

INSPECTION REPORT

Catten College

23 October 2003



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based 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
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Overall judgement

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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

INSPECTION REPORT

Catten College

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Catten College was established in July 1983 as a limited company to provide work-based learning for young people in Essex. Catten College trains foundation and advanced modern apprentices and national vocational qualification (NVO) learners in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in health, social care and public services. Private contracts form approximately 16 per cent of the provision. In September 2002, Catten College was awarded a contract for Profit from Learning, an employer training pilot to train care industry staff to NVO at level 2. Learners must be over 19 to qualify for this programme but there is no upper age limit. At the time of the inspection, this contract had been renewed and was beginning its second year.
2. The college was restructured at the end of 2002. The senior management team now consists of a managing director and two senior managers. The managing director is responsible for health and safety and human resources. One of the senior managers is responsible for equality and diversity issues, the other looks after administrative and financial procedures. A team of six full-time staff is responsible for specific areas of the company, such as quality assurance and programme development. There are 13 part-time staff. Most of the work placements are with small, independent businesses and are based in Colchester, Tendring and surrounding areas.
3. Catten College's training provision is funded through Essex Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The Colchester area, from where the college recruits most of its learners, has a minority ethnic representation of 3.8 per cent, according to the 2001 census, compared with around 9 per cent for England as a whole. The proportion of school leavers in Essex achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above is slightly above the national average. In 2001, it was 54.7 per cent compared with 51.6 per cent for England as a whole.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

4. There are 42 learners on hairdressing programmes. Of these, 14 are advanced modern apprentices and 28 are foundation modern apprentices. Thirty-two learners are employed while 10 are unemployed and have job placements in hairdressing salons in the Colchester area. Learners attend Catten College's training centre in Colchester for off-the-job training one day each week and the rest of their training is provided on-the-job in the workplace.

Health, social care & public services

5. There are 102 learners on programmes leading to qualifications in care. Twelve are on advanced modern apprenticeships, 23 are on foundation modern apprenticeships and 67 learners are working towards an NVQ at level 2. Of these, 62 are funded by the Profit from Learning initiative, leading to an NVQ at level 2. These learners receive all their training in the workplace. All other learners receive training on and off the job and attend training at the provider's premises. Learners are assessed in the workplace, either by assessors from Catten College or by work-based assessors. All learners are employed in a range of residential care homes for the elderly or people with learning disabilities, care homes for people with physical disabilities and nursing homes.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learner interviews	54
Number of staff interviews	29
Number of employer interviews	17
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	15

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, leadership and management at Catten College is satisfactory. Its approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory and its quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The quality of work-based learning in hairdressing and beauty therapy is good, and in health, social care and public services, is satisfactory.

GRADES

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	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Health, social care & public services	3
Contributory grades:	
Other government-funded provision	3
Work-based learning for young people	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

7. Retention rates on hairdressing programmes are satisfactory and there is an improving trend in achievement rates on the foundation modern apprenticeship programme. Of the 17 learners who started the programme in 2001, 71 per cent have been retained and 59 per cent of these have successfully completed the framework.

8. **Achievement rates on foundation modern apprenticeships in health, social care and public services are poor.** Only 10 per cent of learners who started the programme in 2001 achieved their qualification and 25 per cent are still in learning.

9. Retention and achievement rates on NVQ programmes in health, public services and social care were very poor for the period 1999-2001, but have improved significantly in 2002. Sixty-two of the 67 current learners are on the Profit from Learning scheme. Of the 111 learners who started the programme, 27 per cent have achieved the qualification, 19 per cent are awaiting verification and a further 10 per cent have only one or two units to complete.

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	0	4	4	0	0	0	9
Health, social care & public services	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	1	0	4	5	0	0	0	10

10. **On- and off-the-job training in hairdressing is good.** Learners enjoy the sessions and trainers make good use of techniques which involve learners and challenge their practical skills. All learning sessions observed were satisfactory or better.

