

REINSPECTION REPORT

Michael John Training Reinspection

24 June 2004



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.

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Michael John Training (MJT) is a privately owned business, established in 1983 and based at a training centre in Manchester city centre. It provides national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and modern apprenticeship programmes in hairdressing for young people funded by Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council. It also offers a recruitment and placement service for learners and employers, which includes arranging salon interviews and helping young people prepare for them.
2. MJT employs 22 staff. The managing director, also trains and assesses in hairdressing, is responsible for the strategic and operational management of the business, equal opportunities and staff training. The finance director is responsible for the management information systems, finance and accounting and business planning. The course director is responsible for health and safety, additional learning support, the provision of some background knowledge and line-manages the internal verifiers. Four managers are in charge of training, quality assurance, recruitment and retention, and management information systems respectively. There are 10 hairdressing staff directly involved with training, assessment and internal verification, both at the training school and at employers' salons. Three staff provide additional learning support for learners. Other staff have administration, recruitment and retention, dispensary and housekeeping positions.
3. MJT also offers a level 3 NVQ programme in customer service. There are only three learners on the programme, too few for it to be inspected.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

4. MJT has 167 learners on hairdressing programmes. Of these, 71 are advanced modern apprentices, 92 are foundation modern apprentices and four are on level 3 NVQ programmes. There are 155 women learners, six learners from minority ethnic groups, and 50 learners with additional learning needs and/or disabilities. Learners can join the programmes at any time during the year. The MJT training school provides training and assessment in background knowledge and practical skills for the hairdressing NVQs and technical certificates, and for key skills. Some learners receive additional learning support from MJT and specialist trainers. Most learners attend the training school for one day a week and are given further practical training by salon staff in their workplaces. MJT staff visit learners' salons to carry out practical assessments on demand, and review their progress approximately every 10 weeks. A few learners receive all their training and assessment in their workplaces from MJT staff. As well as the 10 MJT staff involved in teaching, assessment and internal verification activities, there are visiting demonstrators for practical skills and 14 salon-based assessors. MJT has learners working in 122 salons in and around Manchester.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	31
Number of learner interviews	85
Number of staff interviews	32
Number of employer interviews	35
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of partner/external agency interviews	1

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. At the previous inspection in March 2003, the quality of training in hairdressing was judged to be unsatisfactory. Leadership and management and arrangements for equal opportunities and quality assurance were satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were judged to be satisfactory or better.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	3
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	3

Hairdressing & beauty therapy	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. **Learners gain good practical skills which are enhanced by a range of activities.** Some learners achieve particularly high standards of hairdressing and participate successfully in local, regional and national competitions, sometimes featuring in hairdressing trade journals. Demonstrations by well-known local hairdressers and visiting specialists, technical training, and discussions with more experienced learners motivate learners and develop their self-confidence.

7. **Retention rates have significantly improved.** MJT identified the most likely time for learners to withdraw as being the first few months of the programme. It introduced changes, and that difficult period has successfully passed for the most recent intake. Data shows that almost all the learners who are retained achieve their qualification.

8. There is **insufficient recording of some learners' unit achievements.** This has been identified by internal verification, but has yet to be dealt with fully. Some learners' individual learning plans do not contain enough long-term targets or information about their prior and current achievements. Some learners do not complete NVQ assignments until late in their programmes

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
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	1	2	14	10	0	0	0	27
Total	1	2	14	10	0	0	0	27

9. **Training is good,** with regular use of innovative role-play in background knowledge sessions. This is topical, very memorable and much enjoyed by learners. The large studio at MJT's training school is an ideal venue and the space is used very effectively. Sessions are prepared thoroughly and executed well by skilled trainers who use a wide range of teaching styles.

10. **Practical training in the workplace is generally good,** with the better sessions relating the practical skills to NVQ knowledge and requirements. However, MJT does not formally plan the sessions, and in some there is insufficient assessment of learners' skills.

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11. **Key skills training sessions are good, with some outstanding teaching.** Sessions have clear objectives. Some are well integrated with the hairdressing training, while some have a deliberate focus on specific skills.

12. MJT's training school has **extensive accommodation** with salons on four floors. These include a colouring salon with extensive natural light, a large studio with a mirrored wall, a small barber's shop and a basement cutting studio. There is good access to ground floor facilities for people with limited mobility.

