

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Training for today Reinspection**

**05 June 2003**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## TRAINING FOR TODAY REINSPECTION

### 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.

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## **Training for today Reinspection**

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Training for today is the trading name of Michaeljohn Training Ltd. It was established in 1986 and is a privately owned company. It has a training centre at its head office in Bolton and a smaller training centre in Prestwich. It provides work-based learning in business administration, customer service, hairdressing, and care for foundation and advanced modern apprentices and learners working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs). It also provides foundation training for learners on Life Skills programmes.

2. The company has three directors and employs 27 staff. The managing director is responsible for the financial management and strategic direction. The operations director is responsible for training. Since the inspection in February 2002, the structure of the organisation has been changed and there are now four programme managers and fourteen tutors/assessors. There is a manager responsible for quality assurance. All staff divide their time between the two centres.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### **Business administration, management & professional**

3. There are 11 learners following programmes in administration, six of them foundation modern apprentices and five working towards NVQs at level 1 in administration. All the foundation modern apprentices are employed and the NVQ learners are on work placements. Tutors visit learners in the workplace approximately every two weeks to provide off-the-job training and assessment. NVQ learners spend one day a week in their work placement and two days at the training centre for off-the-job training. Progress reviews take place every 12 weeks for modern apprentices and every four weeks for NVQ learners.

#### **Retailing, customer service & transportation**

4. Training for today provides work-based learning in customer service for 21 young people. Ten are foundation modern apprentices and 11 are on NVQ programmes. All the learners are employed, and most have previously gained NVQs in hairdressing or care through Training for today. Training and assessment take place on the job. Learners can attend one of the training centres for tutorials if necessary. Most learners have already completed key skills qualifications as part of their hairdressing or care programmes. For the remainder, key skills training and assessment are integrated with NVQ training. There are two tutor/assessors involved in training and assessment, and the programme manager carries out internal verification.

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### **Hairdressing & beauty therapy**

5. There are 16 advanced modern apprentices and 54 foundation modern apprentices on hairdressing programmes. Fifty learners are following NVQ programmes: 17 at level 1, 30 at level 2, and three at level 3. All learners attend Training for today's training centre for background knowledge, key skills and practical training once a fortnight on day release. They receive assessments both on and off the job. A trainer/assessor visits learners once a month and progress reviews are carried out every 12 weeks.

### **Health, social care & public services**

6. There are 69 learners on training programmes in the care of older people. Nine are advanced modern apprentices, 44 are foundation modern apprentices, and 16 are on NVQ programmes. Sixty-two learners are employed and seven are on work placements in nursing homes and residential care homes in Bolton and the surrounding area. Training is carried out in the workplace and at the Bolton training centre. Learners with additional needs are visited fortnightly.

### **Foundation programmes**

7. There are 14 learners on a Life Skills programme which is offered on sites in Bolton and Prestwich. Learners study for 25 hours a week. The training programme is for 15 weeks initially, but may be extended according to individual needs. The programme includes options in basic skills, key skills, jobsearch, confidence building, teamwork, information and communications technology (ICT), independent living skills and personal and social development. Learners have the opportunity to attend work experience and a range of vocational training tasters.

## **ABOUT THE REINSPECTION**

Number of inspectors	8
Number of inspection days	24
Number of learner interviews	47
Number of staff interviews	35
Number of employer interviews	20
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	32
Number of partner/external agency interviews	2
Number of visits	3

## **OVERALL JUDGEMENT**

8. At the inspection in February 2001, training in business administration, hairdressing, and care was judged unsatisfactory. Customer service training was satisfactory and Life Skills provision was good. Leadership and management were unsatisfactory, as were arrangements for equal opportunities and quality assurance. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were judged satisfactory or better. More specifically, Training for today's leadership and management are now good, its

arrangements for equal opportunities are satisfactory and for quality assurance are good. Training in all areas of learning is good.

## GRADES

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

	Original grade	Reinspection grade
<b>Leadership and management</b>	4	2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity	4	3
Quality assurance	4	2

	Original	Reinspection
<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	4	2
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	2

	Original	Reinspection
<b>Retailing, customer service &amp; transportation</b>	3	2
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	3	2

	Original	Reinspection
<b>Hairdressing &amp; beauty therapy</b>	4	2
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	2

	Original	Reinspection
<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	4	2
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	2

	Original	Reinspection
<b>Foundation programmes</b>	2	2
Contributory grades:		
Life Skills	2	2

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

9. There are signs of improvement in Training for today's retention rates. In 2002-03, in all nearly areas of learning, **the proportion of learners leaving their programmes early has decreased significantly.**

10. **Most business administration learners are now making satisfactory progress.** Their portfolios of evidence are good.

11. **In customer service, achievement rates for learners on the NVQ programme are particularly good.** Twelve out of 18 learners who started programmes in 2001-02 have now achieved their qualification, and four are still in training. Other learners are making good progress, are well motivated and produce good work.

12. **Learners in hairdressing are making good progress** and their portfolios contain good, well-presented evidence.

13. **Most care learners are now making good progress** and are on track to achieve their NVQ. Learners are more confident and have developed new skills which they can apply in the workplace.

