

INSPECTION REPORT

Easi Hairdressing Academy Limited

29 July 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 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

Easi Hairdressing Academy Limited

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the inspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	2
Key findings	3
What learners like about Easi Hairdressing Academy Limited	7
What learners think Easi Hairdressing Academy Limited could improve	7
Key challenges for Easi Hairdressing Academy Limited	8

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	10
Quality assurance	12
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	13

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Easi Hairdressing Academy Limited (Easi Hair) is a privately owned company established in May 2003 that is based in Colchester, Essex. It offers work-based learning in hairdressing for young people and provides training for 40 salons in the north Essex area. The company has 90 learners on work-based learning programmes, 85 of whom are employed and five who are waiting for work placements and are currently in Easi Hair's workshop.

2. Easi Hair employs four full-time and four part-time staff, six of whom are qualified assessors and internal verifiers. One tutor co-ordinates key skills and supports learners with additional learning needs. Easi Hair employs two administrators. The company's two directors are responsible for all aspects of Easi Hair's performance. Easi Hair is joining a local consortium of training providers in August 2004.

3. The company funds its training through the Essex Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Approximately 80 per cent of Colchester's employment is in the service sector, which is about 4 per cent above the average for Essex. In June 2004, the unemployment rate for Essex was 1.4 per cent, and for Colchester it was 1.3 per cent, compared with a national average of 2.2 per cent. Minority ethnic groups make up 2.9 per cent of Essex's population, and 3.8 per cent of Colchester's, according to the 2001 census. The average for the Eastern region is 4.9 per cent. The proportion of learners in this LSC area remaining in education and training at the age of 16 is 80 per cent, 3 per cent less than the national average. The proportion in work-based learning is 6 per cent, compared with 8 per cent nationally. In 2003, the proportion of school leavers in Essex achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education at grade C or above was 55 per cent, compared with 52.9 per cent nationally.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

4. Easi Hair provides hairdressing training in and around Colchester in Essex. On-the-job training takes place in 40 hairdressing salons and Easi Hair provides off-the-job training in its main training centre in Colchester and a small centre in Chelmsford. The training centres provide background knowledge, practical, theory and key skills training. Most learners attend the training centres either fortnightly or monthly. Easi Hair offers foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1, 2 and 3. Advanced modern apprentices also work towards the technical certificate. There are 90 learners on hairdressing training programmes. Of these, 71 are following foundation modern apprenticeships, and 19 are working towards the advanced modern apprenticeship. Eighty-five learners are employed and five are waiting for work placements and are currently in Easi Hair's workshop. Learners from minority ethnic groups account for just over 1 per cent of Easi Hair's enrolments. There

EASI HAIRDRESSING ACADEMY LIMITED

are eight male learners, four of whom are aged 25 years or more. The foundation modern apprenticeship programme is of two years' duration and the advance modern apprenticeship lasts three years. There is a total of six staff directly employed by Easi Hair who teach, assess or verify on hairdressing programmes. There are 27 qualified work-based salon assessors, with a further 14 working towards the assessors award.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	16
Number of learner interviews	45
Number of staff interviews	26
Number of employer interviews	12
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	13

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, Easi Hair's training in hairdressing is satisfactory. Its leadership and management and equality of opportunity are satisfactory. The company's quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory.

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		4

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hairdressing</i> - Work-based learning for young people	90	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. **Learners demonstrate good progress in their practical work.** Most practical training takes place on the job. Learners have good access to a range and quantity of clients for training and assessment. Learners use appropriate techniques and display suitable levels of skill when carrying out practical work.

7. Retention rates are satisfactory. Of the 128 modern apprentices who have started on work-based learning programmes since Easi Hair was established, 76 per cent are either still in learning or have successfully completed their programmes.

8. Learners' portfolios of evidence are satisfactory. They show satisfactory indexing and referencing. Learners demonstrate satisfactory progress in key skills.

Quality of education and training

9. Of the learning sessions observed, 90 per cent were graded satisfactory or better.

10. **Learners receive highly effective individual support.** Easi Hair's staff provide good guidance and sensitive support to learners. Staff create a supportive, friendly learning environment that enables learners to develop their skills with confidence. The company has good arrangements for learners who are in unsuitable salons or lose their job. Easi Hair investigates promptly and monitors closely the reasons for learners' poor attendance, late completion of assignments or changes in behaviour.

