their choice is compared with the results of the psychometric analyses. Learning styles are not analysed. Many learners on hairdressing training programmes leave hairdressing when they leave the training programme. The development plan identifies a need to produce a written strategy to include all factors affecting achievement and retention, but this has not yet been sufficiently implemented.

17. The procedures used for compiling the self-assessment report were wide-ranging and the most recent report correctly identified many of the organisation's strengths. However, it did not identify some weaknesses in all areas of learning, and did not recognise the importance of the rate of learners leaving the training programmes early.

18. The company has a procedures manual which is comprehensive and clearly describes most training procedures. However, it is not used widely and there are insufficient arrangements for auditing the use of procedures to ensure they are up to date. Arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory. There are three suitably qualified internal verifiers and a relevant written policy.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	31	3

19. There are 13 advanced modern apprentices and 18 foundation modern apprentices on work-based learning programmes in business administration, working towards NVQs at levels 2 and 3. Recruitment is normally from schools or colleges and is directly into employment. One staff member works as an adviser and assessor in business administration and is responsible for all the learners. Another staff member is training as an adviser and assessor. When appropriate, one of the partners in Stuart's Training also provides advice and assessment. The trained adviser/assessor visits workplaces to provide training, guidance and support, to observe learners at work, and to plan and carry out assessments. The trainee adviser/assessor carries out regular workplace progress reviews, which are recorded and involve workplace supervisors. Learners attend the training centre on day release. This training covers any necessary skills and background knowledge training as well as key skills, testing and assessment. All other training is carried out on the job by workplace trainers, mentors or supervisors.

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)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	2		6		10		18		16		8				
Retained*	0		0		2		4		9	56	5	62				
Successfully completed	0		0		1		4		7	44	5	62				
Still in learning	2		6		3		2		0	0	0	100				

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	6		24		13		11		17						
Retained*	0		1		5		6	55	2	12						
Successfully completed	0		0		1		5	45	0	0						
Still in learning	5		12		1		0	100	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts									4		12				
Retained*									1	25	1	8				
Successfully completed									1	25	1	8				
Still in learning									0	0	0	0				

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good working relationships with employers
- effective progress reviews
- good IT resources and training

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more involvement of learners in matching evidence to NVQ

20. Stuart's Training has particularly good working relationships with a wide range of local employers. The provider acts as a first-stage recruitment agency for employers. Some employers have used the training provider for a number of years to recruit new

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staff. All learners who enrol on a training programme start a job at the same time. Where a change of workplace is necessary for any reason, the provider finds alternative employment quickly. Trainers have good access into workplaces. Stuart's Training has a good understanding of workplaces, which provide a wide range of experience of administrative work in good work environments. There is good use of work-based evidence.

21. Progress reviews are effective, a strength not identified in the self-assessment report. Progress reviews are carried out every six to eight weeks in the first year of the training programme and every 10 to 12 weeks in the second year. Further reviews are carried out if required by the learner or the employer. Progress reviews systematically involve the learner, employer and trainer and are detailed and well recorded. Health and safety, equal opportunities and learner performance are discussed. Learners assess their own progress against four levels of performance in five key categories. They are also assessed by their employer. The learner and employer make written comments and agree action plans with dates to be completed before the next progress review. All parties involved keep copies of the review forms. However, learners are not fully involved in matching evidence to their NVQ, most of which is carried out by their assessor.

22. IT resources and training are good, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. The IT rooms are well equipped with modern desktop computers and printers. Hardware and software meets or exceeds current industry standards. A notice about risk assessments is displayed in each room. A liquid crystal display screen is available for learners who may be affected by normal screens. Training is good. Tutors make good use of audio-visual aids such as a digital projector. Learners have been able to put into practice in the workplace new techniques learned in the training centre. For example, one learner has introduced mail merging into the workplace. Learners have their own personal folder on each machine and save their work on to their own personal disks.

23. Retention and achievement rates are poor. Many learners leave the training programme early. Some learners achieve their NVQ but not the full framework. For example, of the 18 advanced modern apprentices who started training programmes in 1999-2000, 12 left without achieving the full framework. Of these, four learners achieved their NVQ at level 2 and only one achieved their NVQ at level 3. Of the 11 foundation modern apprentices who started training programmes in the same year, six left without achieving the full framework. Of these, only one achieved an NVQ at level 2. Of the 38 learners who have started training programme since 2001, 25 are still in learning. These learners are making satisfactory progress in key skills and in business administration.