14. On the Life Skills programme, 64 per cent of the 2002-03 learners are still in learning, which is satisfactory. Achievement is also satisfactory. **There is good personal development for Life Skills learners, and they produce good individual project work.**

### Quality of education and training

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	1	1	1	0	0	3
Retailing, customer service & transportation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Health, social care & public services	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Foundation programmes	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>

15. Ten of the learning sessions observed were satisfactory or better and most were good. One session was unsatisfactory.

16. **There is good support for learners in all areas of learning.** Learners are visited regularly and tutors can be contacted by mobile telephone if necessary. There are good



working relationships between learners and tutors. Extra support is given if learners need it.

17. **In business administration, liaison with employers is good.** Workplace supervisors are well briefed on their role, and assessment and training is jointly planned by tutors and supervisors. However, key skills evidence is not always cross-referenced to workplace evidence and is assessed late in the programme.

18. In customer service, staff support learners by intervening if they have difficulty or if their employer is unhappy with their work. Employers are not sufficiently involved in the training programme. Some learners are not given time at work to gather evidence.

19. **In hairdressing, teaching is good and meets the needs of learners.** They learn well and are interested and motivated. Progress reviews are effective and clear progress targets are set. Although the salons are well equipped, there are too few clients and the range of work is not wide enough. In some salons on-the-job training is not planned and only takes place if time allows.

20. **The progress of care learners is carefully monitored.** Monthly progress reviews take place at which achievements are celebrated and new clear targets are set. Workplace supervisors contribute to the review process. Assessment practice is good. Clear plans are made and learners are fully involved. Assessment is thorough and its timing is flexible, taking into account learners' shift patterns. However for many learners there is restricted access to off-the-job training as employers do not allow them to attend during work time.

21. **The Life Skills programme is innovative and supportive.** Tutors discuss its content with learners, adapting it to meet their needs. A wide range of creative activities takes place and information technology (IT) is used effectively. Learners acquire good skills and produce work of a high standard. However, learning is not evaluated sufficiently and written feedback is weak. Learners' progress is not monitored carefully enough and achievements are not always recorded.

22. Training for today's approach to learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs is satisfactory. Learners are given a diagnostic test on entry to their programme. If necessary, this is followed up with more specific tests. Support is readily available both at the training centre and at work, and learners' progress is monitored. However, no evaluation is made of how this support helps learners to achieve their framework. The staff who provide support are unqualified, although they have had some training.

### **Leadership and management**

23. **Training for today has taken effective action to remedy the weaknesses identified at the original inspection.** Some areas of weakness have been turned into strengths, and retention rates have shown a significant improvement.

24. **Staff performance is very carefully monitored.** Clear targets are set and reviewed

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fortnightly. Bonus payments depend on the achievement of targets.

25. **Internal and external communications are good.** The structure of the company is clear as is the communication policy. There are regular meetings at all levels and good practice is shared. The company involves employers well and is a member of providers' networks. It has good links with local schools.

26. **Careful attention is paid to staff training.** There is a comprehensive staff handbook and good initial support for new members of staff. Training needs are quickly identified and met.

27. **Although the business plan is clear, some of the targets set are not specific.** The development plan is not linked to the business plan so it is not clear how the objectives in the business plan are to be met. The management team does not monitor progress towards the objectives. Staff involvement in, and awareness of, the business plan are poor.

28. **The formal staff appraisal process has lapsed and no appraisals have taken place since May 2002.** There are no reviews and long-term goals are not set for individuals.

29. **Equality of opportunity is promoted well with learners.** The policy is clear and comprehensive. Learners have a good induction, and most understand their rights and responsibilities well. Understanding is checked frequently using reviews and questionnaires.

30. **There has been slow progress in dealing with the weaknesses in equality of opportunity identified at the original inspection.** Half of the staff have not had awareness training. There is insufficient marketing of training to under-represented group. Targets set in the equal opportunities strategy are not measurable.

31. **The internal verification system is comprehensive and effective.** The computerised sampling plan enables the co-ordinators to monitor the process systematically.

32. **The self-assessment process is effective and staff are fully involved.** A detailed development plan is drawn up alongside the self-assessment report. Inspectors identified most of the same strengths and weaknesses as those in the report.

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

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Strengths**

- successful action to remedy weaknesses identified at the original inspection
- very close performance management of training staff
- good internal and external communication

- careful attention to staff training needs
- good promotion of equal opportunities with learners
- comprehensive internal verification
- effective self-assessment process

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient focus on business planning
- lapse in the formal appraisal of staff
- slow progress in dealing with some weaknesses in equal opportunities

## **Business administration, management & professional**

### **Strengths**

- good development of personal and work skills
- strong individual support for learners
- good liaison with employers

### **Weaknesses**

- late assessment and cross-referencing of key skills

## **Retailing, customer service & transportation**

### **Strengths**

- increased proportion of learners remaining in learning
- good achievement rates on NVQ programme
- good support for learners

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient involvement of employers in training

## **Hairdressing & beauty therapy**

### **Strengths**

- much higher proportion of learners remaining in learning
- good evidence in portfolios
- good teaching
- effective progress reviews
- good support for learners

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient range and number of clients
- inadequate additional on-the-job training for a few learners