11. Training is satisfactory. Some tutors plan their sessions well and use a range of strategies to motivate the learners. In some sessions, tutors do not set clear learning goals or challenge the learners sufficiently. Tutors do not regularly direct questions at individual learners and many ask closed questions. Some sessions do not always start punctually.

12. Work placements are satisfactory. Many salons give learners the opportunity to work on a diverse range of clients.

13. There are satisfactory opportunities for personal and professional development. Learners have opportunities to attend national hairdressing shows and specialist demonstrations.

14. **Easi Hair does not co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training sufficiently.** Most employers do not receive a copy of learners' individual learning plans and many do not have a structured learning plan for their learners. Training in the salons is not co-ordinated with the background knowledge training at Easi Hair's training centre. Easi Hair does not involve learners and employers sufficiently in setting long-term targets.

15. **There is insufficient monitoring of learning in the workplace.** Easi Hair does not observe work-based tutors delivering their training. Employers do not participate fully in learners' progress reviews. Easi Hair does not plan internal verification adequately. There are technical inaccuracies in some of the learners' written assessments. Written work contains insufficient constructive comment to help the learners make improvements.

Leadership and management

16. **Easi Hair has established effective links with key partners.** Communications are good with the salons and benefit the learners. Easi Hair holds a wide range of meetings for employers to resolve concerns regarding learners. The company has developed good links with local secondary schools and a local education action zone. Easi Hair has participated in initiatives to improve retention and achievement rates among modern apprentices. Easi Hair makes good use of its links with other training providers to improve its own training.

17. **There are good arrangements for the employment and appraisal of staff.** The company has good employment policies and clear procedures for staff recruitment. The appraisal scheme identifies the strengths and weaknesses of individual members of staff at an early stage and enables them to take on new responsibilities that directly benefit the learners.

18. Staff communication is satisfactory. They give feedback through regular staff meetings and through the appraisal scheme.

19. The development planning arrangements are satisfactory. The business and development plans contain clear objectives and targets for company performance.

20. Resources are adequate for the current number of learners. Physical resources at the main centre in Colchester are used fully, as are some of the training facilities in other salons.

21. Arrangements are satisfactory to support learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs. Easi Hair identifies learners' needs through the use of initial assessment tests and further diagnostic testing as necessary. A specialist tutor provides individual support for learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs.

22. **Easi Hair makes insufficient use of management information for decision-making.** The company does not carry out any formal analysis of trends in performance or use the management information system to monitor the progress of learners.

23. **There is little use of performance targets for individual members of staff.** Easi Hair has included targets in its overall development plans but has not linked these targets to individual members of staff.

24. **Easi Hair has implemented effective initiatives to widen the participation in training**

of learners from under-represented groups. Easi Hair regularly attends careers fairs to promote hairdressing to young people. The company has established successful after-school clubs. Easi Hair works with secondary schools and provides an alternative education for some 14-16 year old pupils. The company has participated successfully in a project to encourage more men into hairdressing. This project has enabled Easi Hair to design new and highly imaginative publicity material. The company has increased the number of its male learners from two in 2002-03 to four in 2003-04, plus an extra four who are aged 25 years or over.

25. Easi Hair has a satisfactory equality of opportunity statement and policy. The company reviews and updates this policy regularly. In addition, Easi Hair regularly checks that learners have not been subject to harassment or bullying in the workplace. Equality of opportunity, complaints and appeals are included in both learners' and staff induction. Easi Hair collects data for LSC purposes but does not analyse the data in terms of ethnicity or disability for its own use.

26. Easi Hair responds satisfactorily to the needs of its learners with disabilities and provides suitable support appropriate to individual need where this is required. Access to the main Easi Hair training premises and the centre in Chelmsford is poor. The company is aware of this limitation and makes suitable alternative arrangements.

27. **There is insufficient training in equality of opportunity.** Easi Hair has no learning plan for staff or learners after their induction. Reinforcement of equal opportunities is insufficient. Easi Hair does not develop the learners' understanding of how equal opportunities' issues apply to the hairdressing industry. Staff have not been sufficiently trained in equality of opportunity and there is insufficient knowledge of how to improve learners' understanding.

28. **Easi Hair uses learners' feedback well to make improvements.** Learners complete well-designed questionnaires at specific points in their training programmes. Easi Hair collates and analyses these results effectively to make improvements.