13. Learners' NVQ and key skills portfolios are generally satisfactory. MJT's background knowledge work-packs are satisfactory, but there are insufficient reference materials and some textbooks are rather dated.

14. **Staff work well together as a team.** They are very enthusiastic about hairdressing and maintain current industrial practice. They encourage learners to take part in extra-curricular hairdressing activities, such as competitions and photo-shoots. There is a good proportion of male learners and MJT's male staff are good role models.

15. **MJT provides good support for learners and employers.** The pastoral support for learners is particularly good. MJT supports employers well, ensuring that they are familiar with current legislation in equal opportunities and health and safety, and other relevant hairdressing and training requirements.

16. MJT provides **effective support for learners with additional learning needs and disabilities**, both at the training school and through links with other providers and organisations. Staff are very approachable, supportive and understanding of the wide range of social, behavioural and learning support needed by many of their learners.

17. There is **some ineffective use of monitoring documents.** MJT has wall charts which display learners' assessment records, but these do not identify when the time lapse between background knowledge and practical assessments is too great. The assessment monitoring sheets in the front of learners' portfolios are not being completed regularly or in enough detail. The new forms to monitor and record learners' salon training are not being used to help identify when they are ready for NVQ or key skills assessments.

Leadership and management

18. MJT's **good, established and integrated procedures for strategic business planning** clearly benefit its learners. The plans are prepared through consultation with staff and take account of the ideas of learners and employers, as well as responding to national and local priorities and targets. MJT uses realistic measures of historical, current and projected performance in its planning, and identifies performance indicators for success.

19. MJT clearly understands its own strengths and weaknesses. Managers acknowledge that the absence of key staff because of illness has had a significant impact on learners' experience. MJT has made good arrangements to develop staff's skills and provide a

larger pool of management expertise. In addition, staff numbers have increased since the previous inspection, and roles and responsibilities are being redefined. A key member of staff has now returned to MJT.

20. The **significant improvement in learners' retention rates** has been managed well and is clearly evident through thorough, regular and systematic analysis of data. Changes have been made to recruitment strategy; initial assessment and support have been improved; and the problems that were leading to learners leaving programmes early have been eradicated. Skilled use of a vast manual management information system provides MJT with useful reports to use in decision-making.

21. The recruitment and retention staff manage a good system of computerised salon records. They can find suitable work placements for prospective learners in response to their requests and needs. The staff help learners prepare for interviews by discussing different types of salons, finding out travel routes and times and by practising interview techniques and presentation skills.

22. MJT makes **extensive use of external networking to the benefit of learners**. Contacts have been established over many years. They include former learners who are frequently used to judge hairdressing competitions, provide exciting demonstrations, and work in MJT's salons as trainers and NVQ assessors. The organisation also has good contacts with other training providers in this country and abroad, and with many employers.

23. MJT makes **especially good use of visual communications**. There is extensive use of photographs, flow-charts, lists and tables in wall displays, newsletters, staff communications and policy and procedures manuals. MJT is good at celebrating learners' successes. There are photographic displays throughout the training school.

24. The training provided by MJT is **very effective in raising learners' awareness of equality issues**. Learners are introduced to the policy and procedures at induction, and this is followed up in more detail in later sessions, including during NVQ training. Innovative use of role-play emphasises the implications of equal opportunities in salons. There is regular reinforcement of equal opportunities at learners' progress reviews.

25. MJT staff work hard to provide **good support for a wide range of learners' needs**. Some MJT learners face considerable hurdles in their personal lives. As well as offering support directly, MJT has a range of contacts for specialist help and advice, including a professional counselling service. MJT is offering NVQ hairdressing training to some Entry to Employment (E2E) learners from another local provider, and an introductory hairdressing course to a group of disaffected learners from local schools. A learner who is now in prison has been enabled to continue her NVQ as MJT staff ensured that her completed work was passed on to the prison staff.

26. MJT has an appropriate range of policies and procedures in place to support equality of opportunity. The equal opportunities policy is clearly written, reviewed annually, and refers to all recent and relevant legislation. In addition, a disability

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statement gives helpful information about the training facilities and support available. There are clear procedures for grievances, bullying and harassment, and appeals, and learners' understanding is checked thoroughly using questionnaires. Improvements to training are made as appropriate.