## **Health, social care & public services**

### **Strengths**

- effective development of learners' skills
- good support for learners
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- high standard of assessment
- well-managed programme development

### **Weaknesses**

- restricted access to off-the-job training for many learners

## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- good personal development for learners
- innovative and supportive programme which meets individual needs
- effective use of IT to support learning
- good individual project work

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient evaluation of learning
- incomplete tracking and monitoring of learners' progress

## DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

### Grade 2

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

#### Strengths

- successful action to remedy weaknesses identified at the original inspection
- very close performance management of training staff
- good internal and external communication
- careful attention to staff training needs
- good promotion of equal opportunities with learners
- comprehensive internal verification
- effective self-assessment process

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on business planning
- lapse in the formal appraisal of staff
- slow progress in dealing with some weaknesses in equal opportunities

33. There has been very effective action to remedy the weaknesses identified at the original inspection. A comprehensive development plan was drawn up which has been carefully monitored by the operations director and programme managers. Most weaknesses have now been dealt with and some activities which were formerly weaknesses are now strengths. In particular, the retention strategy has succeeded in improving retention rates significantly. Key skills training and assessment, which was affecting framework completion, is now satisfactory. Good progress has been made and a key skills support team now provides support for individual learners and vocational staff. Key skills training is now well integrated with vocational areas. Pass rates in external tests have been good. Attendance at external tests is also good.

34. There is very close performance management of the training staff. Clear targets are set for retention rates, numbers of work placement visits and learners' progress reviews for individual staff. The operations director meets individual programme managers fortnightly to discuss the performance of their area of learning. The programme managers then meet their team members to review individual performance. Staff bonuses are based on the achievement of targets. This process was fully discussed and agreed with staff. The number of learners leaving programmes early has been significantly reduced.

35. Internal and external communications are good. There is a clear and well-understood organisational structure and communication policy. Regular meetings take

## TRAINING FOR TODAY REINSPECTION

place at all levels. Absent staff receive copies of minutes. At the original inspection, the management of the training processes was judged to be inadequate. Clear guidance is now given on procedures to be followed in training. Full staff meetings take place quarterly. A staff noticeboard conveys important information, and there is also a noticeboard for staff suggestions. Staff feel that the management team is approachable. The lack of formal opportunities to share good practice was a weakness at the original inspection, but good practice is now shared at team meetings, assessors' standardisation meetings and internal verifiers' meetings. Work-based assessors also attend meetings. Briefing booklets on NVQs have improved the understanding and involvement of employers. Training for today is a member of several providers' networks in Bolton and the Northwest. It has good links with local schools.

36. There is careful attention to staff training needs. New members of staff are given a comprehensive handbook which is fully discussed, and spend some time shadowing colleagues. There is good initial support. Training needs are quickly identified and readily met. The training plan and records of training show a wide range of formal and informal training. Members of staff are allocated a sum of money to spend on their own personal development.

37. Training for today's management information system is satisfactory. It provides a wide range of monthly reports for management and team meetings. Retention and achievement data are available at a programme and company level. However, reports on individual learners' progress are only available at unit level. Too few staff can use the management information system, and only one person is expert in its full use. A simple wallboard system is used by training staff to indicate learners' status and enable office staff to follow up learners at risk of leaving early.

38. Resources are adequate. Most staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Training rooms are suitable in size, bright and well maintained. There are sufficient computers connected to a reliable network. Handout and resource materials are appropriate. Consumable budgets are delegated to programme managers. The overall budget is monitored carefully by the managing director.

39. The company's approach to supporting the development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills is satisfactory. On entry, all learners take a diagnostic test to determine their ability. If necessary, this is followed up by more specific tests to identify particular problems. Support is readily available both at the training centre and at work. Individual's progress is monitored and assessed. However, there is no evaluation of how this support helps learners to achieve their modern apprenticeship framework. The staff who provide support have no formal qualifications in teaching basic skills, although they have had some training.

40. The business plan is clear and indicates the company's priorities. However, some of the targets, for example for achievement rates, are not specific. The business plan and strategic objectives only cover 2002-03. A clear development plan has been drawn up from the self-assessment report, but there are no clear links between this and the business plan, so it is not obvious how the company's objectives are to be met.

Management team meetings do not monitor progress towards these objectives. They do, however, look closely at a range of management information on the performance of vocational areas. Staff are not adequately involved in, or informed about, the business plan.

41. There has been a lapse in the formal appraisal of staff. No appraisals have taken place since May 2002. This was recognised as a weakness in the self-assessment report. Although short-term targets are set at fortnightly meetings with line managers, there is no opportunity to review and set long-term goals.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

42. Training for today has a clear equal opportunities policy, which covers most relevant legislation and refers to bullying and harassment. There is a code of behaviour, which also describes what constitutes harassment. The company has an equal opportunities strategy, which includes some targets and development aims. An equal opportunities co-ordinator is responsible for reporting on the learners' equal opportunities questionnaire to the full staff meeting.