29. Easi Hair has a satisfactory manual that covers a wide range of operating procedures.

30. The company's self-assessment arrangements are satisfactory. The self-assessment report matches many of the findings of the inspection team. There is insufficient consultation with learners, salon owners and other partners in the self-assessment process.

31. **There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance arrangements.** Easi Hair has no systematic approach to measuring the performance of its learners or staff. Easi Hair does not monitor sufficiently the quality of work-based learning.

32. **Internal verification is weak.** The internal verification system does not evaluate individual assessors' performance. Most of the in-salon assessors have no regular evaluative measurement of their performance. Internal verification has failed to identify some technical inaccuracies in learners' assessments.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- effective links with key partners
- good arrangements for staff employment and appraisal
- effective initiatives to widen participation in training of learners from under-represented groups
- good use of learners' feedback

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information for decision-making
- little use of performance targets for individual staff members
- insufficient training in equal opportunities
- insufficient monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance arrangements
- weak internal verification

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good progress in learners' practical work
- highly effective individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- insufficient monitoring of training in the workplace

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT EASI HAIRDRESSING ACADEMY LIMITED:

- the practical and theory training
- the friendly and helpful staff - 'they hassle you to complete work in a friendly way'
- the small training group size - 'I feel able to speak up'
- the chance to meet other learners
- the level of individual support

WHAT LEARNERS THINK EASI HAIRDRESSING ACADEMY LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of theory
- the amount of practical training at the training centre
- a refreshment area at Easi Hair
- the training rooms at Easi Hair are too hot

KEY CHALLENGES FOR EASI HAIRDRESSING ACADEMY LIMITED:

- more observation of training in the workplace
- improve the internal verification system
- involve employers more in learners' progress reviews and in the setting of long-term targets
- co-ordinate practical and theory training
- monitor and evaluate the impact of quality assurance arrangements
- develop the use of management information systems
- extend target-setting to individual staff members
- organise staff training in equality of opportunity and diversity

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- effective links with key partners
- good arrangements for staff employment and appraisal
- effective initiatives to widen participation in training of learners from under-represented groups
- good use of learners' feedback

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information for decision-making
- little use of performance targets for individual staff members
- insufficient training in equal opportunities
- insufficient monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance arrangements
- weak internal verification

33. Easi Hair has established effective links with key partners. Communications are good with salon owners and managers, and benefit the learners. In addition to regular contact with each salon, Easi Hair holds a wide range of meetings for employers to discuss and resolve concerns regarding learners. Furthermore, Easi Hair has set up an innovative consultative group with employers to look at important issues for development and improvement. The directors of Easi Hair have developed good links with local secondary schools and a local education action zone. For example, one of the directors acts as a mentor for secondary pupils in years 10 and 11. Easi Hair has participated in initiatives organised by the LSC to improve retention and achievement rates among modern apprentices in Colchester. The directors of Easi Hair have been strongly involved in the formation of a new consortium of local providers in the area to act as the contract-holder to the local LSC. Easi Hair has recently developed innovative subcontracting arrangements with a small number of training salons. Although at present there are no written agreements for this work, Easi Hair acknowledges the need to formalise these arrangements. Easi Hair makes good use of its links with other providers to make improvements to its own training. For example, the company has used the services of a specialist health and safety agency, run by a local authority, to carry out a survey and make recommendations on health and safety procedures. In a further example, Easi Hair has linked with a local beacon provider to apply best practice to a number of its own operating procedures.

34. There are good arrangements for the employment and appraisal of staff. The company has good employment policies and clear procedures for staff selection and recruitment. The employment contract is very detailed and includes a full statement of terms and conditions, supported by a comprehensive employee handbook. An effective

EASI HAIRDRESSING ACADEMY LIMITED

staff appraisal scheme introduces monthly appraisals for new members of staff, reducing to six-monthly intervals after the first three months. This appraisal scheme has helped Easi Hair to identify clearly the strengths and weaknesses of individual members of staff at an early stage in their employment with the company. The scheme has enabled some staff to change their career focus and assume new responsibilities that have had a direct benefit for the learners.

35. Staff communication within Easi Hair is satisfactory. Each member of staff has clearly stated roles and responsibilities. The company's directors encourage staff to give feedback through the appraisal scheme and through regular staff meetings. These meetings provide ample opportunity to discuss individual learners' progress and to share good practice.