11. **Hairdressing work placements are good.** All placements are in prime locations and

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have good, up-to-date equipment. The latest products are used, and there is a varied and busy schedule of clients. Employers have good relationships with Catten College. They feel part of the training team and are well informed.

12. There are some insufficient practical resources in Catten College's training centre for learners in hairdressing. Some learners do not have a workstation in practical sessions. Classrooms are small but satisfactory and staff have adequate qualifications and experience to support learners in their NVQ and in key skills.

13. **There has been a good response to the needs of adult learners over the age of 19 in health, social care and public services.** The college has worked hard to identify and meet the needs of the sector and the requirement for adult learners to gain a qualification at level 2. Learners of all ages are proud of their achievements and have gained confidence and self-esteem.

14. **All learners receive good vocational and pastoral support.** Learners are encouraged to contact their assessors with any personal or training needs. Learners are effectively encouraged to stay on programme even when they experience difficulties.

15. Assessment is satisfactory in care. Initial assessment is carried out sensitively and at an appropriate pace. The teaching and assessment of key skills is satisfactory and appropriately integrated with the vocational NVQ. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is satisfactory.

16. **In health, social care and public services there is no formal identification or recording of the training that individual learners need** or of how that training will be provided. Training sessions are held in the college, but some learners do not attend and records are not kept. Much of the training that takes place in the workplace is good, and many learners receive individual coaching from assessors. However, there are no standardised schemes of work or training records to ensure that all learners receive the same information.

17. All learners have their literacy and numeracy skills assessed as part of a comprehensive initial assessment. Learners who are identified as having additional learning needs are adequately supported.

Leadership and management

18. **Informal communication is good at Catten College.** Most communication takes place informally on a daily basis. Staff have a good understanding of the development plan and are knowledgeable about the company's aims and objectives as well as the annual targets.

19. **Catten College's management team is effective and supportive.** Senior managers are open and approachable. Staffing arrangements are flexible and staff are able to work around other commitments. There is also good networking with local schools, careers offices and charities.

20. The College's resources are satisfactory. Classrooms are suitable for the small groups and adequately furnished, but are in need of decoration. Teaching resources are satisfactory and there are funds to purchase new and replacement teaching materials. The financial management is satisfactory.

21. **There is insufficient recording of management activities.** Senior management meetings have only been minuted very recently and there are no minutes from the many informal meetings that have taken place. Some policies need redefining in line with the proposed new quality assurance system. The complaints record is incomplete, with only two entries for the last three years.

22. **Equal opportunities is well promoted to learners and staff.** However, the strategies to widen participation have not been applied effectively and there have been only two applications from learners from minority ethnic groups since 1999. Recent initiatives have been targeted to tackle this imbalance but it is too early to assess their effectiveness.

23. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and the views of staff, learners and employers are used. The correspondence between the self-assessment report and the findings of the inspectors was satisfactory.

24. Internal verification is satisfactory. In hairdressing, there is a programme manager who is responsible for monitoring quality. Assessors and learners receive regular feedback. There are clear sampling plans.

25. **There is no comprehensive formal quality assurance system in place.** There is a quality assurance system to ensure that the learners' reviews are completed on time and that any outstanding issues are followed up. There are several systems in place to review management policies and procedures. There is also a system that identifies key management events and monitors whether they have been completed on time. These systems function independently and there is no overall system to assure the quality of the training provision.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- effective additional support for learners
- good internal promotion of equality of opportunity
- good celebration of achievements by learners and staff
- good external networking
- effective and supportive management
- good informal communication

Weaknesses

- insufficient implementation of strategies to widen participation
- insufficient recording of management activities
- no formal quality assurance system

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Strengths

- good work placements
- good additional learning activities
- good support for learners
- good on- and off-the-job training

Weaknesses

- some insufficient resources
- poor recording of assessment outcomes
- ineffective initial vocational assessment

Health, social care & public services

Strengths

- very good support for learners
- good response to the needs of adult learners
- good links with most workplaces

Weaknesses

- poor co-ordination of training
- poor achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices and NVQ learners

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT CATTEN COLLEGE:

- the small class sizes
- being treated like adults
- having the opportunity to gain a qualification
- coming to study sessions
- the supportive, approachable staff
- the assessors

WHAT LEARNERS THINK CATTEN COLLEGE COULD IMPROVE:

- the sinks in hairdressing
- the study sessions - they could be better organised
- workbooks - they are not helpful
- allocate a time slot to do the work

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CATTEN COLLEGE:

- improve retention and achievement rates
- develop and formalise the quality assurance system
- ensure management activities are formally recorded
- identify and record the training needs of learners
- maintain the current level of support to learners

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- effective additional support for learners
- good internal promotion of equality of opportunity
- good celebration of achievements by learners and staff
- good external networking
- effective and supportive management
- good informal communication

Weaknesses

- insufficient implementation of strategies to widen participation
- insufficient recording of management activities
- no formal quality assurance system

26. Informal communication is good. The two senior managers and the managing director work closely together. Much communication is informal and takes place on a daily basis. 'Awaydays', led by the managing director, have been effective in team building and encourage staff to share concerns and ideas. Staff and learners feel able to approach anyone in the organisation to get information. There is an internal newsletter, which is also published on the website.

27. Catten College has a clear three-year development plan and an annual business plan which reflect the mission statement of the company. The senior managers set the targets based on information from learners' feedback, employers' feedback and monitoring of performance data. The development and business plans are discussed at staff meetings. Suggestion boxes and noticeboards are prominently displayed and are put to good use by learners. Staff are knowledgeable about the aims and objectives of the company as well as the annual targets. Staff all have the opportunity to contribute towards the development of these plans and feel fully involved in all aspects of the business.

28. Catten College's management team is effective and supportive. Senior managers are open and approachable. There is flexibility in the staffing of the college and hours are designed to allow staff to work around other commitments. One member of staff is encouraged to attend self-assessment meetings outside her normal working hours by having her childcare expenses paid for by the college. Complaints and other problems are dealt with quickly and are usually resolved informally. Staff appraisals are completed annually by the managing director and include a performance review and a review of training requirements based on the needs of the business. The organisation also has a limited budget for personal development needs, even when these are only of peripheral

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interest to the business.

29. Catten College has good links with external organisations. Employers are encouraged to attend monthly meetings and also receive a monthly newsletter detailing current issues in the provision including health and safety and equal opportunities. Employers are also invited to attend sessions with their learners to discuss the details of the qualifications. Employers who attend are rewarded by being invited to free training sessions, relevant to their business. Employers describe Catten College as being responsive and flexible. There are also good links with local schools, careers offices and charities.

30. Learners' and staff's achievements are celebrated. The management invites staff to contribute to management issues and acknowledges the support they receive. There is a staff bonus system to reward staff who achieve their key performance targets. Learners in hairdressing can be selected to be the learner of the month and the learner of the year, based on their performance. Learners are also supported financially to attend a well-known hairdressing organisation to increase their professional knowledge.

31. Catten College's resources are satisfactory. The classrooms are suitable for small groups and are adequately furnished, but are in need of decoration. Teaching resources are satisfactory and there are funds to purchase new and replacement teaching materials. Staff have adequate qualifications and experience to support learners. The office accommodation is cramped but is currently being reorganised. The financial management is satisfactory.

32. Catten College's approach to supporting the development of learners' literacy, numeracy, and language skills is satisfactory. Learners are appropriately tested for additional learning needs at initial assessment. The results are reviewed by the appropriate manager and learning targets are agreed with the learner. Ten per cent of learners currently receive additional learning support. Learners can receive support either in college or the workplace, according to their preferences and needs.

33. The contracts between Catten College and the employers are satisfactory. They cover all the necessary arrangements for the provision of training and assessment at work and give clear guidance on the responsibilities of the employers and learners. The health and safety officer checks each workplace annually for insurance and health and safety.