43. Training for today promotes equal opportunities very well to the learners. Most learners in have a good understanding of equal opportunities. They are very aware of their rights and the complaints and appeals procedures. Learners are given a clear induction, supported by a well-written booklet, which covers the company's equal opportunities policy in sufficient detail and in accessible language. Learners fill in a quarterly equal opportunities questionnaire which reinforces the facts imparted at induction. The results are analysed and evaluated by the equal opportunities co-ordinator and followed up if necessary. In a recent analysis, learners on one programme gave very vague answers. This led to the tutor covering the information again and checking that learners understood fully. Learners' progress reviews, which are held every 12 weeks, also include a set of questions about the learners' experience in the workplace.

44. Since the original inspection, there has been slow progress in dealing with some weaknesses in equality of opportunity. The current policy does not make any reference to the 'Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000'. Over half the current staff have attended diversity awareness training. This proportion has not increased since the original inspection. There is insufficient marketing of training to under-represented groups. Advertising leaflets do not include images of learners from under-represented groups. The company has recently begun to set targets, using its equal opportunities strategy paper. The strategy includes areas for development, but does not provide clear, measurable objectives for them. A breakdown of equal opportunities data is given at the staff meeting, where it is a fixed agenda item. However, it is not clear how the information is used to promote better equal opportunities.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 2**

45. Quality assurance is the responsibility of the quality assurance manager and the operations director. The company has recently produced new quality assurance procedures which incorporate key aspects of the training process. A detailed booklet

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clearly spells out tutors' responsibilities in relation to the tasks identified. There is a thorough document control system. All key training documents are standardised across the organisation and are monitored by the quality assurance manager. The quality assurance manager audits a sample of forms to ensure that they are used correctly. Systematic observation takes place. Internal verifiers observe assessments, the quality assurance manager observes reviews carried out by programme managers, and tutors are observed teaching. Feedback from observations leads to improvements in practice. Learners evaluate their training every three months. Learners' and employers' views are collected and evaluated but do not always lead to action.

46. There is a comprehensive and effective internal verification system, which remedies a weakness identified by the original inspection in a number of areas of learning. A new internal verification co-ordinator has been appointed with direct responsibility for ensuring that internal verification processes are standardised, and for improving assessment. There is a new internal verification strategy. A computerised internal verification sampling plan is fully accessible to staff and allows the co-ordinator to systematically monitor the key processes. There is a monthly, minuted, internal verification meeting, which effectively records actions to be taken. Internal verifiers also have quarterly standardisation meetings. The external verifiers' report on the internal verification process is good. There are examples of the sharing of good practice arising from the new meeting structure. For example, a new form developed by one programme area is now in use across the company.

47. Training for today has maintained the effective self-assessment process which was acknowledged as a key strength in the last inspection. All staff attend a staff training day at a local conference centre. They identify strengths and weaknesses in their own occupational area and for leadership and management. These are then collated and further discussed by teams. They form the basis of a detailed development plan, which includes actions, identifies the person responsible and sets timescales. Staff feel closely involved in the report and the development plan. They have a very clear idea of the key weaknesses to be dealt with in their own area, and the main development issues for the organisation as a whole.



## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Business administration, management & professional

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	11	2

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

#### Strengths

- good development of personal and work skills
- strong individual support for learners
- good liaison with employers

#### Weaknesses

- late assessment and cross-referencing of key skills

#### Achievement and standards

48. Learners acquire good practical and personal skills. They comment favourably on the increase in their self-confidence, teamworking and interpersonal skills since starting the course. Most employers are pleased with the range of work that learners carry out to a good standard after a few months on the programme. Effective use is made of the learner's training log to record any training needs. Timely and appropriate training is given. For example, when an employer identified that a foundation modern apprentice who worked as a receptionist lacked good telephone skills and was dealing inappropriately with clients, the assessor provided a CD-ROM on telephone techniques for the learner.

49. There are signs that retention has improved significantly since the original inspection. Few learners have left the programme early. Although it is too early to make judgements on the achievement rate, most foundation modern apprentices are making satisfactory progress towards the completion of NVQ units and key skills training and are on track to achieve their framework. Some learners on level 1 NVQ programmes are making slow progress towards their NVQ, but good progress in literacy and numeracy. Learners' portfolios are good and contain diverse evidence from the workplace, reflecting their steady progress and attainment. Evidence is well organised and presented, and includes work products, photographs, witness testimonies and direct observation.

### **Quality of education and training**

50. Learners are encouraged and motivated by the strong individual support they receive from tutor/assessors. Staff are readily available by mobile telephone when learners have personal or work problems, and often make additional visits. Progress reviews are thorough and there is very effective short-term action-planning. Staff intervene with employers in cases of work overload or personality conflict and find alternative work placements if necessary. Learners with personal problems such as housing difficulties or debt are referred to specialist counsellors. Learners are given exit guidance on careers and further training.

51. Communication with employers is good. Assessors brief workplace supervisors fully on the requirements of the modern apprenticeship frameworks, and provide excellent leaflets about the programme and equality of opportunity. Employers are knowledgeable about their responsibilities towards learners. Most employers give learners a thorough induction to the workplace and offer good on-the-job training. They often supplement on-the-job coaching with specialist off-the-job training. There is good liaison between assessors and workplace supervisors to plan assessment and training. Workplace supervisors are fully involved in reviews of learners' progress.