36. The development planning within Easi Hair is satisfactory. The business and development plans contain clear objectives and targets for company performance.

37. Resources are adequate for the current number of learners. Physical resources at the main training centre in Colchester are used fully, as are some of the training facilities in other salons. Easi Hair has plans for additional premises in Braintree but awaits confirmation of contractual arrangements with the new consortium before making the commitment to develop these facilities further.

38. Arrangements are satisfactory to support learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs. Easi Hair identifies learners' needs through the use of initial assessment tests and further diagnostic testing as necessary. A dedicated tutor provides individual coaching for learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs.

39. Easi Hair makes insufficient use of management information for decision-making. Easi Hair has purchased proprietary software to provide a full suite of management and learner information. The system is not fully operational and staff have not been fully trained to take full advantage of its facilities. Easi Hair does not make regular and systematic use of management reports. The company does not carry out a formal analysis of trends in performance or use the management information system to monitor the progress of learners or to produce reports for directors and staff.

40. There is little use of performance targets for individual members of staff. Easi Hair has included targets in its overall development plans but has not linked these targets to individual members of staff. Easi Hair does not use targets to monitor or report on individual performance or progress. Staff agree personal development objectives at appraisal, but these are not linked to the company's development plan targets. Additionally, there are no arrangements to monitor and record progress towards achieving performance targets.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

41. Easi Hair has implemented a number of effective initiatives to widen participation in training of learners from under-represented groups. Easi Hair regularly attends careers

fairs to promote hairdressing training to young people. At these events, Easi Hair makes very good use of hair-related competitions and quizzes for its own market research purposes, and to raise the profile of hairdressing, particularly to male, as well as female, school pupils. Easi Hair contacts these competition entrants regarding opportunities to attend introductory training sessions. Easi Hair has established successful after-school clubs, where school pupils learn the basics of hairdressing. In 2003-04, over 50 per cent of these school pupils progressed to hair-related training, some with Easi Hair. Easi Hair works with a number of secondary schools and provides an alternative education for some 14-16 year old pupils. These pupils spend one day each week at Easi Hair's training centre and up to three days each week in a work placement that Easi Hair co-ordinates. Of the eight learners in 2003-04, one has progressed to a full-time work placement in a salon and two are still in training. Easi Hair has already recruited pupils for the year 2004-05, including some male pupils, for the NVQ at level 1 in hairdressing. Easi Hair works closely with Connexions, especially the intensive support team, to provide training for these school pupils. Easi Hair has participated successfully in an externally funded project to encourage more men into hairdressing. This project has enabled Easi Hair to design new and highly imaginative publicity material. This material presents very positive images of men in hairdressing and makes good use of wordplay to challenge stereotypes. In 2002-03, Easi Hair had two male learners. In 2003-04, Easi Hair had recruited four male learners, plus an extra four who were aged 25 years or over.

42. Easi Hair has a satisfactory equality of opportunity statement and policy. Easi Hair displays the statement at the entrance to its training premises in Colchester and along the corridors. The policy includes details on advertising and recruitment, training, work-placement providers, harassment and bullying, victimisation, right to support, and staff and learners' induction. Easi Hair reviews the policy every six months and its updates reflect changes in legislation. For example, Easi Hair has recently updated the policy to include the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 and its responsibilities from 2004. Equality of opportunity, complaints and appeals are included in both learners' and staff induction. The learners' induction pack includes details on equal opportunities legislation. Learners understand how to raise concerns about their training and make complaints. They also receive a small guide to equal opportunities. Learners demonstrate their understanding of this legislation by answering a set of standard questions at their progress reviews. However, Easi Hair's staff do not ask these questions regularly and do not always record the learners' responses. In addition, Easi Hair regularly checks that learners have not been subject to harassment or bullying. Easi Hair deals with complaints sensitively and takes account of each learner's view. The employee handbook contains minimum references to equal opportunities and employees' responsibilities, but it does define discrimination and harassment. Easi Hair collects data for LSC purposes but does not analyse the data in terms of ethnicity or disability for its own use. However, Easi Hair has analysed recruitment data related to men and taken part in projects to increase their participation.