34. There is insufficient recording of management activities. Meetings have been irregular until very recently and there are no minutes for the informal meetings that have taken place. Senior management meetings have only been minuted in the past few months. Some minutes are insufficiently detailed and do not note the action points or identify the member of staff responsible and the deadline for the action to take place. Attendance records are not always kept and there is no systematic recording of the training learners' receive to ensure they all receive the same information. Targets are set using the information collected from the management information system and feedback from learners and employers. However, much of the useful research used in determining these targets has not been recorded. Some of the policies will not fit in with the

proposed new quality assurance system. The complaints' record is incomplete with only two entries for the last three years. Most complaints are dealt with informally and are not recorded.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

35. The internal promotion of equal opportunities is good. Comprehensive teaching materials promote equality of opportunity to learners and staff. Awareness days reinforce the induction and engage learners in all aspects of equal opportunities issues through an imaginative video with challenging questions. Training sessions, questionnaires, and regular updates on legislation are effective in ensuring staff understand recent legislation and a range of equality and diversity issues. Learners recruited in the last eight months have a good understanding of equal opportunities and feel well protected at the college and in the workplace. A senior member of the management team is responsible for developing the equal opportunities' strategy and is well known to learners.

36. Additional support for learners is good. Literacy and numeracy needs are sensitively identified at initial assessment. Learners can choose to receive support in the classroom or on an individual basis. One dyslexic learner wanted her learning needs to remain confidential and was given support outside training sessions. Another learner suffering from a long-term illness was visited in the home, and another, with personal and social problems, was visited regularly in the workplace to support her and help her to develop confidence. Staff vary their work schedule to ensure learners' needs are supported and that visits are timed to accommodate their needs.

37. Data collection is satisfactory. Information on learners, employers and staff is regularly collected and monitored by ethnic group, gender, and disability. Some analysis takes place but this has not yet led to effective target-setting. Signs and posters throughout the building adequately reflect an inclusive recruitment strategy. The college operates an interview-for-all policy and the college's statement on equal opportunities is included on all literature. Employers' policies are regularly checked and monitored. There is a complaints log but this is under-used and many complaints are not formally recorded.

38. The strategies to widen participation have not been put into practice effectively. In the past three years there have been only two applications from learners from minority ethnic groups and at the time of this inspection there was only one learner from an minority ethnic group on programme. Recent measures have been more targeted in rectifying the ethnic and gender imbalance and there was evidence of additional enrolments from learners from minority ethnic groups during this inspection. However, it is too early to assess the lasting impact of this. There are no learners with disabilities and the college has no lift. Although contingency plans have been drawn up to accommodate learners with disabilities, this does not encourage learners with disabilities to enrol for training here.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

39. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Staff have all had the opportunity to contribute to the self-assessment process through regular monthly meetings in which the plan is reviewed. Learners' feedback is collected from a variety of questionnaires issued to learners at various stages of their training and is used in the self-assessment process. Employers are also invited to contribute to the process through attending meetings and completing feedback questionnaires. The correspondence between the self-assessment report and inspectors' findings was satisfactory. Issues identified in the self-assessment report such as the development of a full quality assurance system have been targeted to improve the quality of the provision.

40. The internal verification procedures are satisfactory. There are sufficient internal verifiers to monitor and assess the quality of the training and they are adequately qualified. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is satisfactory. Assessors are observed by internal verifiers annually and there is adequate feedback to learners and assessors.

41. There is no comprehensive formal quality assurance system in place. There is a quality assurance system which operates to ensure that learners' progress reviews are completed on time and that any outstanding issues are followed up. Learners' progress is monitored on the management information system and also represented on wall charts for easy reference. However, the information on the charts is not always kept up to date. There are several systems in place to review management policies and procedures. There is also a system that identifies key management events and records whether these have been completed by the appropriate member of staff at the right time. However, these systems function independently and there is no overall system to assure the quality of the training provision. Two members of staff have now completed training in quality assurance. This was identified as a priority in the self-assessment report.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	42	2

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good work placements
- good additional learning activities
- good support for learners
- good on- and off-the-job training

Weaknesses

- some insufficient resources
- poor recording of assessment outcomes
- ineffective initial vocational assessment

Achievement and standards

42. Retention rates on the advanced modern apprenticeship programme are satisfactory. In 2002, 10 learners started the programme and there are eight still in learning. Five learners enrolled in 2003. Learners currently on programme are producing satisfactory work and are making satisfactory progress towards their learning goals.