52. Off-the job training is satisfactory. Training staff have a good understanding of learners' ability and take into account any additional learning needs. They provide clear explanations and use different approaches to help learners grasp new techniques. They provide excellent coaching on portfolio-building and have regular tutorials with learners to explore how they can generate evidence. Training sessions are usually well planned and involve the learners in practical activities which develop their skills in administration, and their numeracy and literacy. Since the original inspection, improvements have been made to learning resources. Learners are given handouts and question and answer sheets for background knowledge. Accommodation is appropriate, but there are no adjustable chairs for use with computers. Some room layouts inhibit group work. Foundation modern apprentices do not have sufficient access to published materials, although textbooks have just been ordered. Staff are generally experienced and qualified, and there is a good ratio of staff to learners.

53. There is an effective range of initial assessment methods, including diagnostic tests for numeracy and literacy, key skills, and dyslexia. Most learners' support needs are appropriately identified. Additional support is provided individually by specialist tutors or through numeracy and literacy workbooks, which are marked promptly by staff. The administration assessor has key skills qualifications and supports learners in the workplace. Key skills projects are not always set in a vocational context. Key skills evidence is not always cross-referenced and assessed until late in the programme. Although level 1 NVQ learners are making good progress in literacy and numeracy, this is seldom recorded in their progress review documents, although records are kept by the learning support tutor. Most learners pass the external tests at the first sitting.

54. Assessment practices are generally satisfactory. Learners are assessed using a diverse range of methods and given informative and constructive feedback. They are

visited in their workplace by a tutor/assessor every two weeks. At each visit a detailed assessment plan is devised, which the learner uses to prepare for the next assessment visit. Learners understand exactly what they are expected to do and by when, and are thoroughly prepared for their assessments. Assessment does not take place on every visit, and learners commented that they would like more frequent assessments. The tracking system to record learners' progress is very good and shows elements as well as units completed. Learners and assessors have a very clear idea of the progress they are making.

### **Leadership and management**

55. Since the original inspection, the team management has successfully corrected the weaknesses identified. There is a clear understanding and involvement of staff in self-assessment and development planning. The self-assessment report was broadly accurate. The team works well together. Communications are good and there is regular sharing of information at frequent meetings. Staff performance is reviewed fortnightly and prompt action is taken to deal with issues concerning learners. There is continuous forward planning to prepare staff to meet the demands of the new modern apprenticeship frameworks. Training delivery and progress reviews are monitored systematically.

56. The internal verification system has been revised and now meets awarding body guidelines. There is a comprehensive computerised sampling plan, which not only identifies which units and learners' portfolios need to be sampled, but also lists staff qualifications and frequency of assessors' observations. Staff are observed regularly and there is detailed feedback to the assessors on their performance. New assessors are monitored more frequently and are supported well using a mentoring system.

**Retailing, customer service & transportation**

**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	21	2

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

**Strengths**

- increased proportion of learners remaining in learning
- good achievement rates on NVQ programme
- good support for learners

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient involvement of employers in training

**Achievement and standards**

57. Since the original inspection, the proportion of learners remaining in learning has increased. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. All the learners recruited in 2002-03 are still on programme. Although the NVQ programme has had good retention rates in the past, for the foundation modern apprenticeship this represents a major upward trend. Staff changes have led to more frequent visits and increased support for learners. They are encouraged to continue their training and are progressing well towards their target qualifications.

58. There are good achievement rates on the NVQ programme. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Of the 18 learners who started in 2001-02, 12 have successfully achieved their qualification and four are still in learning. The learners are progressing well towards achieving their target qualifications. Learners are well motivated and produce good work.

**Quality of education and training**

59. All learners are supported well by their tutor/assessor. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. They are visited every two or three weeks by their assessor and are able to contact her at any time in between these visits. Additional visits are carried out if any learner shows signs of difficulty or if the employer is dissatisfied with aspects of their work. These additional visits can consist of discussions with the learner, extra coaching in specific activities, or reinforcement of work already set. One employer interviewed said that the additional support from the assessor had prevented their learner from leaving. The relationship between learners and the assessor is very good. Short-term targets are set to help learners progress with units. Clear documents outline the

tasks to be completed before the next visit. Although a lot of extra support is given, it is not well recorded. At the beginning of each programme, learners complete a job analysis that matches their job role with the proposed qualification and helps them to select optional units. This is referred to throughout the programme as roles change and learners develop. It forms part of the action-planning paperwork used to assess progress.

60. There is satisfactory assessment practice using a variety of methods. Learners are given feedback after assessments on how to improve their performance. All learners are aware of the appeals procedure and how to use it. Staff are well qualified and regularly update their industrial experience. Learners' portfolios are well organised and contain a good range of evidence. The internal verification system has been updated to make it easier to track learners' progress and quality assure the assessment process. Units and elements of the qualifications are signed off as they are achieved, and learners are motivated to compete their qualifications.

61. Learners' progress reviews are satisfactory. They are carried out every 12 weeks by the internal verifier and involve detailed discussions of the learner's progress and welfare. Learners and employers value the reviews, which give a clear picture of the achievements to date, and outline further work to be completed. Both are given the opportunity to discuss good and bad points about the training. The review record sheet provides satisfactory information. It is referred to at assessment visits and the next review, and links well with short- and long-term action-planning.

