

REINSPECTION REPORT

UK Training & Development Limited Reinspection

10 July 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. 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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** 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.

REINSPECTION REPORT

UK Training & Development Limited Reinspection

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. UK Training and Development (UKTD) was formed in May 1998. The company was first inspected in 1999 by the Training and Skills Council and was reinspected in 2000. The first ALL inspection was in May 2002, when all areas were judged unsatisfactory. The reinspection started in February 2003 and was completed in July 2003.

2. UKTD has its headquarters in the centre of Hemel Hempstead. There are 400 employed modern apprentices covering five Learning and Skills Council (LSC) areas. Nearly 98 per cent of the learners are hairdressers. The company also offers modern apprenticeships in business administration, management, and retailing and customer service. The company no longer offers qualifications in sport and leisure.

3. The company was restructured in spring 2003 and now has 29 staff. The managing director is supported by a centre manager who has six people reporting directly to her. There are three operations managers, the management information system (MIS) manager, the quality assurance co-ordinator and the office manager. Fourteen training consultants are organised into three teams, each managed by an operations manager. Two of the teams each have one additional support staff. The teams meet each month at the headquarters or in a more convenient location. All the training consultants are appropriately qualified. The operations managers are working towards management qualifications. There are four internal verifiers and another person working towards accreditation.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

4. There are five advanced modern apprentices in management. The company also offers foundation modern apprenticeships in business administration, but there are currently no learners. The advanced modern apprentices have supervisory positions in a range of workplaces which vary from a sports centre to a nursery school. The assessor visits regularly for progress reviews by arrangement. Assessors also help learners with background knowledge and portfolio-building. Employers offer training in the workplace or subcontract it to other providers.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

5. UKTD offers advanced and foundation modern apprenticeships in customer service. There are nine learners who are employed in independent and national companies. Training is offered by employers in the workplace or through external courses. There are four foundation modern apprentices and five advanced modern apprentices. UKTD has three assessors who are qualified to assess customer service. Learners have an induction into their workplace and their literacy and numeracy skills are assessed to identify the level of apprenticeship. Learners' previous achievements in key skills is also taken into consideration. Assessment is carried out in the workplace each month over 14 months. Assessors instruct learners on how to build their portfolio of evidence and clarify the background knowledge. Internal verification is planned by a lead verifier and is carried out by four qualified internal verifiers.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

6. There are 425 learners in hairdressing. Twenty-eight learners are working towards the national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2 and five are working towards the NVQ at level 3. Three hundred and four learners are foundation modern apprentices and 88 are advanced modern apprentices. All learners are employed within 129 salons. All training and assessment takes place in the salons, but learners can attend off-the-job training sessions for one day a fortnight. A training consultant/assessor, who is an occupational specialist, is assigned to each learner and visits them in the salons every three weeks, or more frequently if necessary. The training consultants are responsible for all aspects of the learners' training programme. Initial diagnostic assessment is carried out at the start of the learning programme to identify literacy and numeracy needs.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learner interviews	43
Number of staff interviews	27
Number of employer interviews	23
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

7. Hairdressing and beauty therapy, which forms more than 95 per cent of the provision, is still judged to be unsatisfactory. However, provision in retailing, customer service and transportation, and in business administration, management and professional, is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is the company's approach to equality of opportunity. Quality assurance remains unsatisfactory. UKTD has been referred to the LSC for emergency action.

