

INSPECTION REPORT

Leslie Frances (Hair Fashions) Limited

05 August 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

Leslie Frances (Hair Fashions) Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Leslie Frances (Hair Fashions) Limited (Leslie Frances) is a privately owned limited company located in the centre of Barnsley, South Yorkshire. Leslie Frances was originally established as a hairdressing business approximately 120 years ago. The hairdressing training school was opened in 1983 to provide work-based learning for young people in hairdressing. Leslie Frances offers foundation and advanced modern apprenticeship training funded by South Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

2. Leslie Frances is managed by three directors; a training manager manages day-to-day operations in the training school. The directors and training manager work together to provide strategic direction for the company. Ten staff provide training and assessment, most of whom are part time. There are also 10 work-based assessors. A finance manager and administrator support the training school.

3. The unemployment rate in Barnsley is 2 per cent, which is just under the 2.2 per cent unemployment rate for England as a whole. According to the 2002 census the area has a particularly low minority ethnic population of less than 1 per cent, well below the rate for England as a whole, which is 9.1 per cent.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

4. Leslie Frances currently provides hairdressing training for 55 hairdressing salons. Most learners attend off-the-job training at the Leslie Frances training centre in Barnsley. Training is offered for foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 1, 2 and 3. The training centre provides background knowledge, practical, and key skills training. Most learners attend weekly. Some learners receive all of their training in the workplace; in these cases, a trainer from Leslie Frances visits the salon to support the training. Nine advanced modern apprentices are also working towards the technical certificate. Of the 112 learners on hairdressing training programmes, 97 are foundation modern apprentices and 15 are advanced modern apprentices. All learners are employed. Leslie Frances also has a contract to provide NVQ at level 1 hairdressing to 14-16 year old learners, but this provision was not inspected. The foundation modern apprenticeship programme is planned to last for two years. The advanced modern apprenticeship programme is planned to last for three years.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learner interviews	26
Number of staff interviews	24
Number of employer interviews	11
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of visits	12

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, hairdressing and beauty therapy training is satisfactory, as is its leadership and management. Arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality assurance are also 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		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hairdressing		
- Work-based learning for young people	112	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. **Learners rapidly develop practical skills and background knowledge** in the workplace and the training centre. Most learners gain skills earlier than would be expected of them and learn to apply their skills well. They work with confidence in colouring techniques and use their knowledge to solve problems. Some learners demonstrate particularly high levels of skill: one learner who had only been on programme for four months produced a very good, fashionable haircut. Other learners who worked part time in the salons before starting their modern apprenticeships have used their prior learning well.

7. **Many learners have made slow progress towards completing their modern apprenticeship frameworks** and stay on the programme beyond their planned completion dates. Achievement rates have been poor in previous years, but have improved recently. Of the 41 foundation modern apprentices who started in 2001, eight have currently completed their frameworks and a further 20 are close to completion, or are on target to complete their modern apprenticeships. Retention rates have improved over the past three years and are now satisfactory.

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	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	6
Total	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	6

8. **Teaching is good both in the workplace and at the training centre.** Learners find the teaching challenging and benefit from effective questioning by tutors. Teachers maintain a good rapport with learners. In classroom sessions teachers use a good range of interesting games and activities to help learners make progress. Most employers provide additional training in the workplace which supports and reinforces progress.

9. **Learners' workplaces are good.** Salons are of very good quality and provide a positive environment for learners to develop skills and practise on clients. Learners have access to modern equipment, including computers, and wide ranges of products which help to stimulate learning.

10. Assessment is appropriately planned and learners understand the processes well. They have opportunities to be assessed at work, but most assessment takes place at the training centre.

11. Any additional learning needs are identified during induction and there are satisfactory arrangements for learners to receive literacy and numeracy support where necessary. There are also opportunities for learners to receive support from external

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agencies if required. Staff and employers provide appropriate support for learners who experience problems in the workplace.

Leadership and management

12. Management of the area of learning is satisfactory. Staff are well qualified and experienced, all trainers have a good understanding of current commercial practice and work to a good standard.

13. Employers are supported well. Staff have carried out a detailed evaluation of employers' understanding of key employment issues and have provided a number of ways in which employers can be updated on areas such as employment law. Employers appreciate the efforts made to keep them informed.