43. Achievement rates on the foundation modern apprenticeship programme are showing signs of improvement. In 1999, only 18 per cent of those who started the programme completed the full framework. This has improved over a three-year period. Of the learners who started in 2001, 71 per cent have been retained and 59 per cent of these have successfully completed the framework. In 2002, 15 learners started the programme and 13 are still on programme. These learners are making satisfactory progress towards their learning goals.

44. Learners currently on programme are gaining satisfactory practical skills and are on target to complete their programmes within the planned duration. Most learners produce practical work at the standard expected of them and there are some examples of learners producing work at a more advanced level than might be expected for the time spent on programme. The standard of work in portfolios is satisfactory. They are well presented and meet the requirements of the awarding body.

45. Learners develop the literacy and numeracy skills they need to help them achieve

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their qualification. An appropriate range of teaching techniques is used, which helps them to develop confidence and to make progress. Training in key skills is also satisfactory and learners' achievements are consistent with their main programme of study. Recently, the college has started to integrate key skills into work-based learning and assessment and this is helping learners to develop and maintain lifelong learning skills in the workplace.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	5		10		1		2		2						
Retained*	0		1		1		0	0	1	50						
Successfully completed	0		0		0		0	0	1	50						
Still in learning	5		8		1		0	0	0	0						

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	14		15		17		8		11						
Retained*	0		0		11		4	50	4	36						
Successfully completed	0		0		10		3	38	2	18						
Still in learning	13		13		2		0	0	0	0						

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts			2		4		3								
Retained*			2	100	2	50	1	33								
Successfully completed			2	100	2	50	1	33								
Still in learning			0	0	0	0	0	0								

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

Quality of education and training

46. On- and off-the-job training is good. All sessions observed in college or in the workplace were satisfactory or better. In one session that took place in the college, an employer gave a demonstration of razor cutting. Learners were inspired by the employer's enthusiasm and professionalism. They were asked to identify critical points, techniques and background knowledge. In an on-the-job training session in a hairdressing salon, the trainer made good use of demonstration techniques which involved the learners and challenged their practical skills.

47. Work placements are good. All work placements are in prime locations, and have good, up-to-date equipment. The latest products are used, and there is a varied and busy schedule of clients. Competent senior stylists act as good role models for learners. All placements have training alongside normal salon activities and have separate training sessions for learners. Employers are treated as part of the training team and are well informed. Employers have good working relationships with Catten College and appreciate the way the college responds to their needs. One employer has a particular method of training his learners in the workplace which did not follow the normal learning plan for the NVQ. Catten College checked the contents of the NVQ units, to ensure that all units were included with that method of training.

48. Learners receive good vocational and pastoral support. Staff provide support and advice to any learners who experience problems in the workplace. Catten College staff create a supportive and friendly learning environment which enables learners to develop their skills with confidence. Learners find staff approachable and feel able to discuss problems relating to their training or their personal needs. One learner with additional learning needs did not want this to be known to the rest of the group by having a support tutor in the class. This learner was given additional individual support by the vocational tutor before and after the training sessions. Learners are able to get support if they require it in both background knowledge and practical work. The learners' induction is comprehensive and informative. Learners receive detailed information on the vocational content of their NVQ and are well informed on equal opportunities issues.

49. Learners take part in many valuable additional learning activities. The college plans many educational visits and organises a variety of events and training courses. All learners were preparing to attend a prestigious international hairdressing exhibition in London at the time of the inspection. Learners also have the opportunity to participate in hair shows organised by the college and to attend a range of short courses on topics such as applying false nails and bridal make-up, to enhance their learning.

50. Some of the practical resources in Catten College's training centre are inadequate. There are only seven workstations in the hairdressing salon and one class has 11 learners. Some learners therefore do not have a workstation for practical sessions and so the resources do not meet the requirement of a realistic working environment. Classrooms are small, but satisfactory, and staff have adequate experience and

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qualifications to offer support to learners for their NVQ and key skills.

