

INSPECTION REPORT

MichaelJohn Training

17 March 2003



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
- **learnirect** 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

MichaelJohn Training (MJT) is a privately owned company which was first registered in 1983. The company's head office is in Manchester's city centre. MichaelJohn Training offers work-based learning for foundation and advanced modern apprentices in hairdressing and customer service. It also offers national vocational qualification (NVQ) training in customer service at level 3.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Training in hairdressing is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of training, quality assurance and the approach to equality of opportunity are satisfactory.

GRADES

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

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

KEY STRENGTHS

- high attainment of practical skills by learners
- good integration of key skills with vocational training
- good support for learners with additional learning needs
- good business planning process
- good promotion and reinforcement of equal opportunities

KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement on modern apprenticeship programmes
- lack of work-based assessment

MICHAELJOHN TRAINING

- inadequate management information system
- lack of an established process for observing training
- ineffective monitoring of quality assurance processes

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more focused standardisation meetings
- more systematic approach to collection and analysis of feedback from employers

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of three inspectors spent a total of 12 days at MichaelJohn Training (MJT) in March 2003. Inspectors visited 15 work placements and interviewed 14 employers, 15 of MJT's staff and 43 learners. They observed and graded three learning sessions. A range of documents was examined, including 22 portfolios of evidence, 24 individual learning plans, assessment records, external verifiers' reports, minutes of meetings, and the company's plans, policies and procedures. MJT has produced three self-assessment reports. The most recent was written in 2002 in preparation for the inspection.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	3
Total	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	3

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. MJT is a privately owned, medium-sized company, which was founded in 1983. The head office and training college is based in Manchester city centre and the company employs 12 full- and part-time staff. MJT has seen a slight growth in its numbers over the past three years. At the last inspection by the Training Standard Council, in June 2000, there were 155 learners in training; at the time of this inspection the numbers had increased to 177 which represents a 14 per cent increase overall. The company promotes an open-door policy and actively promotes the recruitment of learners with additional learning needs. At the time of inspection, 21 per cent of learners were identified as needing additional learning support.

3. MJT offers work-based learning in hairdressing, and customer service. It contracts with the Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to offer foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships. There are 99 foundation modern apprentices, 74 advanced modern apprentices and four NVQ learners. MJT's staff carry out off-the job training. On-the-job training is carried out jointly by MJT's staff and the employers.

4. MJT operates predominantly within the Greater Manchester area. In April 2002, the unemployment rate in Greater Manchester was 3.4 per cent, with the national average being 3.1 per cent. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above in Greater Manchester was 46.9 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. At the time of the 1991 census, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Greater Manchester was 5.9 per cent, compared with 6.2 per cent nationally.

Work-based learning for young people

5. Work-based learning in hairdressing is unsatisfactory. Many salons offer good on-the-job training and support. The practical skills demonstrated by the learners are of a high standard. There is particularly good integration of key skills training with the vocational training and assessment. The accommodation at MJT is good and the centre attracts a good range of clients for the learners to practise their skills and then be assessed.

Arrangements for the initial assessment of basic skills are satisfactory. Good support is provided for learners with additional learning needs

6. There is, however, poor retention and achievement rates on all modern apprenticeship programmes. A high percentage of learners have left the programme year-on-year with no achievement. Over the period 1998 to 2001, only 27 per cent of those who left the foundation modern apprenticeship programme, completed the full modern apprenticeship framework. Over the same period, only 23 per cent of advanced modern apprentices do the framework. There is a lack of work-based assessment, which means many learners have to repeat work they have already done in their salon. The individual learning plans are ineffective. Individual learning plans are not used to adequately record all aspects of the initial assessment or agreed actions, they are not systematically updated, and targets recorded on them have often lapsed. The employer is not involved in the development of individual learning plans and is unaware of the agreed targets for learners to achieve.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

7. MJT currently employs 12 staff. The managing director and the training director have overall responsibility for the training college and the management of day-to-day operations. The course director is responsible for additional support within the training college and also has line-management responsibility for the lead internal verifier. The training manager has a team of trainers/NVQ assessors who train and assess both in the training college and in employers' premises. The quality assurance manager maintains quality assurance within the organisation and has management responsibility for the company administrator. MJT has an equal opportunities policy, which is reviewed by the training director annually. There is a quality assurance manual and the company has an internal audit system. Self-assessment is established within the company and the latest self-assessment report was produced in July 2002 and revised in November 2002. The company's development plan was updated in March 2003.