GRADES

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

	Original grade	Reinspection grade
Leadership and management	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity	4	3
Quality assurance	4	4

	Original	Reinspection
Business administration, management & professional	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3

	Original	Reinspection
Retailing, customer service & transportation	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3

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

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

8. **Learners are slow in achieving NVQ units in all areas of learning.** Many learners achieve elements of a large number of units, but are not focused on full unit achievement. Target dates for completion are missed, often by several months.
9. **For many learners key skills are introduced late.** In business administration and management, and in retailing and customer service, most learners are exempt from the key skills test, but for those who are not, support for key skills is poor. Slow achievement of key skills has prevented some of the learners from completing the frameworks.
10. **Retention rates have been poor but are improving across all areas of learning. For modern apprentices in retailing and customer service they are particularly poor.** Only four of the 15 learners who started a foundation modern apprenticeship in 2001-02 stayed until the end of the programme. Of the 12 advanced modern apprentices who started in the same period, only two stayed until the end of the programme. Thirty-three per cent of learners who started a foundation modern apprenticeship in customer service

this year have already left the programme. In hairdressing, the dropout rate this year is 18 per cent for foundation modern apprentices and 11 per cent for advanced modern apprentices.

Quality of education and training

11. **Hairdressing employers provide many good work placements.** Most salons are attractively designed, modern, well equipped and carry an extensive range of good hairdressing products. Hairdressing staff are occupationally competent and experienced. Salons attract a wide range of clients and learners develop their skills by assisting with many different types of services. Staff are good role models and demonstrate good customer service skills.

12. **Hairdressing learners work in busy salon environments and many develop skills which enable them to work productively at an early stage of their training.** Learners are well trained to evaluate the use of techniques and working methods. Trainers praise and encourage learners. Training is enhanced by activities such as competitions, visits to exhibitions, taking part in hairdressing shows for friends and family and charitable events. Employers also use commercial workshops, from major product companies, to enhance and develop their training sessions.

13. **In the best salons, training is well structured and planned in advance.** However some salons do not structure or plan learning and do not co-ordinate the background knowledge with the practice at work. Progress monitoring is sometimes incomplete so learners' skills cannot be accurately identified for assessment. Some salons are too noisy for learners to concentrate during background knowledge sessions in hairdressing.

14. **Learning is well planned for business administration and management learners.** Consultants' visits are scheduled to accommodate the needs of the workplace. Deadlines in individual learning plans can be adjusted to maximise the learners' opportunities for success. Assessment procedures and methods of gathering evidence are varied, and are relevant to the learners' place of work.

15. Learners in retailing and customer service are working on tasks which are related to their company's objectives. For example, one learner is analysing potential customers' visits to their company's website and customer feedback questionnaires.

16. **Portfolios in business administration and management are good and include relevant evidence which is well presented and cross-referenced.** Learners use a wide selection of media to generate evidence, including videos and posters. One learner was able to record a meeting on video so that the assessor could witness it when she visited.

17. **There is good individual support for most learners.** Individual support is offered to help develop practical skills and background knowledge. Frequent action-planning helps learners to focus on completing tasks which are set at reviews. UKTD's staff visit regularly and learners can contact their personal training consultant easily in between

visits to discuss problems or concerns.

18. Support for numeracy and literacy has improved. UKTD has recently appointed two trainers to offer specialist support to learners and staff on numeracy, literacy and key skills development. Specialist training materials have been purchased to support hairdressing learners in their key skills development. However, they are not relevant for the very few learners in other occupations. Effective support with grammar, spelling and punctuation is provided by training consultants during salon visits. Learners' progress with numeracy and literacy skills is beginning to be closely monitored and recorded. However, there is still insufficient specialised numeracy and literacy support in two of the five LSC areas. UKTD plans to extend the support as soon as it is established in the other three areas.

Leadership and management

19. **There is good management of change.** Strong leadership from senior managers has supported radical changes. Organisational changes have been made in a controlled and well-planned way to ensure that all staff are involved in the process and learners are continuously supported.

20. **Operational management is good.** The new structure defines clear roles and responsibilities which are focused on the learners. Tighter control of the learning process and stronger monitoring of staff gives increased consistency in the application of new processes and procedures. Managers who do not have a caseload of learners can support staff effectively. Small manageable teams centred on geographical areas minimise unnecessary travel. Constructive monthly individual meetings are balanced by focused regional meetings.