43. Easi Hair responds satisfactorily to the needs of its learners with disabilities and provides suitable support appropriate to individual need where this is required. For example, the company introduces learners with a physical disability to the most suitable salon and produces a learning plan to enable them to achieve their potential. Easi Hair's

staff visit the salons to make prior arrangements and salon staff understand these learners' needs. However, access to the company's main training premises and the centre in Chelmsford is poor for those learners, clients and staff with restricted mobility. Easi Hair is aware of this limitation and makes suitable alternative arrangements for learners and clients.

44. There is insufficient training in equality of opportunity. Easi Hair has no structured learning plan for staff or learners beyond the induction period. Reinforcement of equal opportunities is insufficient. Easi Hair checks learners' understanding of equal opportunities legislation but does not develop their understanding of how equal opportunities issues apply to the hairdressing industry. There are few resources available to help learners or staff understand equality of opportunity issues. Some wording on the application form is inappropriate. Staff have not been trained sufficiently in equality of opportunity and there is insufficient knowledge of how to improve the learners' understanding.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

45. Easi Hair uses learners' feedback well to make improvements. Learners complete well-designed questionnaires at specific points in their training programmes. For example, learners complete questionnaires following their initial interview, after induction and background knowledge sessions. Easi Hair collates and analyses these results effectively to make improvements. For example, following feedback from learners on their background knowledge sessions, Easi Hair has redesigned the delivery pattern of lessons at one of its training centres. In a further example, Easi Hair has adapted how it provides individual support for learners with additional support needs. Following feedback, the company now offers this support more frequently and regularly for some learners.

46. Easi Hair has a satisfactory manual that covers a wide range of operating procedures. Minutes of staff meetings have improved significantly in recent months and now include clear identification of action points, timescales and staff responsibilities.

47. There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance arrangements. Easi Hair has identified this weakness in its self-assessment report. The company has no systematic approach to measuring the performance of its learners or staff. Easi Hair does not monitor sufficiently the quality of work-based learning. Easi Hair has obtained feedback from employers twice since the establishment of the company. However, this feedback is not sufficiently evaluative to identify improvements.

48. Internal verification is weak. The internal verification system does not evaluate individual assessors' performance or provide any opportunity for analysis, development and improvement on an individual basis. Most of the in-salon assessors have no systematic or evaluative measure of their performance. Internal verification has failed to identify some technical inaccuracies in learners' assessments. Easi Hair has recently established a new system to observe training regularly. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of this development.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hairdressing - Work-based learning for young people	90	3

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good progress in learners' practical work
- highly effective individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- insufficient monitoring of training in the workplace

Achievement and standards

49. Learners demonstrate good progress in their practical work. Most practical training takes place on the job. For example, most employers have in-salon assessors and allocate training times throughout the week. Learners progress quickly through the units of the NVQ. They have good access to a diverse range and quantity of clients for training and assessment purposes. Learners are enthusiastic about their practical training and are highly motivated. Many of the practical units on the advanced modern apprenticeship have been completed very early in the programme. Learners use appropriate techniques and display suitable levels of skill when sectioning and applying foil highlights. They demonstrate good levels of dexterity when handling combs and brushes.

50. Retention rates are satisfactory. In 2002-03, of the seven learners who started the advanced modern apprenticeship, 86 per cent are still in learning. Of the 17 learners who started the advanced modern apprenticeship in 2003-04, 76 per cent are still in learning. Similarly, of the 69 learners who started the foundation modern apprenticeship in 2003-04, 81 per cent are still in learning.

51. Learners' portfolios of evidence are satisfactory. They contain appropriate evidence to support the learners' levels of competence. Portfolios show satisfactory indexing and referencing. Learners demonstrate satisfactory progress in key skills.

EASI HAIRDRESSING ACADEMY LIMITED

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													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	17		7													
Retained*	0		4	57												
Successfully completed	0		0	0												
Still in learning	13		6	86												

*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													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	69		35													
Retained*	1		11	31												
Successfully completed	1		7	20												
Still in learning	56		15	43												

*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

52. Learners receive highly effective individual support. Easi Hair's staff provide good guidance and sensitive support to learners who experience problems in the workplace. For example, learners whose personal situation changes after the start of their modern apprenticeship are able to change to a salon more suitable to their needs, such as closer to home or nearer to childcare facilities. In most cases, these changes enable the learners to continue their training. Staff create a supportive, friendly learning environment that enables learners to develop their skills with confidence. The company has good arrangements for learners who are in unsuitable salons or lose their job. These learners continue their training at Easi Hair's training centre and receive individual help to find a new work placement or complete their qualification. For example, of the seven learners who have used this facility, four have found new salons and two have achieved their qualifications. Four learners are currently receiving this support from Easi Hair. The company makes good use of causes for concern notes about its learners. It investigates promptly and monitors closely the reasons for learners' poor attendance, late completion of assignments or changes in behaviour.