STRENGTHS

- good business-planning process
- highly focused staff development
- good promotion and reinforcement of equal opportunities
- good use of feedback from learners

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate management information system
- lack of established process for observing training
- ineffective monitoring of quality assurance processes

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better contingency planning for staff illness
- more focused standardisation meeting
- more systematic collection and analysis of feedback from employers

8. MJT has established effective procedures for the development of its business plan. Senior managers, in consultation with all staff, have identified key performance priorities, which include recruitment, retention, achievement and business growth. Accurate data on recruitment and performance are collected and analysed, objective measures, timescales and responsibilities are clearly identified. The business plan is reviewed annually and is aligned to the company's four-year strategic plan. Through the business planning process, a range of strategies have been introduced to deal with low retention and achievement rates. For example, additional support for learners during the early

stages of their programme and monthly monitoring of learners' progress. The company's targets are displayed in the staff room, enabling staff to monitor actual performance against projected targets. Progress towards achievement of the business plan is closely monitored through both weekly and monthly staff meetings and specific plans are prioritised from the business plan. The projected costs for the implementation of these plans is identified in the business plan. The recent external financial audit did not identify any serious concerns.

9. Contingency planning to cover staff illness is not satisfactory and monitoring of the internal quality assurance audits and the internal verification of assessment has fallen behind planned schedules. This problem has recently been acknowledged and some action is being taken. For example, more internal auditors are being trained to help complete the internal quality assurance audit schedule and several internal verifiers are working towards, and are close to, the completion of their training and development qualifications. A deputy equal opportunities co-ordinator has been appointed to ensure the development work on equal opportunities is continued.

10. The management of training is satisfactory. There are written contracts with all employers which are reviewed annually. The contracts clearly identify employers' roles, responsibilities and legal obligations; however, they do not include any requirements for how on-the-job training is carried out. Employers are actively involved in the progress review process and have a good understanding of learners' progress. Most employers support their learners by releasing them for off-the-job training days. Employers receive a detailed off-the-job training calendar, which includes suggested activities that could be offered in the workplace to support the training provided at MJT's college. However, not all employers use this as a basis for planning on-the-job training.

11. Assessor's visits are frequent, eight-weekly for learners with additional learning needs or 12-weekly for other learners. In salons where learners are being trained and assessed, visits are more frequent and follow a regular pattern. Often, additional visits are arranged in response to requests by the learner.

12. Systems for staff appraisal and development are well established. Staff development is highly focused on the needs of the business. This was not identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. New staff receive a thorough induction covering terms and conditions, equal opportunities, health and safety and quality assurance. Employees who lack the appropriate qualifications are given the necessary support to be able to achieve them. All staff have achieved, or are working towards, key skills qualifications, which has improved their understanding of the modern apprenticeship framework requirements and enabled the successful integration of key skills into vocational training and assessment. Training has taken place for staff on both the technical and practical developments in hairdressing, and manufacturers have been involved in providing training in the use and application of the latest trade products. All staff have, or are working towards, a range of training and development awards. A range of internal training programmes is provided by experienced staff members. These include accreditation of prior learning, NVQ assessment, learners' progress reviews,

introducing staff to new training programmes, equal opportunities and diversity, and health and safety. All training is fully evaluated and the results of the evaluations are used to make decisions about future training.