27. MJT makes **effective use of data to monitor the recruitment and performance of different groups**, and to set targets for improvement. For example, targets have been set for the recruitment of men, learners from minority ethnic groups and learners with disabilities. Marketing and recruitment strategies are inclusive. MJT has placed advertisements for models and learners in the Asian press, and prints some marketing material in local community languages. This includes the displays on the training school's front doors.

28. MJT has taken a number of steps to promote employers' awareness of equality of opportunity. Information regularly appears in the organisation's newsletter, and there are training sessions to help them keep up to date with the most recent legislation. In addition, MJT carries out an annual survey of employers' salons, including a check on the accessibility of their buildings to people with mobility difficulties.

29. There is widespread use of a **good range of feedback mechanisms** to improve learning. These focus on learners' experiences of MJT and their recommendations for improvements. The results are analysed and compared by the quality manager to identify recurring issues. The new learners' focus group and session evaluations have given learners a good opportunity to discuss their experiences at MJT and suggest improvements. Feedback to learners is included in the newsletter and displayed on notice boards at the training school.

30. Annual staff appraisals and interim reviews include feedback from colleagues and learners, and if appropriate, records of training observations. Feedback from salon training observations is collated and displayed in the training school to disseminate good practice and alert learners and staff to areas of concern. Many recent observation grades awarded by inspectors were higher than those in previous reinspection visits and during the internal observations.

31. MJT has reviewed the findings of its self-assessment process at each stage of the reinspection. It has produced useful and informative progress reports outlining the improvements made. Improvements and progress are communicated well to staff, learners and employers using newsletters and wall displays. These stakeholders are all very supportive towards MJT.

32. The **quality assurance arrangements have not identified discrepancies in some learners' records**. For example, there are inconsistencies between their individual learning plans, progress review documents, assessment monitoring documents and awarding body assessment logbooks.

33. Learners' individual learning plans are audited, and this thorough process identifies non-completion. However, it does not assure the quality of the information. Learners'

progress reviews are audited for non-completion and graded for quality, but there is no process to identify the action required for improvement.

34. The internal verification system has been reviewed and some significant improvements have been made. Two new staff have been appointed as additional internal verifiers. Their duties including the internal verification of MJT's peripatetic and work-based assessors. Some standardisation training is now taking place. Internal verification is planned using learners' monitoring records. These only record NVQ assessment observations, and provide insufficient information for sampling.

35. The internal verification of portfolios is working more effectively for learners who started in 2003-04 and are working to the new awarding body standards. However, no internal verification of work for the technical certificates has been planned.

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

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good, clear strategic business planning
- well-managed, effective actions to improve retention rates
- extensive use of external networking
- good use of visual communications
- very good training in equality issues
- good support for a wide range of learners' needs
- widespread use of feedback

Weaknesses

- insufficient action to ensure that information on learners is recorded correctly
- new internal verification arrangements insufficiently established

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Strengths

- good practical skills enhanced by a wide range of activities
- good and improving standards of knowledge and practical training
- good range of salons and clients meeting learners' needs
- particularly good support for learners and employers

Weaknesses

- insufficient recording of some learners' unit achievements
- some ineffective use of documents to monitor learners' progress

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

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

Strengths

- good, clear strategic business planning
- well-managed, effective actions to improve retention rates
- extensive use of external networking
- good use of visual communications
- very good training in equality issues
- good support for a wide range of learners' needs
- widespread use of feedback

Weaknesses

- insufficient action to ensure that information on learners is recorded correctly
- new internal verification arrangements insufficiently established

36. The good, established and integrated procedures for strategic business planning have been maintained as a strength since the previous inspection, and continue to clearly benefit the learners. The organisation currently has a four-year strategic plan for 2002-06; and a three-year development plan for 2003-06; and annual business, recruitment, retention, staff training, equality and diversity, and self-assessment and development plans. The preparation of the plans involves consultation with MJT's staff, acknowledgement and recognition of the ideas of learners and employers, and a response to national and local priorities and targets. MJT uses realistic measures of historical, current and projected performance in its planning. It makes good use of performance indicators, such as learners' achievement and successes, business stability and growth, achievement of objectives, external agency reports and peace of mind and respect. Organisation targets are displayed in staff offices and used to record and monitor performance. MJT clearly understands its own strengths and weaknesses. It acknowledges the significant impact of key staff absence over recent months, and has made good arrangements to develop staff skills and provide a larger pool of management expertise. In addition, staff numbers have almost doubled since the previous inspection and roles and responsibilities are being redefined.