21. **Self-assessment is used honestly and critically to improve practice.** The processes for the management, content and recording of learning have been refined and all staff are well aware of them. Continuous evaluation uses feedback from all interested parties.

22. **There is good staff development. A wide range of training opportunities for all staff is closely linked to meeting the needs of learners.** Good training opportunities are also offered to employers, including training for assessors.

23. **New initiatives have been successful in widening participation.** Nearly 8 per cent of the hairdressing learners are men and the proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is increasing. **There is good promotion of diversity in many of the workplaces.** The new equal opportunities policy is clearly written and has simply explained guidance on dealing with harassment and bullying. Employers are encouraged to sign an agreement which has well-defined responsibilities and expectations. New units, such as the Afro-Caribbean hairdressing units and barbering, are being developed to attract more learners from minority ethnic groups. UKTD has devised a process of risk banding to identify learners who are in need of greater attention and this allows staff to react quickly to difficulties to help reduce the dropout rate.

24. **The quality assurance of some aspects of the training programme is inadequate.** A comprehensive internal verification plan and system are in place but the system is not consistently implemented. **There is no system in place to monitor the structure and quality of practical training provided by employers.** Written assignments and tests are marked and verified, but weaknesses such as insufficient frequency of practical skills assessment, and insufficient verification of work-based assessment have not been identified.

25. **The management information system remains inadequate to monitor progress.** A new system has been introduced since the previous inspection and this has overcome initial problems. Operations managers are now given detailed information for each of their training consultants every month. However, the system does not include detailed information such as progress with elements of the NVQ and key skills. This information has to be prepared manually each month.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good operational management
- good management of change
- good initiatives to widen participation
- good staff development
- effective use of self-assessment to promote continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- slow progress to deal with weaknesses in key skills learning
- inadequate quality assurance of some aspects of the training process
- uneven provision of additional learning support
- inadequate management information systems for monitoring progress

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- good range of evidence in portfolios
- well-planned and flexible learning

Weaknesses

- poor completion rates for the frameworks
- some poor involvement by employers

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Strengths

- good partnership with employers to plan assessments
- thorough and memorable induction

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates
- weak target-setting
- late introduction of key skills

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Strengths

- good practical training
- many good work placements
- good individual support for most learners

Weaknesses

- slow achievement of NVQ units
- late introduction of key skills
- insufficiently structured training in some salons
- poor quality assurance of assessments

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good operational management
- good management of change
- good initiatives to widen participation
- good staff development
- effective use of self-assessment to promote continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- slow progress to deal with weaknesses in key skills learning
- inadequate quality assurance of some aspects of the training process
- uneven provision of additional learning support
- inadequate management information systems for monitoring progress

26. There is good management of change. Since the previous inspection, senior managers have shown strong leadership and determination to implement reforms which are identified in the development plan. A radical approach has been adopted to resolve the company's weaknesses. Outside expertise has helped the company to redefine its mission and clarify its purpose, focusing on the learners and their needs. Staff identified that the company has increased its stability and their confidence. Organisational changes have been made in a controlled and well-planned way, to ensure that all staff are involved in the process and learners are continuously supported.

27. Operational management is good. There is an effective new structure with clear roles and responsibilities for all. Operational managers no longer have a learner caseload and they can support and direct their staff effectively. They have time to visit and observe interactions between learners, employers and UKTD's training consultants, so that the monitoring can be more thoroughly carried out. Small manageable teams are centred on a geographical area to minimise unnecessary travel. Constructive individual monthly meetings between training consultants and their managers set attainable targets and discuss performance, so that each person is given support and the opportunity to develop. Monthly regional team meetings are purposeful and are focused on sharing and maximising good practice in training and assessment. Staff manage time better by only discussing items which are relevant to their workload. The company has refined and tightened the processes which surround the management of learning and the recording mechanisms and content, and all staff are well aware of them. Communication is clear and direct across the organisation, with objectives focused on

the learners.