62. Key skills training and assessment have improved since the last inspection. Learners complete a diagnostic test at the start of the programme to determine the appropriate level of key skills for their ability. Support is offered to ensure these levels are adequate for the modern apprenticeship framework requirements. Documents have been developed that link closely to the customer service standards, and evidence is gathered alongside that for the NVQ. Key skills training is not yet fully integrated with vocational training, but the steps taken since the original inspection have provided a sound base from which to build.

63. Employers are not sufficiently involved in training. Action has been taken to try and involve employers more but this has not yet succeeded. A work log is being piloted for learners to identify training needs with their employers and then explore ways of meeting them, but few employers have made good use of them. Learners would like more involvement from their employers to stop the NVQ being perceived as separate from the job role. Some learners are not given time at work to gather evidence. In some cases, learners are unable to gather valuable evidence in the workplace because of the lack of involvement by their employer.

### **Leadership and management**

64. Leadership and management in this area of learning are good. Regular management meetings ensure staff are kept up to date with performance issues and set clear targets. Targets are discussed at fortnightly meetings with the operations director, and achievement of targets is linked to pay. Assessors have responded well to the bonus

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scheme. The retention rates have improved. New systems have been developed during the reinspection period and the development plan clearly shows how these will be implemented. There is insufficient depth to the actions however, to ensure their long-term effects. There is little focus on the learner and no strategic overview linking the actions to the company's business plan. Staff are enthusiastic about the self-assessment and development planning processes, and are fully committed to improving the provision. Learners have an adequate awareness of equal opportunities.

## Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	120	2

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

### Strengths

- much higher proportion of learners remaining in learning
- good evidence in portfolios
- good teaching
- effective progress reviews
- good support for learners

### Weaknesses

- insufficient range and number of clients
- inadequate additional on-the-job training for a few learners

### Achievement and standards

65. At the original inspection, the retention rate was identified as a weakness. There has been a significant improvement in the proportion of modern apprentices remaining in learning. The retention rate for foundation modern apprentices increased in 2001-02 to 71 per cent, and 87 per cent of foundation modern apprentices recruited in 2002-03 have remained on their programmes. The retention rate for advanced modern apprentices was 60 per cent in 2001-02, and 67 per cent of those recruited in 2002-03 are still in learning

66. Learners' portfolios of evidence are good. Learners take pride in and responsibility for them, and they are clearly presented and well indexed. They contain well-presented assignment work, and in many instances this has originality of style. Some portfolios contain good photographic evidence of the learner's work. Learners are encouraged to use the company's digital camera to take photographs which demonstrate their skills. The evidence shows that learners have carried out a wide range of treatments on clients. Assignments are well written with constructive written feedback from the trainers. Portfolio evidence indicates that many learners may achieve their NVQ ahead of their target date. Key skills are being developed well and an increased number of learners are achieving key skills qualifications.

## Quality of education and training

67. Teaching is good. It effectively meets the needs of individual learners and the requirements of awarding bodies. Learners learn well in most classes and are interested and motivated by the enthusiasm of the trainers. Background knowledge and practical sessions are linked to enable learners to remember complex techniques and technical information. The trainers accommodate different learning styles and abilities. Questioning is used well to test learners' essential knowledge and understanding. Learners are fully engaged during the training sessions, and are knowledgeable about the subject. Learners' practical skills are at a level appropriate to the stage of their learning.

68. Learners' progress is reviewed every 12 weeks in the workplace. The learner, the employer and the trainer all contribute to the review process and set clear targets for NVQ unit achievement. A detailed record is made of the review and learners now receive a copy of this. The review process also identifies the distance travelled by the learner since the previous review. Assessors make additional visits to the workplace, and set assessment targets which feed into the quarterly review.

69. Learners are well supported. They are visited in their workplaces at least once every four weeks. Their progress is monitored during these visits, and any problems or issues are noted and discussed at staff meetings. The original inspection identified insufficient opportunities for assessment in the workplace as a weakness. This has been dealt with by offering assessment on demand. Learners are given the trainers' mobile phone numbers for out-of-hours contact to arrange assessments. Learners appreciate the additional support offered, and are very complimentary about the help they get. There is good pastoral support, and practical solutions are offered to learners with personal problems. This was a strength at the original inspection and has been developed further. Additional numeracy and literacy support needs are identified at an early stage, and support is readily available at the training centre or from basic skills staff who visit the workplace.

70. The hairdressing training salons at both the centres are well resourced and equipped. There is a broad range of commercial products available for learners to use. However, at the Prestwich training salons, the range and number of hairdressing clients is inadequate to cover the requirements of the NVQ and promote a realistic working environment. Learners have to work on practise blocks or other learners. This reduces the practise time available for the learner acting as the model. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report.

71. Many of the work-placement salons offer learners designated training days or training evenings, in addition to their day-to-day salon work. However, in some salons there is no planned training, and training only takes place if time allows. This disadvantages learners.