37. The significant improvement in retention rates has been managed well and is clearly evident through thorough, regular and systematic analysis of data. Since the previous inspection there have been changes to recruitment strategy and improvements to initial assessment and support. The proportion of early leavers has fallen significantly. There is extensive use of a vast but reliable manual management information system that

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provides MJT with useful reports to help management decision-making. A computerised system is being developed, and although there have been initial problems with this, they have not affected other developments as the manual system has been maintained. The recruitment and retention staff manage a good computerised system of salon records and are able to arrange interviews for prospective learners in response to their requests and needs. The staff help learners prepare for interviews by discussing different types of salons, finding out travel routes and times and by practising presentation skills and interview techniques. MJT organises useful days at the training school where prospective learners can find out about the programmes and join in hairdressing activities alongside existing learners.

38. MJT makes extensive use of external networking which benefits the learners. Contacts established over many years, including those with former learners, are frequently used to benefit learners. Some former learners are asked to judge hairdressing competitions, or give demonstrations, while others work in MJT's salons as trainers and NVQ assessors. MJT has made good use of contacts with a hairdressing training provider in France, arranging a visit by 40 students and staff in 2002, and benefiting from their help in implementing the technical certificate. MJT has recently arranged for its learners to use a local training provider's extensive computer facilities in Manchester city centre in return for MJT providing some of its E2E learners with hairdressing training. Local school students have attended MJT for weekly hairdressing training. Much to the delight of all concerned, this has had a significant improvement on their behaviour and career aspirations. To further widen participation, MJT now produces posters in many community languages to advertise its training.

39. MJT makes especially good use of visual communications. There is extensive use of photographs, flow-charts, lists and tables. Wall displays, newsletters to learners and employers, and internal communications in offices and in policy and procedures manuals make good use of these visual methods of presentation. MJT is good at celebrating learners' successes. There are extensive photographic displays throughout the training school, dating back over a number of years and illustrating the wide range of achievements in internal and external competitions, and at marketing and promotional events. Responses to learners' suggestions and feedback are displayed, and procedures such as the grievance/appeals process are illustrated by flow-charts. Staffroom and office walls are full of visual communications which are clearly being used, and which encourage staff communications. These include staff training calendars, and learners' assessment schedules and timetables.

40. Staff are appraised systematically once a year and have six-monthly reviews. New staff have a development plan prepared during their induction. All appraisals are carried out by the managing director. Only the managing director and the finance director do not have appraisals. All staff complete annual self-assessments. Staff training is planned to meet organisational needs and attendance at training events is good. The events include visits to MJT by technical and specialist trainers, and external training. Since the previous inspection, there has been much work to improve learning sessions. Inspectors' observation grades improved during the reinspection process. Staff training has also taken place in MJT's new observation process, the absence of which was identified as a

weakness at the previous inspection.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

41. The training provided by MJT is very effective in raising learners' awareness of equality issues. Learners are introduced to the policy and procedures at induction, and the induction is followed up in more detail in later sessions. Some reinforcement is included in the taught elements of NVQ units. Taught sessions help learners understand the legal framework for equality and its relevance to the workplace. They are presented in an enjoyable and effective way. For example, in one session, role-play was used in a particularly innovative way to relate equal opportunities to everyday salon situations. There is regular reinforcement of equal opportunities at progress reviews. In addition to training learners in aspects of equal opportunities practice, MJT plans to extend its training programme to include African-Caribbean hairdressing. The promotion and reinforcement of equality of opportunity was identified as a strength in MJT's November 2003 self-assessment report.