53. Training is satisfactory. Some tutors plan their sessions well and use a range of strategies to motivate the learners. Learners enjoy discussing and selecting suitable styles

of haircut in relation to male pattern hair loss. In a further example, they particularly like choosing hair colours and matching depth and tones using manufacturers' shade charts. In some sessions, tutors do not set clear learning goals or challenge the learners sufficiently. Tutors do not regularly direct questions at individual learners and many ask closed questions. Some sessions do not always start punctually. In a minority of sessions, tutors did not regularly reinforce the importance of good health and safety practice. For example, some learners did not wear suitable protective clothing when colouring hair. Most learners enjoy the off-the-job training at Easi Hair's training centres.

54. Work placements are satisfactory. Many salons give learners the opportunity to work on a diverse range of clients. Most have modern equipment and facilities and include a wide range of products for use in the salon and for retail. Easi Hair provides some salons with textbooks to support learners' background knowledge. The two Easi Hair training centres are satisfactory. The Colchester centre has a separate room for theory teaching. However, there is much interruption from an adjacent office. At the Chelmsford centre, the training area for key skills is too small to accommodate the size of the group.

55. There are satisfactory opportunities for personal and professional development. Learners have opportunities to attend national hairdressing shows and specialist demonstrations. Easi Hair offers a range of short courses on specific techniques. There are opportunities within the workplace for learners to progress in their career.

56. The assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills is satisfactory. Easi Hair identifies learners' needs during induction. The company employs a specialist tutor to support learners with additional learning needs. Easi Hair has identified 15 learners who require additional support for their literacy, numeracy and language skills. Of these, six attend Easi Hair's training centre regularly for individual support. The tutor maintains a record of the work completed in each session. Easi Hair provides facilities for some learners to demonstrate and record their background knowledge on tape.

57. Easi Hair does not co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training sufficiently. Most employers do not receive a copy of learners' individual learning plans. Many do not have a structured learning plan for their learners. The individual learning plan is not updated with enough frequency to record early completion of individual units. Training in the salons is not co-ordinated with the background knowledge training at Easi Hair's training centre. Practical and theory training is not linked. Background knowledge training does not progress at the same pace and the learners' knowledge of theory is often behind their practical skills. Theory training often starts three to six months after the practical work has started. Employers do not always know which elements of theory Easi Hair is delivering. Easi Hair does not involve learners and employers sufficiently in setting long-term targets. For example, there are few long-term assessment targets recorded in the learners' progress reviews or individual learning plans to enable them to measure their progress or plan NVQ unit completion throughout their programme. Short-term targets are satisfactory. These targets enable the learners to plan units within the NVQ each month. However, these targets are too broad and do not identify elements within the NVQ units themselves.

58. There is insufficient monitoring of learning in the workplace. Easi Hair does not observe work-based tutors delivering their training. Employers do not participate fully in learners' progress reviews. These reviews often do not contain employers' comments on learners' progress and on the targets or actions needed for improvement. Easi Hair does not plan internal verification adequately. For example, sampling of assessments is infrequent and most work-based assessors do not receive information on planned assessor observations. The internal verification procedures have failed to highlight technical inaccuracies in some learners' written assessments. Written assignment work contains insufficient constructive comment to help learners make improvements. Easi Hair only internally verifies a small percentage of learners' portfolios of evidence before the end of their training programme.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Easi Hair has recently introduced new systems and quality control procedures. It is too soon to judge the impact of these changes. Staff are enthusiastic and work well together as a team. The support given to assessors is satisfactory. For example, all new assessors receive an induction and receive copies of the minutes and action points of the regular standardisation meetings. There is insufficient reinforcement of health and safety, and equal opportunities in learners' progress reviews. Easi Hair has devised a standard set of questions that relate to health and safety, and equal opportunities' legislation. Learners answer questions on this legislation rather than relating their understanding of health and safety, and equal opportunities to their workplace. Staff do not always record fully the learners' response to these questions. The self-assessment report is satisfactory. It contains many of the strengths and weaknesses that inspectors have identified.