72. The hairdressing programme is well managed and staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. There has been some significant improvement since the original inspection. Staff have played an active role improving the quality of learning. This has had positive results, for example by improving retention rates. The internal verification system has been evaluated and re-designed. The new computerised system supports a thorough quality assurance procedure. The system informs internal verifiers of due dates for sampling direct observations or portfolios, and of any non-compliance since the last verification check. The staff were all involved in developing the new system, and in sharing good practice with other sectors. The self-assessment report for this area of learning is accurate and involved all staff.

**Health, social care & public services**

**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	69	2

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

**Strengths**

- effective development of learners’ skills
- good support for learners
- good monitoring of learners’ progress
- high standard of assessment
- well-managed programme development

**Weaknesses**

- restricted access to off-the-job training for many learners

**Achievement and standards**

73. The proportion of learners leaving their programmes early has improved since the original inspection. Ninety-seven per cent of learners recruited in 2002-03 are still in learning. Achievement rates for NVQs and key skills qualifications have improved. Many of the learners who have started programmes since the original inspection are achieving NVQ units in line with their targets. Only a few are making slow progress. Learners develop new skills and increased confidence in their work as a result of their training, particularly in the area of communication. Many learners who start their programmes lacking in confidence and self-esteem become competent workers with a good understanding of their role. As a result, learners are able to take responsibility for new tasks and work with less supervision. They are able to apply skills and knowledge in the workplace that they have gained from off-the-job training. Care learners may also take a level 2 NVQ in customer care.

**Quality of education and training**

74. There is good support for learners and this is highly valued by the learners and their employers. Assessors visit learners every two weeks in their workplace and more frequently when required. Assessors give learners their mobile phone numbers for easy access if they need support or guidance. Additional visits are arranged for pregnant learners to help them complete units before taking maternity leave. Learners who are unable to attend the training centre receive individual tuition in the workplace. Learners with additional learning needs in numeracy and literacy benefit from individual support provided by assessors and key skills tutors.

75. There is good monitoring of learners' progress. Progress reviews take place monthly in the workplace. Learners' achievements are recorded and celebrated, and new, clear targets are set. Learners participate fully in the reviews. They develop a good understanding of their programmes, their progress and achievement, and the work still to be done. Employers and supervisors contribute to the review process and are fully aware of learners' progress. Learners' progress is also monitored at the monthly meetings of the care team and actions are agreed to deal with any problems. The programme manager monitors the retention and achievement rate of each trainer/assessors' learners.

76. Training for today's assessment practice is good. Assessors work with learners to develop clear assessment plans. As a result, learners understand what the standards mean, how they relate to their work and how their evidence will meet the standards. Before the assessment, assessors question learners to check their understanding of key aspects of the standards. This ensures that learners take responsibility for their assessment and award. Assessment is thorough and is linked to all the relevant units of the NVQ and key skills. Learners receive detailed and accurate verbal and written feedback following assessment. Assessors praise learners' achievements and use constructive criticism if the learner needs to improve their practice to meet the standards. The timing of assessments is flexible to meet learners' needs and shift patterns. Portfolios of evidence are set out clearly and used as an ongoing reference for learners. Portfolios also contain copies of the learners' individual learning plans (ILPs), review documents and equal opportunities monitoring forms. Internal verification procedures are thorough and accurately capture the quality of assessment. Learners do not receive certificates for individual units completed unless they leave the programme early.

77. The training provided is satisfactory. Learners plan their attendance at off-the-job training sessions with their assessor, according to their needs and progress on their programme. Learners are given an NVQ workbook, and handouts on the key aspects of care work including equal opportunities and the protection of clients. Learners also gain background knowledge from workplace materials and from senior staff. Resources are satisfactory. Staff hold relevant occupational qualifications and assessors' and verifiers' awards. They have also taken key skills awards themselves. There is a care training room at the Bolton training centre which is equipped with a hoist, bed and wheelchair. All learners complete a quarterly equal opportunities questionnaire to check their understanding and reinforce the importance of equal opportunities. The same questionnaire is used every time, and weak answers are not always challenged. Learners' awareness of appeals and complaints procedures is good and is regularly reinforced at reviews.

78. Most employers do not allow learners to attend off-the-job training during work time. They attend in their own time in addition to their full-time working hours. In most care homes, duty rotas do not take account of the days when learners are due to attend the training centre. Many learners have to negotiate exchanging shifts to be able to attend their training. For some learners, this creates a barrier to making better progress

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and achieving full awards, particularly for those with young children. Some learners choose to come in to work in their own time to carry out part of their programme as they feel under less pressure than when they are on duty. Training for today has recognised this issue and has taken steps to encourage employers to permit learners to attend training during work time. Staff notify all employers of the dates of training courses, assessors reinforce the importance of off-the-job training to employers during their visits, and a charging policy has been introduced for employers who continually cancel assessment appointments. Training for today is also researching possible funding for employers to pay for the cost of replacing learners attending training.