14. **The provider has good strategies to ensure that learners remain in training.** Staff meet and discuss those learners who are at risk of leaving before completing their training and plan appropriate actions. The team shares good practice regularly and work together to help learners. The training team has a particularly positive attitude and they relate to the needs of learners well. **Leslie Frances ensures that employers are fully aware of expectations regarding learners' terms and conditions of employment, to ensure good working conditions.**

15. Staff receive regular opportunities to review their own development in line with business objectives. Staff development is accessible to all staff and the provider responds to all requests by staff.

16. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. Leslie Frances has an effective internal audit cycle. Clear processes are followed that are known and understood by all staff. Actions arising from the audit process are clearly recorded.

17. **Good use is made of the wide range of feedback** gathered from learners and employers. Employers receive regular visits from provider's staff specifically to gain feedback. This feedback is evaluated and used effectively to help improve the quality of training. The quality of on-the-job training is not monitored sufficiently.

18. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and all stakeholders are appropriately involved.

19. Staff and other resources are effectively managed. The training centre is equipped to industry standards and good-quality products are used for training and assessment. Literacy and numeracy support is managed satisfactorily. Strategies are in place to diagnose learners' needs and arrangements are in place to make sure that their needs are met.

20. Leslie Frances has a comprehensive range of appropriate equality of opportunity policies and supporting paperwork. Learners receive an introduction to equal opportunities when they start training and most have their knowledge reinforced during

their programmes. Employers are offered additional training in equality of opportunity issues and are kept up to date with equal opportunities through the provider's newsletter.

21. Leslie Frances has had some success in attracting more male learners to hairdressing apprenticeships. Thoughtful revisions to the information and publicity materials have been made, with good attention paid to the needs of male learners. There are no specific strategies to improve the recruitment of learners from minority ethnic groups.

22. **The management of on-the-job training is weak. Employers are not sufficiently involved in progress reviews** and they do not receive enough guidance or support in developing a structured on-the-job learning plan. **They are not always present at progress review meetings.** Employers are not encouraged sufficiently to make comments and to contribute to target-setting. Individual learning plans are not always updated when learners achieve their targets early.

23. **Business planning is weak,** key strategic plans are not centralised and there are few detailed targets. The process does not detail how the business objectives will be met. Not enough details are given about timescales or the resources needed to establish management strategies.

24. **The management information system is inadequate.** Most data is produced manually, and is adequate for financial monitoring, but regular analysis of ongoing performance is weak. It is difficult for the provider to identify trends early enough to take appropriate actions. This problem has been identified by managers and plans have been made to deal with this weakness.

25. **Equality of opportunity is not reinforced sufficiently in progress reviews.** Staff do check that learners are being treated fairly. Learners are asked questions at progress reviews, but these do not reinforce wider knowledge, or help to promote equality of opportunity. Where learners do make comments, these are not recorded in the review paperwork.

26. Internal verification is satisfactory, the internal verification process is well-planned and recorded and learners' work is sampled appropriately. Trainers and assessors in the training centre are observed regularly, but work-based assessors are not observed enough and some have not been observed assessing during the past year.

27. Teaching observations are carried out regularly with all staff, but workplace training is not monitored. A process has been developed to improve this situation, but has not been implemented.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good support for employers to enhance learners' working conditions
- good strategies to ensure learners remain on programme

LESLIE FRANCES (HAIR FASHIONS) LIMITED

- good evaluation and use of a wide range of feedback

Weaknesses

- weak business planning
- inadequate management information systems
- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity at progress reviews

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing

Strengths

- rapid development of learners' background knowledge and practical skills
- good standard of teaching
- good workplaces

Weaknesses

- slow progress towards achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- weak management of on-the-job training
- insufficient employer involvement in monitoring of learners' progress

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT LESLIE FRANCES (HAIR FASHIONS) LIMITED:

- supportive, friendly and professional staff
- the practical hairdressing training
- the training sessions provided at work
- demonstrations of new practical skills
- the games and interesting activities in background knowledge sessions
- meeting other young hairdressers at the training centre