Good Practice

In one workplace a learner worked on her own under supervision. The employer and the assessor identified that there was a need for her to gain experience of working with others in order to meet the requirements of the standards. They agreed on a secondment to a team to enable her to develop the necessary competences.

Retailing, customer service & transportation**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	14	4

24. There are six foundation modern apprentices, and eight learners on other work-based learning programmes, working towards NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3. All of the foundation modern apprentices are on retailing training programmes. All learners are employed and work in a range of independent companies. There are two fully qualified assessors who visit learners in the workplace approximately every three months to carry out assessments. Assessments are also carried out in the training centre. A member of staff visits learners in the workplace every six to eight weeks to review their progress. Induction is carried out in the training centre. As part of the induction process learners complete a psychometric assessment to establish the correct level of entry to the programme. Initially learners visit the training centre one day each week for off-the-job training. After three months, this is reduced to once a month.

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

Work-based learning for young people														
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	2		12		10		9		8				
Retained*	0		0		3		2	22	2	25				
Successfully completed	0		0		1		2	22	1	12				
Still in learning	2		3		1		0	0	0	0				

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people														
NVQ Training	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	2		8		4				4				
Retained*	0		3		2				1	25				
Successfully completed	0		0		1				1	25				
Still in learning	2		5		1				0	0				

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good teaching
- good assessment procedures
- good learner support

WEAKNESSES

- low achievement and retention rates
- poor target-setting in progress reviews

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- clearer occupational focus on key skills project

25. Teaching is good with well structured training sessions. Learning sessions have clearly defined aims and objectives, and are well presented with professionally produced training materials. Key skills training and assessment are clearly integrated with the learning sessions. Trainers are well qualified and occupationally competent. The provider has developed a good project to generate key skills evidence. However, it is more appropriate for those learners on hairdressing training programmes.

26. Assessment procedures are good. The system for recording observations is well written and ensures that all stages of the assessment process are followed correctly. Observations are planned in advance. Once an assessment decision has been given, learners must sign to indicate that they either agree with the decision or intend to follow the appeals procedure. There have been no appeals to date. After the assessment, written feedback is given to each learner and an appropriate action plan is drawn up. All learners understand and are confident about the assessment process.

27. Learner support is good. All staff have frequent contact with the learners at the training centre. Learners have good working relationships with their internal verifier and assessor and the staff member responsible for reviewing their progress. Most employers are very supportive of training and encourage learners to participate in training programmes. They are interested in their learners' progress and are always involved in the review process. Learners are encouraged to progress to another NVQ or one at a higher level when they have completed their initial qualification.

28. There are low achievement and retention rates. For example, retention rates on the foundation modern apprenticeship programme for 1998-99, 1999-2000, 2000-01 are 25, 22 and 30 per cent respectively. Achievement rates for the same period are 12, 22 and

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10 per cent respectively. The provider identified this problem in the self-assessment report and has recently introduced a system to identify and retain learners at risk of leaving, but it is too early to be able to judge its effectiveness.

29. There is poor target-setting in progress reviews, particularly in the medium- and long-term. Individual learning plans are completed at the start of each learner's training programme but are not based on the specific needs of each learner. They do not detail training required in order that learners can achieve their qualification. Targets for the completion of individual NVQ units and key skills are not set systematically. Learning plans are not updated.

30. Stuart's Training has recently identified that learning plans are poor, and has started to improve the completion of the plans but it is too early to judge its effectiveness. Progress reviews are not used effectively to set demanding targets. Employers do not receive sufficient information to enable them to help learners progress through their qualifications.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	35	4

31. There are currently 12 advanced modern apprentices and 23 foundation modern apprentices on work-based learning programmes in hairdressing. Learners are recruited through direct referral from employers, or through the Connexions service, and some learners apply directly to Stuart's Training. Training programmes are also advertised in local newspapers. Foundation modern apprentices attend the training centre one day each week for off-the-job training sessions, and advanced modern apprentices attend the training centre on a drop-in basis. All assessment for the foundation modern apprentices takes place during the off-the-job training sessions, which are on a weekly basis. Advanced modern apprentices are assessed in the workplace at their request. A few employers are qualified assessors and assess their learners in the workplace. All learners are employed. Induction takes place at the training centre. Learners are given a psychometric test to determine which programme and which level they should be on. At the same time, any necessary additional learning support is identified.