42. The organisation has worked hard through its network of contacts to extend its provision to learners from a wide range of backgrounds, and provides good support to help them succeed. Links with another local provider have led to MJT offering NVQ units in hairdressing to some E2E learners who may want to progress to further training. Through another link with a local project, the organisation has offered an introductory course in hairdressing to a group of disaffected learners from local schools. This is proving to be successful. Learners are producing good levels of written and practical work, their behaviour has improved significantly, and they have gained confidence. A learner who is now in prison has been allowed to continue with her qualification because of the determination of MJT's staff to pass on all completed work and liaise with prison staff. MJT also tries to improve learners' interpersonal skills and prepare them for interviews. All learners are given some training in interview techniques and curriculum vitae presentation, and are helped to arrange work placements with local salons. Where necessary, staff give learners additional individual coaching to help them prepare their applications and present themselves well at interview. This is particularly valuable in boosting the confidence of many young learners, some of whom face considerable hurdles in their personal lives. As well as offering support directly, MJT has a range of contacts for specialist help and advice where appropriate, including referral to a professional counselling service.

43. MJT has an appropriate range of policies and procedures to support equality of opportunity. The equal opportunities policy is clearly written, reviewed annually, and refers to all recent and relevant legislation. An additional disability statement gives helpful information about training facilities and support available. Clear grievance, bullying and harassment and appeals procedures are also in place. All these policies and procedures are effectively communicated to the learners at induction and through additional training sessions. Learners' understanding of the procedures is thoroughly checked using questionnaires, and improvements to training are introduced as a result.

44. Action-planning to promote equality of opportunity is managed well. This has

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helped to bring about significant improvement since the previous inspection. The action plan identifies a range of strategies for improvement. It is displayed on the staffroom wall, and updated by the managing director as actions are completed. The actions include staff training, and a range of strategies to recruit under-represented learners. The organisation has made effective use of consultants to support staff training and evaluate provision for learners with disabilities.

45. MJT makes effective use of data to monitor the recruitment and performance of different groups, and to set targets for improvement. For example, targets have been set for the recruitment of men, learners from minority ethnic groups, and learners with disabilities. Some progress has been made towards all these. Analysis of the performance of groups of learners reveals some differences, and although the data does not show any clear trends, MJT has a good understanding of the factors contributing to this. The use of data has improved since the previous inspection.

46. MJT's marketing and recruitment strategies are inclusive. The organisation has advertised for models and learners in the Asian press, and prints some marketing material in local community languages. This includes the displays on the training school's front doors.

47. The organisation has made satisfactory arrangements for learners with disabilities. Access to the training areas for people with restricted mobility is limited to the ground floor. However, MJT has contingency plans to provide all training on the ground floor if needed. A disability audit has been carried out and some alterations made in response to recommendations. Further improvements are planned. A survey carried out by MJT shows that 23 of the 122 salon premises used by the organisation have restricted access. Arrangements can be made to accommodate learners with restricted mobility in accessible salons.

48. MJT has taken a number of steps to promote employers' awareness of equality of opportunity. Staff check that salon managers are aware of the organisation's policy and that copies of their own or MJT's policy are displayed in their salons. Assessors ask learners about equal opportunities at progress reviews. MJT includes information about equality of opportunity in a regular newsletter sent to employers, and has provided training sessions to help keep them up to date with the most recent legislation. In addition, the organisation carries out an annual survey of employers' salons. This includes a check on the accessibility of buildings.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

49. At the previous inspection, the monitoring of quality assurance processes was a weakness. This is no longer the case. MJT's quality assurance manager has reviewed the organisation's quality assurance arrangements and implemented a number of improvements. The comprehensive quality assurance manual is well organised and makes good use of flow-charts to help staff understand the procedures. Documents are controlled, logically indexed and easily available to all staff. There is a thorough, regular and systematic internal audit of procedures, with clear recording of compliance, actions

required and action taken.

50. There is widespread use of a good range of feedback mechanisms to improve learning. Learners complete questionnaires during their first few months on programme, after eight to 12 months, and again on leaving. These focus on learners' experiences of MJT and their recommendations for improvement. The results are analysed by the quality assurance manager and compared to identify any recurring issues. The new learners' focus group and session evaluations have proven effective in giving learners opportunities to discuss their experiences and suggest improvements. There is a box on MJT salon's reception desk for further feedback. Learners' feedback is passed on to staff at weekly meetings, and areas of dissatisfaction are acted upon. Feedback to learners is included in the newsletter and displayed on notice boards at the training school. Good use of feedback from learners was a strength at the previous inspection.