28. The staff development is good and is linked to regular appraisal. A wide range of training opportunities are available for all staff and are closely linked to meeting the needs identified in the development plan. All training consultants are attending training in literacy and numeracy and key skills to help them support learners more effectively. Newly appointed operations managers are being trained as internal verifiers and are also working towards an NVQ in management. All staff are actively supported with their continuing professional development to maintain their technical skills. Good training opportunities are also available for employers and their staff, although these are not taken up by all employers. They include training days to keep assessors up to date with assessment requirements. Every six months, the whole staff has a company training week, where ideas are shared and developed, and strategic planning and updating takes place.

29. There is slow progress in dealing with the weaknesses in key skills learning. The two new appointees are making good progress in developing support, but there are still few materials in use. Materials for background knowledge are just beginning to be available to learners, and some hairdressing assignments have been carefully designed to match the key skills requirements. Key skills expertise and awareness among UKTD's staff is currently being developed in training events. However, many learners and employers are still not aware of key skills and do not understand what is expected of them. All new learners start their qualification by completing an equal opportunities assignment which includes some evidence for key skills evidence, but many of the learners who are near the end of their NVQ have little key skills evidence.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

30. The company's thorough analysis of the populations of the LSC areas served by UKTD shows a need to widen participation. Many creative new initiatives have been generated to deal with this. A new equal opportunities policy is clearly written and has simply explained guidance notes for learners on areas such as harassment and bullying. In the induction pack, learners are also given a colourful leaflet which was produced by the LSC to explain diversity. All employers are encouraged to sign an agreement which has well-defined responsibilities and expectations. Most do so, but some have house rules which do not allow this. An interesting assignment on diversity is given to all new learners and is also used to gather key skills evidence in communication and application of number. One learner had produced impressive bar charts on the salon computer to analyse diversity issues in her salon. New units, such as the Afro-Caribbean hairdressing units and barbering, are being developed to attract people from minority ethnic groups into learning. Staff have attended many training sessions to increase their understanding of substance misuse and equal opportunities. Two people have recently been appointed to support the development of numeracy and literacy support in the company. Both have strong links with Connexions and other agencies. UKTD has devised a risk-banding process to identify learners who need more attention and this allows staff to react quickly to difficulties.

31. Clear targets have been set to increase the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups taking up learning. Many of the salon owners raise learners' awareness of equality and diversity, and workplace supervisors are good role models. For example, one male learner is supervised by an extremely competent male assessor, and works in a salon with equal numbers of men and women. In another salon, a learner provides appropriate and enthusiastic support to enable a person who has a learning disability to work in the salon for one day a week. However, some learners demonstrate poor understanding of equal opportunities, although all are confident that they have access to help and advice from UKTD if they need it.

32. There is insufficient additional learning support. The initial assessment has now improved and it measures additional needs more accurately. Training consultants offer some help to learners when they visit, but they do not have specific expertise in literacy and numeracy. Targeted support from the two specialist staff is effective but it is only offered in three of the five LSC areas. There is little formal expertise in the organisation to deal with literacy, numeracy and language skills. One member of staff has a qualification to teach basic literacy.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

33. Self assessment is used effectively to promote continuous improvement. The organisation continually reassesses itself critically to improve its practice. The development plan which was written in November has well-defined targets which have been revisited and updated regularly as the effects of actions are reviewed. Tighter control of the learning process is supported by stronger monitoring of the consultants to increase consistency. More detailed recent monitoring of the assessors' performance has identified that some workplace supervisors, who are also assessors, are not available often enough to help learners progress through their qualification. Travelling assessors are being recruited and trained by UKTD. Continuous evaluation uses feedback from all interested parties. There is a new induction pack which deals with concerns raised in the previous inspection. The company's policies, and learners' rights and responsibilities, are clearly set out in accessible language, together with a simple introduction to the NVQ and the options available. Learners are tested on their understanding of crucial elements at the end of the induction session.