13. Internal and external communication is satisfactory. Senior managers have an open and supportive style of management and there are good working relationships at all levels. Regular staff meetings are held on a weekly basis and management meetings every month. Attendance at meetings is good. A company newsletter is sent to employers three times a year. Employers also complete a questionnaire once a year, which covers a range of issues related to training. For example, the quality of support provided by MJT, skills development, attendance monitoring, the effectiveness of assessors and progress reviews. Not all employers reply to the questionnaire and a system has recently been introduced to monitor the responses from employers. Responses are analysed and improvements introduced, although the analysis does not cover all problems raised. For example, absence monitoring was an issue employers raised recently but there is no record of any action taken to deal with the problems. A new initiative has been the introduction of training for employers. A recent training event on equal opportunities was held at the training college, feedback from employers was very positive and subsequent events are being planned. MJT has recently started to collect very useful information about assessors from visiting salons twice a year which is analysed and any issues raised by employers are followed up with individual assessors. This, however, has not been introduced in all salons and performance of assessors is not picked up in the annual process of feedback from employers.

14. Management information systems are inadequate. This was not identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. A range of basic information on learners, which meets LSC requirements, is held on an LSC-compatible database. Recruitment trends and contract profiles are produced, analysed and updated manually. There is insufficient analysis of a range of performance data. Analysis of Learners' progress by unit has been only recently introduced and relies on assessors manually updating records. Few management reports to identify trends and performance in terms of retention and achievement have been produced. There is no analysis of learners' achievement by workplace. This is particularly relevant as a significant number of learners do not attend the training centre and have their qualification assessed by a visiting assessor.

15. The management of basic skills is satisfactory. The company is aware of the national focus upon literacy, numeracy and language skills. MJT has developed a strategy in which all learners undergo initial assessment on entry, diagnostic assessment is provided for learners who require it, and extra support is planned. All learners with additional learning needs are well supported and have an individual training support programme. There are, however, no staff with basic skills qualifications at MJT. This has been identified in the company's skills audit and staff training is to be provided for one member of staff to lead in this area. Where the support needs are beyond the skills of staff, specialist support tutors have been employed on a consultancy basis. There are currently 35 learners receiving additional learning support. This represents 21 per cent of MJT's learners. In the recent key skills external tests, all of these learners passed the

examinations at level 1.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

16. MJT has a clearly written equal opportunities policy and related operating procedures for anti-harassment, anti-bullying, appeals, grievance and complaints. The policy is reviewed annually. A detailed action plan has been produced which is regularly monitored by the equal opportunities co-ordinator, and good progress is being made against the identified actions. The recent disability discrimination audit did not raise any serious concerns about accessibility for learners visiting the training college. Contingency plans are established to ensure that learners with any form of disability are not disadvantaged.

17. There is good promotion and reinforcement of equal opportunities. Learners receive good awareness training as part of their induction. An information pack is issued to learners which includes the disability statement, identifies the range of support available, including a counselling service and clearly identifies learners' rights and responsibilities. Information is also included on health and safety, types of discrimination, appeals, grievance, harassment and bullying. There is regular reinforcement of equal opportunities issues during off-the-job training sessions and through learners' progress reviews. Learners have received further training on grievance, appeals and harassment procedures, a request they made through the eight-month review questionnaire. A recent internal competition to create a poster on a specific equal opportunities issue proved to be very popular with learners. MJT provided a cash prize for the winning entry. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of key aspects of equal opportunities.

18. MJT is aware that the learners it recruits do not adequately reflect the diversity of the local working population. Only 9 per cent are men, and 3 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. In an attempt to address this issue, good links have been established with several local boys schools to promote hairdressing which has involved visits and demonstrations. Links with Connexions have been established resulting in attendance at careers shows and local employers' events. Newspaper advertisements have been issued promoting hairdressing as a career. Promotional materials and interview packs have been adapted. Posters in community centres, and recently a visit to the women's refuge, demonstrate a positive approach to attracting learners from under-represented groups. Despite these positive attempts, little progress has been made since the last inspection.