51. Annual staff appraisals and interim reviews include feedback from colleagues and learners, and records of training observations. Feedback from salon training observations is collated and displayed in the training school to share good practice and alert learners and staff to areas of concern. In October 2003, MJT introduced forms for observations and these have already been reviewed and improved. Grades and useful evaluative comments are recorded and feedback is given to staff. Observations made during the reinspection process confirm that the quality of MJT's training is improving. Recent grades given by inspectors were often higher than those given at earlier reinspection visits and during internal observations. The observation process is now satisfactory, having been identified as a weakness at the previous inspection.

52. MJT has reviewed its self-assessment at each stage of the reinspection process and produced informative and useful progress reports outlining improvements. Improvements and progress are communicated well to staff, learners and employers, all of whom are very supportive towards MJT. The most recent self-assessment review identifies most of the same strengths and weaknesses as the inspectors.

53. The quality assurance system has not identified discrepancies in the paperwork relating to some learners. Details of learners' targets, progress and achievements differ between their individual learning plans, progress review documents, assessment monitoring documents and awarding body logbooks. There are no crosschecks to ensure that the content is accurate.

54. MJT began to audit learners' individual learning plans after the previous inspection. It now uses a thorough process that identifies non-completion, but does not quality assure the appropriateness and usefulness of the information. The organisation has recently begun to audit learners' review documents. While this process both audits non-completion and grades the quality of the review, it does not identify the action required for improvement.

55. The internal verification system has been reviewed since the previous inspection and some significant improvements have been made, including the appointment of two new staff as additional internal verifiers. The work of MJT's peripatetic and work-based

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assessors is now being internally verified and some standardisation training is taking place. MJT now has an audit approach to checking the completion of unit requirements, and has introduced a three-month sampling plan to replace the previous two-year plan. However, the records used to create sampling plans only include NVQ assessment observations, so give insufficient information. Internal verification of portfolios is working more effectively for the learners who started in 2003-04 and are working to the new awarding body standards. Some assessment inconsistencies are not being identified by internal verification and assessment. For example, some learners' portfolios contain incomplete assessments, yet NVQ elements have been signed by assessors as complete. No internal verification is planned for the assessment of technical certificates. Internal verification records do not include details of assessors' continuous professional development.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	167	2

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

Strengths

- good practical skills enhanced by a wide range of activities
- good and improving standards of knowledge and practical training
- good range of salons and clients meeting learners' needs
- particularly good support for learners and employers

Weaknesses

- insufficient recording of some learners' unit achievements
- some ineffective use of documents to monitor learners' progress

Achievement and standards

56. Learners have good practical skills which are enhanced by a range of activities. They use creative and advanced colouring techniques involving combinations of colour to create a range of effects. They learn cutting techniques that go beyond NVQ requirements. Some learners achieve particularly high standards of hairdressing and this was identified as a strength at the previous inspection. Learners have good success rates in MJT, local, regional and national competitions, and have appeared in hairdressing trade journals. Demonstrations by well-known local hairdressers and visiting specialists, technical training and the use of previous and more experienced learners motivate learners and develop their self-confidence.

57. Retention rates were a weakness at the previous inspection and have significantly improved. MJT identified that most early leavers withdrew from the programme within the first few months. They introduced changes and for the current intake that difficult period has successfully passed and retention has improved. The retention rate for foundation modern apprentices has improved from 30 per cent in 2001-02, to 74 per cent for 2003-04 starters. For the same dates, the rates for advanced modern apprentices have improved from 47 per cent to 85 per cent. The unsatisfactory achievement figures for modern apprentices are showing an improving trend, in line with improvements to retention rates. Almost all the learners who are retained successfully achieve their qualification.

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58. There is insufficient recording of some learners' unit achievements. Learners' assessment logbooks are not systematically completed and there are inconsistencies in the NVQ unit records. MJT's internal verification has identified these issues, but as yet they have not been fully dealt with. Some learners' individual learning plans contain too few long-term targets and not enough information about their prior and current achievements. Ineffective completion of individual learning plans was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. Some learners do not complete NVQ assignments until late in their programmes.