34. UKTD covers all aspects of the training process in its quality assurance policy and in a range of quality assurance procedures. Many of these are under review as a result of recent changes in roles and responsibilities of staff. Training consultants have a copy of the procedures in a handbook. There is a consistent and controlled approach to the learning experience across all the regions covered by UKTD. Changes to the initial assessment process have allowed the identification of learners' ability. Learners are started on the correct NVQ level and the retention rates have improved. Monitoring of health and safety in work placements takes place systematically. The newly appointed operations managers are giving regular support to training consultants during visits to the workplace and on record-keeping. Recent changes to the procedure for gaining feedback from learners and employers through a questionnaire have resulted in an improved response rate. Results have been analysed and circulated to all staff, but have

not yet been used for improvement-planning.

35. There is inadequate quality assurance of some aspects of the training programme. The quality of off-the-job training is thoroughly monitored through a system of observation and feedback on performance. There is no equivalent system in place to monitor the structure and quality of training on employers' premises, although training consultants visit employers frequently and observe training while they are there. Some of this is recorded as evidence in portfolios. Many of the employers have their own well-structured training schemes which benefit learners, but these do not necessarily link into the NVQ.

36. The internal verification system is adequate. A comprehensive internal verification plan is in place and written assignments and tests are marked and verified. However, the system is not consistently implemented. Weaknesses relating to insufficient frequency of practical skills assessment, and insufficient verification of assessment, have not been rectified.

37. The management information system remains inadequate. Data from the previous inspection do not match the data provided for corresponding years for the reinspection. The data for the previous inspection were generated from a compilation of three different databases which were not compatible, and the new system measures contract years differently. Since the previous inspection, the company has worked hard to remedy this. Data are now collected and recorded more frequently, more systematically and in much greater detail. The new information system's initial problems have been resolved and it is now giving accurate information. Operations managers are given performance reports for each of their training consultants every month. Details of learners still in training are listed, within and beyond the funded period, and learners due to complete training in the next three months are identified. The system can list the due and past dates for progress reviews but nothing is recorded. Details of starts and leavers, including reasons for leaving, are also included. However, the system does not give managers enough detailed information. A time-consuming manual process generates lists each month so that learners' progress can be discussed at the training consultants' meetings with management. Managers cannot easily see the rate of progress towards NVQs and key skills on the system as it only shows the units which have been started or completed. There is no way to obtain a snapshot of the learner's progress towards the completion of a unit.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	5	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good range of evidence in portfolios
- well-planned and flexible learning

Weaknesses

- poor completion rates for the frameworks
- some poor involvement by employers

Achievement and standards

38. The completion rate for modern apprenticeship frameworks is poor. The rate of progress has improved since the previous inspection, with a greater focus on prompt assessment and accreditation of NVQ units. One learner has completed a framework in four months. There were problems with the database at reinspection, but historical data shows that learners had made very slow progress in the past and had reached the end of their planned programme without achieving many units. Some of these learners have now achieved an NVQ, but have not taken key skills as they are out of funding. It has been agreed that training in this area of learning will not be offered in future.

Quality of education and training

39. Learning is well planned. Consultants' visits are scheduled to accommodate the needs of the workplace. Nearly all learning plans have clear targets and deadlines and tasks are well defined. However, the deadlines can be adjusted to maximise the learners' opportunities for success. Assessment procedures and methods of gathering evidence are varied and are relevant to the learners' workplace. A high proportion of learners are following other unrelated courses in their spare time.

40. Employers are from a range of sectors, including retailing, education and leisure. UKTD only recruits learners who are already employed and are carrying out work which is suitable for the qualification. UKTD takes great care to recruit good employers who are supportive of learning. However, the recent volatile nature of business in some commercial sectors has meant that supervisors have not remained in post until the end of

the learner's qualification. Some employers have gone through several changes of ownership. In these employers there has been a high dropout rate, but UKTD has been persistent and supportive in maintaining good relationships with them in order to retain and encourage those learners who are still in learning.