19. Monitoring of the equal opportunities practices of employers is a recent development. The employers' newsletter features equal opportunities issues. For example, religious holidays have been recently highlighted. Assessors check employers' understanding and practice during reviews and through monitoring the complaints book. Learners in salons are now monitored over a six-month period for progress on the modern apprenticeship framework, and if they leave the salon, the reasons are recorded and followed up if necessary. Where equal opportunities issues have been raised by learners, assessors increase the number of visits to the salon to monitor the situation.

20. Equal opportunities information is now collected from application forms, and a detailed analysis has been produced for staff, however, there is insufficient analysis of the

performance of different groups. Learners' achievements are not analysed by age, gender, ethnicity or disability. There are no targets set for retention and achievement rates or analysis of early leavers by age, gender, ethnicity or disability. Analysis of the performance of learners who have identified additional learning needs has recently been completed in relation to key skills external examinations. This practice has not yet been extended to retention and achievement rates on the modern apprenticeship programme.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

21. MJT has a manual, setting out a comprehensive quality assurance policy and procedures covering the company's activities. The related documents are controlled, logically indexed and easily available to all staff. The system is annually reviewed, staff are fully involved in the review and development of new procedures.

22. There is good use of a range of feedback from learners to improve training. Learners complete questionnaires during the first three months of training and after nine months on programme. These focus on learners' early experiences of training and their recommendations for improving it. The results are analysed and compared for recurring issues by the quality assurance manager. Feedback is provided to staff through the weekly meetings and management meetings. Feedback to learners and proposed action is posted on the college's noticeboard. For those learners who do not attend college, feedback is given during their progress reviews. Feedback is also collected from off-the-job training sessions and training in the salons; analysis and identified actions are summarised in the annual training report. MJT is prompt to rectify areas of dissatisfaction, changes include, a dedicated training day for level 3 learners, further training on grievance, appeals and harassment procedures, cutting stools for stylists to sit on have been provided in the training salons, practical training has been adapted to include more cutting and a recent self-defence and awareness course has been organised.

23. There is no established quality assurance strategy or procedure for the observation of training, a weakness acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Observation of theory teaching has been only recently introduced. There has been no observation of practical training and there has been no observation of training provided in the employers' salons. Three observations have been carried out so far, although two have been on the same member of staff. Observations have been graded, and tutors have received detailed feedback. Two of the observers have no formal teaching qualifications and there has been little training for staff on how this process will be implemented. During inspection, some unsatisfactory background knowledge teaching was observed and the grades awarded by inspectors have been lower than grades awarded by the company's observers.

24. The monitoring of quality assurance processes is ineffective, a weakness only partly identified in the self-assessment report. In 2000-01, there was no recorded monitoring of quality assurance procedures in the audit records. In 2001-02, 30 per cent of the quality assurance procedures were not monitored for effectiveness. In the current year, 30 per cent of the scheduled audits have not been completed. Staff shortages have meant that there are too few quality assurance auditors to monitor the effectiveness of the quality assurance arrangements. When internal audits have been conducted, they have rarely covered all the written procedures. The last health and safety monitoring was in September 2001. One salon is operating without a current employer's liability insurance certificate, yet MJT was not aware it had not been renewed. There was one example where the audit report did not match the written procedures in the quality assurance manual. The audit records indicate significant gaps in the monitoring of training, in

particular, learners' recruitment, initial assessment, induction, accreditation of prior learning and learners' reviews.

25. The internal verification process has very well-recorded procedures. The sampling plan includes all units, assessors and key skills. Verification takes place throughout the year as well as at the end, and each learner is covered twice. Units are clustered to allow maximum coverage. The internal verifier provides individual feedback to assessors after each visit. The outcome of the external verifiers' visits is fed back through the weekly debrief meetings. Each assessor is scheduled to be observed at least six times each year. There are, however, not enough verifiers to adequately cover this volume of sampling. The current internal verification sampling is well behind schedule, only 50 per cent of this year's sample has been completed. Assessors and verifiers meet infrequently on a formal basis for focused standardisation meetings. Assessment and verification is covered in the weekly debrief meeting, but this does not provide sufficient focus for assessors and verifiers to discuss assessment, identify learners making slow progress, standardise assessment and share good practice.

26. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Staff, employers and learners contribute to the development of the report through questionnaires, interviews and brainstorming. The grades awarded were, in the main, the same as those given by inspectors. Inspectors awarded a lower grade for hairdressing. The significant weakness of poor retention and achievement rates on modern apprenticeship programmes was not highlighted in the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment grades for leadership and management. The development plan does deal with the key strengths and weaknesses identified. Progress of the plan is regularly monitored through the weekly staff meetings and the management meetings. The company is making good progress in rectifying the weaknesses identified.

Good Practice

MJT has linked with a French hairdressing academy which has sent over learners as part of an exchange strategy. Learners from MJT will be making a return visit to France during 2003. Learners, staff and management have all benefited from both the cultural exchanges and the sharing of good practice. An evaluation of the visit by the French learners was conducted in their own language.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	177	4

27. There is a total of 177 learners on the programme, of whom 74 are advanced modern apprentices, 99 are foundation modern apprentices and four are NVQ learners. All modern apprentices work towards key skills at an appropriate level as an integral part of their programme. Twenty-three of the advanced modern apprentices are working towards NVQ level 2 and 54 towards level 3. All learners have employed status within the hairdressing industry and are recruited by MJT or directly by their employer. MJT has links with 80 salons. Most learners join the programme in July and they have a three-day block induction. Learners can join the programme at any time throughout the year. The learners who start at different points throughout the year are given a one-day induction and staff will do this on an individual basis. All learners undergo basic skills testing in numeracy and literacy and a practical skills ability assessment. The results of the basic skills test determine which modern apprenticeship programme they will join. MJT has a training college in Manchester city centre with excellent practical and classroom facilities. Most learners attend here every two weeks for background knowledge, practical training and assessment during the first year of their training. This increases to every week in the second year. Employers can also choose to do all the training and assessment at their own salon facilitated by a member of MJT's staff. In addition, learners can also drop into the centre at any time for support. Progress reviews are carried out in the workplace every 12 weeks and eight weekly for learners with additional support needs. There are two internal verifiers and six trainers/assessors. One assessor is employed as the training manager.

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							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	20		43		67		65		28							
Retained*	0		0		12		17	26	12	43						
Successfully completed	0		1		12		14	22	11	39						
Still in learning	19		25		24		6	9	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							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	43		90		116		75		109							
Retained*	0		0	100	12	10	23	31	47	43						
Successfully completed	0		0	100	12	10	23	31	45	41						
Still in learning	36		39	43	24	21	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							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts			3		6		24		48							
Retained*			0	100	2	33	11	46	20	42						
Successfully completed			0	100	2	33	11	46	20	42						
Still in learning			3	100	1	17	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

- high attainment of practical skills by learners
- good integration of key skills training with vocational training
- high quality of accommodation and training resources
- good support for learners with additional learning needs

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates on modern apprenticeship programmes
- ineffective completion of individual learning plans
- lack of work-based assessment

28. The practical skills which learners demonstrate are of a high standard. In the salons and at the training centre, learners work competently and confidently. Some of the more advanced learners are used to give demonstrations in the training centre. This is motivational for the new learners, as they are able to identify what can be achieved and

the technical standard that can be reached. MJT's staff have a broad range of occupational knowledge, which is reflected in the high standards of practical training at the centre. Many salons offer good on-the-job training and support and learners are able to progress quickly to become productive members of the salon teams. However, not all salons offer training, and for some learners the only time that they get to work on models is when they attend college for the off-the-job training.

29. There is particularly good integration of key skills training with the vocational training and assessment. During practical assessments, competence in the key skills of communication and application of number is assessed along with the hairdressing competencies. Projects have been designed to assess both the hairdressing and key skills components of the modern apprenticeship framework, which avoids unnecessary additional projects to cover the key skills components. Tutors make regular reference to key skills to enable learners to see the relevance of them and learners demonstrate a good understanding of the key skills requirements. Awarding body reports have been very positive about the development work carried out on key skills. MJT has demonstrated the key skills work that it has developed at a national good practice competition for key skills, organised by the awarding body to showcase good practice in work-based learning. MJT finished second in the competition.