Quality of education and training

59. The training at MJT is good. Staff regularly use innovative role-play in background knowledge sessions. These are topical, very memorable and much enjoyed by learners. Sessions are thoroughly prepared and well executed by skilled trainers who use a wide range of teaching styles. They are well supported by visual aids and hand-outs and their relevance to NVQs and key skills is emphasised. The sessions are evaluated effectively by learners and staff. Observation grades have improved during the reinspection process. Hairdressing background knowledge, practical skills and key skills sessions have good ratios of staff to learners. Practical training in the workplace is generally good, with the better sessions relating the practical skills to NVQ knowledge and requirements. However, there is no formal planning for MJT's practical sessions, and in some there is insufficient assessment of learners' skills.

60. Key skills sessions are good, with some outstanding teaching. Sessions have clear objectives. Some are well integrated with hairdressing training, while others focus on specific skills. For example, one group of learners were obviously delighted at being able to grasp numerical concepts that had been explained in a clear and relevant manner by a skilled MJT trainer. Good integration of key skills with vocational training was identified as a strength at the previous inspection.

61. MJT has a good range of workplace salons and clients who meet the needs of individual learners. The organisation has a database which enables it to find salons that fulfil learners' individual requirements for location, size and style. Many employers have been using MJT for many years, while others have contacted MJT for the first time because of its reputation.

62. The MJT training school has extensive accommodation with salons on four floors, including a colouring salon with good natural light, a large studio with a mirrored wall, a small barber's shop and a basement cutting studio. There is good access to the ground floor facilities for people with limited mobility. MJT is situated in the city centre, close to transport links, and has an abundance of all sorts of clients to fulfil NVQ requirements. Practical salon sessions have high ratios of staff to learners. There are 11 work-based assessors in the 122 salons used by MJT learners.

63. Learners' NVQ and key skills portfolios are generally satisfactory. MJT's background knowledge work-packs are satisfactory, but there are insufficient reference materials and

some textbooks are rather dated.

64. MJT provides good support for learners and employers. There is particularly good pastoral support for learners. The staff are very approachable, supportive and understanding of the wide range of social, behavioural and learning support needed by many of their learners. The MJT training school is a haven for many learners. They benefit significantly from a friendly, supportive learning environment that enables them to develop their skills with confidence. Learners who miss sessions have extra individual tuition in the workplace and at the training school.

65. There is appropriate initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy during induction. MJT provides effective support for learners with additional learning needs and disabilities, both at the training school and through links with other providers and organisations. It offers flexible training programmes that meet the needs of learners and employers. The organisation supports employers well, ensuring that they are familiar with current legislation on equal opportunities and health and safety, and up to date with other hairdressing and training requirements.

66. There is some ineffective use of monitoring documents. MJT has wall charts which display learners' progress, but they do not identify when assessments are overdue. The charts are ticked when an assessment takes place, but do not record dates or staff signatures, so it is not possible to monitor the timing, pace or sequence of completed assessments. This information is in the learners' logbooks, but delays are not being picked up by the assessment or internal verification processes. In addition the assessment monitoring sheets in the front of learners' portfolios are not being completed regularly and fully. The new forms to monitor and record learners' workplace training are not being used effectively to encourage salon training activities which relate to the modern apprenticeship requirements, or to identify when learners are ready for NVQ or key skills assessments.

Leadership and management

67. MJT's staff work well together as a team and are very enthusiastic about hairdressing. They maintain current industrial practice and encourage learners to take part in extra-curricular hairdressing activities, such as competitions and photo-shoots. There are regular and well-attended meetings for staff, many of whom work part time. At the end of each training day there is a staff debriefing and evaluation at the training centre. There is a good proportion of men among the learners and good role models among MJT's male staff. MJT's staff have adapted well to supporting the increasing numbers of learners with additional social, behavioural and learning needs. Staff training events are well attended and equality of opportunity is actively promoted. The staff training and development wall charts in the office are kept up to date.

68. There has been recent restructuring of the hairdressing team's roles, and some new staff have been appointed. Job specifications are currently being reviewed. MJT has recently implemented a new internal verification system and appointed two new internal

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verifiers, but the new arrangements are not yet sufficiently effective.

69. The MJT hairdressing team has been fully involved throughout the reinspection process, reviewing progress at each stage. The latest review of the self-assessment report identifies most of the same strengths and weaknesses as were identified during the final reinspection visit.