41. There is a good range of evidence in portfolios. Learners use a wide selection of media to generate evidence, including videos and posters. One learner whose workplace was short staffed videoed a meeting to demonstrate her negotiation and consultative skills, so that the assessor could witness it when she visited. Portfolios are good, and include relevant evidence which is well presented and cross-referenced. Internal verification is thorough.

42. Learners remember their induction clearly and understand equal opportunities well. Some of the older individual learning plans are unsatisfactory, but recent ones have used initial assessment well to take prior learning into account.

43. The training consultants are adequately qualified and have relevant experience. Very little off-the-job training takes place, although UKTD's staff are prepared to carry this out on request. There are not many paper-based resources and reference materials to support learning. Key skills materials are biased towards the hairdressing environment.

Leadership and management

44. Internal verification of business administration and management qualifications is thorough and consistent. Each portfolio is assessed twice and every assessor has a visit from the internal verifier for each NVQ and level assessed. However, the initial assessment is not accurate or differentiated enough to identify literacy and numeracy needs or other specific problems. The company has appointed two people to support literacy and numeracy and key skills and a qualified consultant is available for learners who need extra help. The other new appointee is developing materials for key skills. All new learners are given a project on equality of opportunity, which can be used for the key skills. New recruits have an induction in the workplace which includes their supervisor, and learners' agreements are signed by the employer and employee.

45. UKTD has recognised that the demands of the business administration frameworks are different from those of hairdressing, which is their main focus and they are therefore discontinuing this provision.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	9	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good partnership with employers to plan assessments
- thorough and memorable induction

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates
- weak target-setting
- late introduction of key skills

Achievement and standards

46. Retention rates for foundation and advanced modern apprentices are poor. Only four of the 15 learners who started a foundation modern apprenticeship in 2001-02 stayed until the end of the programme. Of the 12 advanced modern apprentices who started in the same period, only two stayed until the end of the programme. All learners are employed before they start with UKTD and a large proportion of them have been badly affected by recent downturns in the commercial environment. UKTD is persistent and proactive in supporting learners who remain in these workplaces. The provider is considering whether to discontinue the customer service apprenticeship, except within the hairdressing industry. By the time of the second phase of the reinspection, two of the nine learners had completed the advanced modern apprenticeship framework and the other seven are still in learning.

Quality of education and training

47. There is good partnership working with employers to plan assessments. The tasks carried out by learners in the workplace are well chosen to meet the assessment criteria. Employers value the learners as they often carry out tasks which are linked to their business objectives. For example, one learner is analysing potential customers' visits to the company's website and customer feedback questionnaires. Learners' portfolios are adequately referenced and most learners can locate evidence easily. Assessment and verification is clearly recorded and meets the required standards. Learners have regular contact with their assessors and can telephone them if they encounter any problems. They are confident that they can ask assessors for advice and guidance on a professional or personal basis.

48. All learners have a good recall of their induction. The induction process has been radically overhauled to deal with the weaknesses from the previous inspection. It is comprehensive and detailed and takes place entirely in the workplace. Learners are familiar with their rights and responsibilities and have a particularly thorough understanding of health and safety and equality of opportunity. Workplace supervisors take part in this section of their induction, and ensure that they are aware of these aspects. Most learners already have qualifications and regard modern apprenticeships in customer service as good progression.

49. Changes to staffing and procedures have allowed learners to make better progress. The current assessors are experienced, qualified and carry out assessment satisfactorily. The training they give is individually tailored to fill the gaps in learners' understanding and develop the knowledge and skills needed to meet the NVQ standards. Learners and employers have good working relationships with assessors who visit learners each month. When employers are too busy to allow assessors to spend adequate time with the learners, assessors visit more frequently. They observe learners' performance in the workplace and make further appointments. Steady progress is being maintained in this way with most learners. Risks to health and safety in the workplace are continually monitored. Learners have good access to training provided by their employers.