51. Assessment outcomes are not recorded effectively. Long-term assessment targets identify when learners should achieve units throughout their programme, however, no formal records are made of short-term assessment targets and outcomes. Learners receive verbal feedback on assessment but there is no system in place to identify the actions they need to take to succeed.

52. Initial vocational assessment is ineffective. It identifies learners' literacy and numeracy and key skills needs and records the learners' previous vocational experience, however, the information is not used to accredit prior achievement. Some learners have worked part time in the hairdressing industry before starting their programme. Learners are not accredited for skills they have gained during this period. There is no formal practical vocational initial assessment to identify prior achievement. In one case, a learner had worked part time in the industry for three years and was still required to start her programme from the beginning.

Leadership and management

53. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The programme manager is responsible for monitoring quality assurance. Staff meet very regularly and have formal monthly meetings. All staff are knowledgeable about the self-assessment report and have good opportunities to contribute to it. They value the responsiveness of senior managers and appreciate their support. Internal verification is satisfactory. It takes place at regular intervals, and visits are planned in advance. Standardisation meetings take place regularly. There is a long-term sampling plan which includes all assessors, including work-based assessors. Internal verifiers observe assessors regularly and give useful feedback. Additional learning needs are identified at initial assessment and all learners who require support receive it. Learners have a good understanding of equal opportunities. They are familiar with the complaints procedure and feel well protected in the workplace.

Health, social care & public services**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other government-funded provision	62	3
Work-based learning for young people	40	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- very good support for learners
- good response to the needs of adult learners
- good links with most workplaces

Weaknesses

- poor co-ordination of training
- poor achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices and NVQ learners

Achievement and standards

54. Retention and achievement rates have improved on advanced modern apprenticeship programmes between 1999 and 2000 and there are signs of continued improvement. Thirty-three per cent of learners who started their programme in 2001 have achieved their qualification and a further 25 per cent are still in learning. A satisfactory proportion of learners, 90 per cent, who enrolled in 2002, are still in learning and are making satisfactory progress.

55. Adequate support is provided for learners with additional literacy, numeracy and language needs. Achievement in key skills is satisfactory. All learners are encouraged to take the key skills tests and the standard of work is satisfactory.

56. Achievement rates are low on foundation modern apprenticeship and NVQ programmes. Between 1999 and 2001, only 16 of the 76 learners who enrolled on the foundation modern apprenticeship programme, achieved the qualification. Only 10 per cent of learners who started their programme in 2001 have achieved their qualification and 25 per cent are still in learning. Almost half of the learners who started the programme in 2002 left the programme early. However, there is evidence that the learners who are currently on programme are starting to make better progress towards their learning goals. Only two out of the 21 learners who started the NVQ programme since 1999 have achieved the qualification. However, achievement rates for learners who enrolled on NVQ level 2 programmes on the Profit from Learning programme in 2002 show an improvement. Of the 111 learners who started the programme, 62 remain in learning. Thirty have achieved their qualification, a further 21 have completed their portfolio and are awaiting verification, and 10 learners have only one or two units to complete.

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

LSC funded work-based learning															
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	10		12		8		6							
Retained*	0		5		7	88	4	67							
Successfully completed	0		4		4	50	1	17							
Still in learning	9		3		0	0	0	0							

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

LSC funded work-based learning															
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000						
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	5		20		20		35		21					
Retained*	0		1		11	55	18	51	11	52					
Successfully completed	0		0		2	10	10	29	4	19					
Still in learning	5		11		5	25	2	6	0	0					

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

LSC funded work-based learning															
NVQ Training	2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000						
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Number of starts	2		3		9		6		6					
Retained*	0		0		2	22	3	50	0	0					
Successfully completed	0		0		1	11	1	17	0	0					
Still in learning	2		1		1	11	1	17	0	0					

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

Other government funded																	
	2002-03																
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	111																
Retained*	89																
Successfully completed	30																
Still in training	62																

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

Quality of education and training

57. There are good links with most workplaces. Assessors make regular visits to the workplace and these are always planned to suit the employer and the area of work. Several workplaces have qualified assessors and effective use is made of their skills in meeting the personal and social requirements of the NVQ. Assessors ensure that employers regularly receive information on learners' progress and difficulties. Employers are actively involved in progress reviews and help to identify learners' personal goals. Many workplaces keep an updated record of learners' progress on display and this is discussed with the assessor during visits. Employers value the provider's responsiveness in answering queries and in accommodating their needs.