30. The accommodation at MJT is good and the college attracts a good range of clients for the learners to practise their skills on and be assessed. The training college has three floors and a spacious studio. For learners with mobility difficulties, activities are carried out on the ground floor. The salons are modern and reflect industry practice. When learners attend for their training days, they are seen individually by an assessor to decide on the most appropriate area of work according to current progress and individual needs. Learners always have the choice between additional training or assessment, each time they visit the training college. There is good support in the training college from product suppliers and this is also evident in some of the salons. During the inspection, the salons visited where learners are employed were of good quality, offering good employment progression opportunities.

31. There is effective support for learners who have been identified as having additional learning needs. Of the current learners still in training, 21 per cent have identified additional learning support needs. Through a thorough initial assessment process, which includes a basic skills assessment, followed up by a second-phase diagnostic assessment if required, MJT carefully identifies learners' specific support needs and develops an individual action plan with timely targets. One of the positive outcomes of this is that the results of the external key skills tests for these learners have been very encouraging. The results indicate that they have performed better in these tests than the learners without support needs.

32. There is poor retention and achievement on all modern apprenticeship programmes. A high percentage of learners have left the programme year-on-year with no achievement. Of the foundation modern apprentices who started programmes between 1998-99 and 2000-01, 27 per cent have successfully achieved their modern

apprenticeship framework and 8 per cent are still in learning. MJT does not accredit learners with units achieved, only full NVQs. Any learner who leaves the programme early has nothing to show in terms of NVQ or key skills achievement for their time at MJT.

33. There is a lack of work-based assessment. Most of the learners are only assessed during off-the-job training sessions. Learners do not collect evidence of their competence during their daily work activities. They have to repeat work for assessment which they have already done in the salon. They are not progressing at their own pace, and are only assessed when they attend the training college. NVQ Level 3 learners who are working as busy stylists are disadvantaged, as the progress they make on the modern apprenticeship programme does not keep pace with the rate of development and competence they demonstrate at work. There is a delay in getting units signed off because of waiting for aspects of the NVQ to be covered during off-the-job assessment sessions. MJT has introduced the use of witness testimonies at work, however, these are not consistently used. Assessors do not drive this forward through effective planning of the use of witness testimonies. Learners do not take their portfolios to the salons which means they have no access to the NVQ standards and are not able to clearly identify what evidence could be generated at work. Employers are not able to look at the portfolios and assist in this process.

34. The individual learning plans are ineffective. They are not used to adequately record all aspects of the initial assessment and any agreed actions as a result of this process. For example, there is no indication that learners' previous experience in the industry will be taken into account as evidence towards their NVQ units. Learning plans are not systematically updated and targets have often lapsed for some time. The employer is not involved in the development of the individual learning plan and is often unaware of the learners' agreed targets for achievement. The employer is not encouraged to assist in driving progress during the initial development of the individual learning plans. The employer and the learner are not issued with a copy of the individual learning plan to allow them to refer to any targets that have been set. Due to the ineffective completion of the individual learning plan, there is insufficient detail against which to review progress. The learners who are signing up for the advanced modern apprenticeship are not given the opportunity to choose from the range of optional units available. MJT makes the decision about the units that learners will take, rather than choosing the most suitable option for both learners and the employers.

Poor Practice

During a practical session, learners were working with colour chemicals and did not use protective gloves. This was an essential requirement of the qualification on which the learners were being assessed. Assessors did not ensure that the health and safety requirements were followed.

One salon visited during the inspection did not display a current employer's liability insurance certificate. It had expired mid-December 2002. The health and safety poster had not been completed with the relevant details. MJT was not aware that the certificate had not been renewed. This was not picked up through its monitoring procedures.