50. Current learners are satisfied with the support and guidance given by assessors. They have access to books to enhance their knowledge. Learners who work in hairdressing salons and small businesses make satisfactory progress and have extremely good support from their employers. Learners in larger organisations sometimes have less employer support or opportunity to progress. The number of retailing modern apprentices is diminishing, and the programme will be phased out as the current group finishes.

51. Target-setting is weak. The results of initial assessment have not been used to develop targets on individual learning plans (ILPs). Some learners are unfamiliar with the content of their ILP. ILPs are poorly developed and have not been used to set interim targets for achievement. On older ILPs the only target date for completion of a unit is usually the last day of funded training, but newer ILPs have individually planned targets for each unit. Most learners know which qualifications they are working towards and some employers are familiar with these targets.

52. Planning of learning has been improved by the development of more detailed action plans. These are agreed with learners and employers at each assessor visit to the workplace. They clearly specify the evidence that learners need to produce. However, the perception of timescales is unsatisfactory. Assessors expect the evidence to be gathered by the next visit, while learners believe the targets are more flexible and timescales are often extended. Targets on action plans are not related to interim targets on ILPs.

53. Key skills are introduced too slowly, but this only affects a minority of learners, as most learners are exempt from the key skills tests through previous qualifications. There

is insufficient preparation for the small number of learners who are assessed externally for key skills. In one example, a learner was introduced to the test papers only a week before he was scheduled to complete the framework and further time had to be negotiated. Some learners have a poor understanding of the key skills. One learner was unaware that key skills were part of his learning targets. This was recorded on his ILP, but he was unfamiliar with the document.

Leadership and management

54. Quality assurance of the learning process is satisfactory, with regular planned observation of assessors' performance and learners' interviews. Since the previous inspection, internal verification has been expanded to meet the joint awarding body requirements. Standardisation exercises are carried out at assessor and internal verifier meetings. Assessors have individual meetings with team leaders to plan their personal development. Formative internal verification sampling has increased. Learners are aware of equal opportunity issues including procedures for appeals, harassment and bullying. They are confident that they could use them if necessary.

55. There is inadequate specialised support for modern apprentices who have additional learning needs. Literacy and numeracy screening is superficial and in some cases, the results are spelt incorrectly on learners' records. Training consultants have insufficient expertise in supporting complex additional learning needs such as dyslexia.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	425	4

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good practical training
- many good work placements
- good individual support for most learners

Weaknesses

- slow achievement of NVQ units
- late introduction of key skills
- insufficiently structured training in some salons
- poor quality assurance of assessments

Achievement and standards

56. The achievement rate for NVQ units is slow. Many learners achieve elements of a large number of units, but are not focused on individual unit achievement. Learners who have been training for many months have typically achieved very few units. Two learners who have been training for 10 months have not completed any units. One learner who has been in training for 14 months and works as a junior stylist has completed just one unit. Units are not used as milestones towards the completion of the whole qualification. Target dates for completion are often missed by several months. Learners who leave the programme early are accredited with only those units which are complete.

57. New assignments have been introduced in recent months to cover key skills requirements. They are well designed and link effectively to hairdressing and equal opportunities. However, some of the learners have not started to work on these assignments as yet. All new learners who started since February this year, have worked on some of them. There are some learners who have nearly completed the NVQ, but they have not collected enough evidence for the key skills. Some learners who need to take the external key skills assessments have not covered the essential elements.

Quality of education and training

58. The practical training is good and this was identified at the previous inspection. Training takes place frequently in salons and includes individual demonstrations and guidance for each learner. Learners are encouraged to consider the reasons for

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particular techniques and trainers effectively gain information about methods of working from learning. Trainers ensure that learners' development needs are met promptly and they make good use of praise and encouragement. Errors made by learners are dealt with sensitively.