WHAT LEARNERS THINK LESLIE FRANCES (HAIR FASHIONS) LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of equipment at the training school
- the number of clients for practise in the training school
- background knowledge training at work
- the organisation of the cleaning rota
- financial help with transport costs
- the number of detailed demonstrations in some sessions

KEY CHALLENGES FOR LESLIE FRANCES (HAIR FASHIONS) LIMITED:

- maintain and continue to improve the good standards of teaching
- develop more effective strategies to ensure that learners complete their modern apprenticeship frameworks within planned timescales
- improve co-ordination and planning of on-the-job training
- increase the involvement of employers in monitoring training and progress
- improve the business planning process and measurable performance targets
- improve the availability and use of management information and technology
- ensure that progress reviews are used effectively to promote learners' understanding of equality of opportunity
- prioritise quality assurance procedures to resolve the key weaknesses in hairdressing training

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good support for employers to enhance learners' working conditions
- good strategies to ensure learners remain on programme
- good evaluation and use of a wide range of feedback

Weaknesses

- weak business planning
- inadequate management information systems
- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity at progress reviews

28. Leslie Frances supports employers well; this strength was partly recognised in the self-assessment report. A good evaluation has been completed of employers' understanding of key issues which affect learners, such as employment rights. Targets have been incorporated into the business plan to raise employers' awareness of employment issues and to improve learners' experiences. A formal agreement with employers gives clear guidance regarding the provider's expectations of employers. Employers are regularly updated by a six-monthly newsletter giving information about current legislation and issues such as the current minimum wage. The employer agreement contains a requirement of the employer to ensure that learners receive a contract of employment. This gives learners a clear understanding of their employment rights and responsibilities. Leslie Frances holds events to update employers about issues such as equal opportunities and employment law. These events are well received by those employers that attend. Alternative strategies are used with employers who do not attend, such as the six-monthly newsletter.

29. Good strategies ensure that learners remain on programme; a strength partly recognised in the self-assessment report. Staff communicate effectively and work closely together to identify and deal with learners who may be at risk of leaving the programme before completion of objectives. Staff have regular monthly meetings and meet informally more often to share information about learners and their progress. The training team have a particularly supportive and positive attitude which helps them to relate to the needs of learners. Most tutors work part time as hairstylists in the salons and are highly competent fashion hairdressers. Stylists often progress to assistant tutors in the training school where they work alongside experienced staff, allowing them to develop with the role. The directors work closely with the training team and have a good rapport with the staff and learners. The training manager maintains a very good awareness of learners' progress and is very supportive of the staff.

30. The management and provision of resources are adequate. Financial resources are

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effectively monitored and used to support learning. The training centre is sufficiently equipped to meet the needs of the learners and the requirements of the programmes. Quality products are used in the salons and in the training centre. Leslie Frances has sufficient qualified and experienced staff. Staff receive regular performance reviews and have good access to staff development opportunities. An annual staff development plan is used to identify the organisation's key development needs. Absences from work, such as for maternity leave, are followed by a re-induction and updating on any relevant changes.

31. The management strategy and provision for literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. All learners receive an individual development plan based on their initial assessment result which clearly details areas where support may be needed. A designated key skills tutor supports the learners effectively, both in the training centre and in the salons. A dedicated strategy refers learners for external support if the provider is not able to provide adequate support.

32. Business planning is weak. The plan consists of a number of documents with few clear, detailed targets. The business planning process does not fully record how business objectives will be met, or targets reached. Insufficient detail is given in terms of timescales and resources needed to implement the strategies and how effectiveness will be measured. For example, a target to increase employer involvement has no specific detail as to how this will happen and what would constitute success. There is not enough clear indication of the roles that individuals will play in implementing the plans at operational level. Many of the training targets do not have measurable performance targets. Staff are able to describe how the organisation will meet its targets, but this is often not recorded. This weakness was not recognised in the self-assessment report.