58. The college has responded well to the needs of adult learners. It has identified and met the needs of the sector and the requirement for adult learners to gain a qualification at level 2. The Profit from Learning programme provides opportunities for experienced and mature care workers to demonstrate competence in the workplace and to gain recognition for what they have achieved. The college has recognised the very diverse needs of these learners. Assessors are flexible in their approach to training and are encouraging to learners who have been outside the educational system for many years. Although there was no formal requirement to attend college, learners are invited to attend additional sessions and events. Learners of all ages are proud of their achievements and have gained in confidence and self-esteem.

59. Learners receive very good vocational and pastoral support. They are encouraged to contact their assessors at home or at work with any personal or training needs. Learners are given effective support to help them to stay on programme even when they experience difficulties. The college has significantly increased the number of its assessors recently and this allows more additional support to be given at a time to suit the learner and to meet the requirements of the NVQ. Learners who have not achieved their qualification on time are supported with individual coaching and more frequent visits. Learners on all programmes found their induction useful. Information packs are comprehensive and help learners to settle into their programmes quickly and confidently.

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60. Additional literacy, numeracy and language needs are sensitively identified at initial assessment. Individual support is provided inside or outside the classroom, according to the learner's personal choice. Targets are effectively recorded and monitored, on a separate individual learning plan. Learners are appreciative of the additional support they receive and the confidentiality with which their concerns are treated.

61. Resources are satisfactory. Staff have appropriate occupational experience and are all either qualified as assessors or working to become qualified assessors. Only one member of the care team has a teaching qualification but all staff have adequate experience in working in the sector. The two members of staff involved in administering and delivering literacy, numeracy and language skills had both had training and one was just beginning a training course at level 3. Training rooms are adequate. Learners can use IT stations with internet access, which can be booked in advance. Copies of workbooks and additional training materials provided by assessors are available and learners are encouraged to use the facility in their own time.

62. Assessment is satisfactory. The teaching and assessment of key skills is satisfactory and appropriately integrated with the vocational NVQ. Observation in the workplace takes place regularly. Assessors give learners good opportunities to complete units. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is satisfactory. However, portfolios rely too much on written questions to provide evidence in the vocational units and evidence is not always clearly linked to the standards.

63. There is poor co-ordination of training. There is no formal identification of the training that individual learners will need or how it will be provided. Some learners on foundation modern apprenticeship and advanced modern apprenticeship programmes attend training at the provider's premises. These sessions provide background knowledge and opportunities for portfolio development. Key skills support and some key skills assessment also take place at these sessions. However, some learners do not attend. Assessors also give individual coaching sessions in the workplace but there are no lesson plans or standardised schemes of work to ensure that all learners receive the same training. Many learners receive very good training in the workplace but there is no formal recording of the training they have received. A series of workbooks has now been developed to help learners who do not attend the off-the-job training sessions to gain background knowledge and to ensure greater consistency in provision. These have been piloted in one workplace and are currently being evaluated.

Leadership and management

64. Internal verification is satisfactory. There is a clear sampling plan. Assessors are monitored regularly and assessors and learners receive regular feedback. The care team had a difficult time in adjusting to the restructuring that took place in 2002 and the large increase in numbers arising from Profit from Learning enrolments. However, there have been good team-building activities, led by the managing director and senior managers and all staff are now working together to improve the quality of the training. Staff are knowledgeable about the self-assessment report and have contributed to it. Learners are knowledgeable about equal opportunities and are aware of their rights in the workplace.