### **Leadership and management**

79. The development of the care programme has been managed well. Since the original inspection, extensive progress has been made towards remedying the weaknesses identified and carrying out improvements. Initial assessment of all learners' key skills levels has been introduced to accurately identify learners' needs for key skills support. Assessment of key skills has been integrated with the assessment of NVQ units. The key skills logbook for care learners has been improved and is used to cross-reference evidence.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Life Skills	14	2

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

**Strengths**

- good personal development for learners
- innovative and supportive programme which meets individual needs
- effective use of IT to support learning
- good individual project work

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient evaluation of learning
- incomplete tracking and monitoring of learners' progress

**Achievement and standards**

80. For the past three years, retention rates on this programme have been satisfactory. Sixty-four per cent of learners recruited in 2002-03 are still in learning. The achievement rate is also satisfactory. There is significant progress in learners' development of skills in communication, IT, and independent living, and in their basic skills and wider key skills. Learners with complex needs demonstrate good commitment to the programme and the attendance rate is generally good. Learners are given good individual support to deal with problems, and to negotiate appropriate learning goals with their tutor. Problems with punctuality are consistently followed up by staff and there are effective links with Connexions personal advisers to support the learners. The work in learners' portfolios is generally good, but they are not always clear about the specific skills they are developing or how these can help them prepare for further education, training or employment.

**Quality of education and training**

81. The Life Skills programme is innovative and stimulating for learners. Individual needs are carefully considered when planning the programme content. Tutors regularly adjust the content in response to individual needs. There are effective links with external agencies which create opportunities for learning in a non-threatening environment. The new breakfast club has given learners the opportunity to further develop their independent living skills while promoting a healthy lifestyle. Learners are able to prepare themselves for employment through a range of work tasters. There are many opportunities to develop good personal and social skills through a wide range of creative activities. Learners wrote and recorded a song about teenage pregnancy. Tutors are

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skilled at helping learners to develop their communication and listening skills. They show a good understanding of learners' problems and offer good practical guidance or referral to appropriate agencies. They support learners in developing essential skills such as timekeeping and working with others, as well as increasing their confidence and motivation. Regular, effective communication takes place between staff at Training for today and Connexions.

82. There is effective use of IT to support learning. Learners have constant access to a good range of computers and appropriate software in their base room. Learners are able to use the Internet to research jobs as well as to obtain information to support their project work. The work produced is of a high standard. Learners demonstrate good word processing skills and present work in a professional manner. They produce good letters of application as a result of jobsearch, and well-designed curriculum vitae. Learners have successfully extended their IT skills by producing a magazine which is sold to other Training for today learners. They produce reports or use graphics to illustrate topics. They have also acquired IT skills by producing a video and learning how music is digitally recorded and produced.

83. Learners produce good individual project work. They are encouraged to develop their own learning by selecting a project that is of interest to them. They are very proud of their achievements and work enthusiastically, demonstrating good research skills. They improve their basic skills and take great care in the presentation of their work. Some pregnant learners have produced projects of a very high standard on pregnancy and child development, and use their work as a reference to increase their knowledge of parenting.

84. Training for today's resources and learning materials are satisfactory. Most staff have appropriate qualifications and are highly experienced in working with young people with complex needs. They use a good range of resources and learning materials to support activities. Accommodation in both base rooms is satisfactory, with appropriate space, lighting and facilities. There are suitable facilities on both sites for learners to practise cookery by preparing meals and snacks for the group.

85. Initial assessment is satisfactory. It is computer-based, enabling learners to see the results of assessments in literacy and numeracy immediately. Learners know what their results are, but the results are not always used successfully to plan an appropriate individual learning programme.

86. There is insufficient evaluation of what learners have learned in order to plan the future development of their skills. Tutors give good verbal feedback throughout training sessions, but there is little marked work in learners' portfolios or comments on how well they have completed tasks or how they can improve their skills. Learners are encouraged to evaluate their own learning but this is not recorded fully for future reference. Learners are often unsure how successful they have been in achieving specific skills. Learners who complete key skills work packs do not get immediate feedback on their work.

87. There is incomplete tracking and monitoring of learners' progress. Tutors draw up general individual learning plans but learners' needs are not sufficiently identified. Short-term targets for small steps of achievement are not set. Learning diaries have recently been introduced for learners to identify their weekly learning targets, but the targets are not sufficiently detailed to clearly show learners' achievement or progress. Targets set in progress reviews are too vague, and timescales for achievement are not clear. Learners are unable to remember whether targets have been discussed, and are often unsure of their progress and achievement.

### **Leadership and management**

88. Day-to-day aspects of the programme are well managed. One tutor at each site is responsible for the delivery of the programme. The tutors are very knowledgeable about learners' needs. The programmes are carefully designed to meet individual learners' needs. Tutors liaise successfully with external agencies and services to ensure that learners receive appropriate levels of guidance and support.

89. Individual tutors meet their manager regularly to discuss the programme and each learner's progress. They evaluate the programme content continuously and negotiate any changes that are required to meet learners' needs. The programme manager supports the staff in the development of the programme and endorses a wide range of activities and specialist staff to support the learning. However, tutors have little opportunity to share good practice in a formal setting. They rely on informal meetings to discuss learners' requirements and effective methods of dealing with specific issues. Staff are aware of the improvements needed to the monitoring of learners' progress. They have made some improvements in the recording of learners' needs on individual learning plans, but there is still no clear strategy for the overall co-ordination of this aspect of the programme.

90. The self-assessment process involved all staff and accurately reflects the strengths found at the inspection. Although the weaknesses were not identified in the report, Training for today has recognised where the problems are.