59. In the best salons, training is well structured and is planned in advance. However, in some the training is poorly structured. There is insufficient co-ordination between background knowledge sessions and practical training. Learning is not sufficiently reinforced in a timely way. In some salons training is not planned and training logs are poorly completed. Records of learners' development are incomplete. Some salons do not have areas that are quiet enough for learners to focus and concentrate during background knowledge sessions. Inadequate planning and monitoring of training was identified at the previous inspection.

60. There are many good work placements. Most salons are attractively designed, are modern, well equipped and carry an extensive range of good hairdressing products. Hairdressing staff are occupationally competent and experienced. Salons attract a wide range of clients and learners develop their skills by assisting with many different services. Staff are good role models and demonstrate good customer service skills. Learners work in busy salons and many develop skills which enable them to work productively at an early stage of their training. Learners take part in many activities which enhance their training and develop their creativity and wider understanding of the hairdressing industry. Hairdressing competitions, visits to exhibitions, taking part in hairdressing shows for friends and family and also for charitable events are a few of the many activities carried out as part of their training. Some learners are also involved in marketing events and photo-shoots. Employers use commercial workshops from major product companies, to enhance and develop their training sessions. Good additional training opportunities were identified at the previous inspection.

61. There is good individual support for most learners by UKTD's staff and salon staff. They offer individual support for the development of practical skills and background knowledge. All learners attend frequent action-planning sessions which help them to focus on completing tasks for the next visit by UKTD's staff. Staff visit frequently and regularly and learners are able to contact their personal training consultant easily in between visits if they have problems or concerns. Satisfactory support is also available for learners who need to develop their numeracy and literacy skills. UKTD has recently appointed two trainers to provide specialist support with the development of numeracy, literacy and key skills. Specialist training materials have been purchased and those with identified needs are visited by the support staff at least every six weeks. Training consultants also provide some effective support with grammar, spelling and punctuation during salon visits. Written work in portfolios is satisfactory or better. Learners' progress with numeracy and literacy skills is beginning to be closely monitored and recorded. Improvements have been made to the amount and effectiveness of support available for some learners.

62. Most learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity. However, a small number of learners are insufficiently clear about their rights and

responsibilities. UKTD has produced an assignment about equal opportunities, but it has not yet been introduced to all learners. Equality of opportunity is discussed during learners' progress reviews.

63. Initial assessment includes a satisfactory range of activities during the induction. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed and they also complete a practical skills test which is designed to identify their level of dexterity. The induction process is thorough and takes place at the start of the learners' programme. It covers course requirements, health and safety, equal opportunities, and complaints and appeals procedures. Learners have a good understanding and recollection of the induction process.

64. There is insufficient quality assurance of assessment practice. Many learners are late completing assessments, irrespective of their previous experience or achievements. Assessments for many learners are not sufficiently frequent to ensure learners progress at a suitable rate. Assessments that are not planned in advance are sometimes insufficiently thorough. Learners are not prepared or monitored to ensure that strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified. The results of assessment are not always recorded at the time and some witness testimonies have insufficient detail to be used as reliable evidence. Some poor assessment practices were identified at the previous inspection and these issues have not been adequately resolved.

Leadership and management

65. The management of the learning programme has improved since the previous inspection. Operations managers now have smaller teams to manage. They set individual targets for staff on learners' achievement and they monitor the performance of their staff. Structured individual meetings are held every month.

66. There have been recent improvements to the internal verification practices. However, there are some significant gaps in quality assurance. On-the-job training sessions are not observed and assessors are not observed frequently enough to meet the awarding body's requirements. Assessors are not sampled across the range of units or across the methods of assessments. There is little standardisation of assessment practice, although meetings have started to take place. Assessors have standardised their approach to marking written tests but this is not happened with written assignments. Issues identified during external verification are being action-planned to bring about improvements. Key documents such as training logs are not audited to ensure consistency and quality.