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)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98		1996-97			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts			4		17		22		14		7		7		
Retained*			0		1		5		6		4		1	14		
Successfully completed			0		0		2		0		3		1	14		
Still in learning			2		5		3		1		1		0	0		

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Work-based learning for young people																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	6		20		27		15		21						
Retained*	0		1		10		5		2	10						
Successfully completed	0		0		1		2		0	0						
Still in learning	4		10		7		2		0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

STRENGTHS

- good interactive training
- good use of NVQ standards in practical work
- well structured portfolios of evidence

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient occupational focus in progress reviews
- ineffective individual learning plans
- insufficient workplace assessment
- poor retention and achievement rates

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better resources for practical sessions

32. There is good interactive training. The background knowledge sessions are taught in small groups with one tutor for six learners. There is good use of discussion. Trainers work well with the learners, and provide good support. There is good use of training materials, which include clear handouts. The practice sessions are very good and learners are fully involved in the work. There is a good range of models available and learners are encouraged to tackle challenging tasks. Learners are encouraged to help one another when required, for example, by shampooing each other's models, and tidying up areas after services. Although the training centre salon is adequate, some of the resources are poor, such as badly stained towels.

33. Learners fully understand the NVQ standards and take responsibility for their own

learning. The NVQ logbooks are used during practical training sessions. Learners check the performance criteria before starting a practical task to ensure that the model is suitable. Models are often shared between learners for training or assessment. For example, one learner will use a model for a shampooing assessment, while another learner will use the same model for a cutting or colouring assessment.

34. Portfolios of evidence are well structured. Evidence is clearly indexed and annotated. There is a good range of diverse evidence, including photographs, hair cuttings, product instruction leaflets and client record cards. The evidence is neatly presented. Some learners use computers to produce written evidence for assignments.

35. There is insufficient occupational focus during progress reviews. Learners' progress is reviewed at least every 12 weeks in the workplace. The process includes the learner, the employer and the trainer. However, the information which is recorded in the progress review documents is poor and comprises mainly pastoral issues. The process is not used effectively to help set targets and action plans for learners' progress. Learners are not encouraged to record information on how they want to progress towards framework achievement or on what help their employer can provide.

36. Individual learning plans are ineffective. For example, there is sometimes no information recorded regarding work-related skills gained before entering the framework or of any accreditation of prior learning. Information on how the learners will acquire the skills required by the industry is sometimes missing. The plans are not updated to reflect changes to the training programme or learners' progress. There is no information recorded regarding target achievement dates or the dates that progress reviews are due on or actually take place. The plans are not used during the review process to record action agreed or changes to the learners' planned training. New procedures have been put in place by Stuart's Training, but these have not had a noticeable impact to date.

37. There is insufficient workplace assessment. All assessment for the foundation modern apprentices takes place in the training centre during off-the-job training days. Learners are missing assessments on units that should have been achieved at the start of their hairdressing programme, although they are carrying out these tasks daily in their work placements. Advanced modern apprentices are assessed in the workplace by assessors from Stuart's Training. Their progress depends on the frequency of the assessors' visits. In some instances this has affected learners' progress. They have been unable to progress at their own pace.

38. Achievement and retention rates are poor. On the advanced modern apprenticeship programme for 1996-97, 14 per cent of learners achieved their framework, and in 1997-98, 42 per cent of learners achieved their framework. There have been no other framework achievements for this training programme. On the foundation modern apprenticeship programme, which started in 1998-99, there was no framework achievement in 1999-2000. In 2000-01, 4 per cent of learners achieved their frameworks. There have been no other framework achievements on this training programme. Retention rates for the foundation modern apprenticeships programme

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have shown an upward trend. However, retention rates for the advanced modern apprenticeship programme have shown a downward trend.