33. As identified in the self-assessment report, the management information system is inadequate. The current systems used to produce data are unreliable and inefficient. There is a heavy reliance on producing information manually. Data is analysed on a monthly basis as part of financial monitoring, but yearly intakes are not analysed sufficiently to identify trends in performance over time, or where management action is needed. Leslie Frances cannot produce data readily in order to monitor progress and set targets. Inspectors had difficulty in accessing reliable data to make judgements about learners' performance. Data is not analysed to determine attendance rates; attendance is good in off-the-job training sessions, but this is not measured year on year. Attendance is not analysed to help identify whether this is affecting achievement levels. Managers and directors have identified this weakness and the development plan details actions to resolve the problems.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

34. Leslie Frances has an appropriate, comprehensive equal opportunities and diversity policy that is updated annually. A number of other measures have been produced to support and promote equality of opportunity, such as a disability statement and a range of annexes. Learners and employers receive copies of these policies and annexes and arrangements are adequate to ensure that learners have a satisfactory understanding of

equality of opportunity through the induction process. Some learners have also received ongoing refresher and additional training in equality of opportunity. Some good examples were observed in training sessions which reinforced equality of opportunity through the development of communication skills, such as dealing with clients with disabilities.

35. Employers receive satisfactory information relating to equality of opportunity through their employer pack. More recently, a programme of visits to salons by Leslie Frances's staff has been introduced to check employers' ability to resolve equal opportunities matters. Each salon is given a risk banding, but it is not always clear what criteria have been used to decide the rating.

36. Leslie Frances has satisfactory arrangements to update staff's knowledge through monthly staff meetings. Staff receive information about changes to legislation, although insufficient formal training in equality of opportunity has been provided recently. Employers have been offered equality of opportunity training, but to date none has attended. In the past year, staff and learners have attended a drama training presentation about equality of opportunity provided by the LSC. A satisfactory range of booklets and training materials is available to help support staff's and learners' understanding.

37. Leslie Frances has been successful in attracting more male learners to hairdressing modern apprenticeships. In recent years, revised publicity and information sheets have been used effectively to promote hairdressing careers to men and these strategies have been successful. Managers considered the questions frequently asked by the parents of prospective male learners when developing new promotional materials. Appropriate targets are set and reviewed for the percentage of male learners recruited. At the time of the inspection approximately 4 per cent of learners were men, compared with 10 per cent in the previous year. There are no specific strategies to improve the participation rates of minority ethnic groups; although challenging targets have been set for the past three years, these have not been fully met.

38. Audio tape recordings of background knowledge sessions are produced and made available to all learners who require them, such as those with communication, literacy or language problems. Although the training centre is located on the third and fourth floors above the Leslie Frances salon, alternative arrangements provide training for learners with mobility difficulties at other, ground-floor premises.

39. Appropriate data is collected about the gender and ethnicity of learners on programme, to comply with funding body requirements. Satisfactory targets are set for the recruitment of male and minority ethnic learners, but there is no formal analysis of the performance of specific groups. Data is not used to plan recruitment effectively, or to determine the performance of groups of learners, such as men or those with additional learning needs. This has been recognised in the self-assessment report and plans are formulated to deal with this weakness.

40. Equality of opportunity is not reinforced sufficiently during progress reviews and discussions do not promote equality of opportunity adequately. This weakness was not

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recognised in the self-assessment report. Leslie Frances does check that learners are being treated fairly and not being bullied, but no detailed questions are used to reinforce learners' understanding. Details of discussions with learners are not recorded sufficiently, and learners' knowledge and understanding of equality of opportunity is not improved by the review process. Learners' knowledge levels are not tested sufficiently or identified through progress reviews.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

41. Feedback is used well; it is gathered on a regular basis from a wide range of sources. This strength was not fully recognised in the self-assessment report. Various effective strategies are used to collect feedback. Questionnaires are used to obtain feedback from employers and learners and the results are analysed and acted upon. A scheduled programme of 12-weekly quality monitoring visits to salons is used to obtain feedback from employers. This process also helps Leslie Frances to actively seek out complaints, and managers act promptly to any negative feedback.

42. Other quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. A comprehensive quality assurance manual covers training centre activities. The manual is understood and used by staff. The provider has an internal audit cycle, with nominated staff assigned to various aspects of the audit. Concerns are well recorded and used to contribute positively to continuous improvement. The directors are appropriately involved in quality assurance of the programme. Although improvements are planned, not enough checks have been made to assure the quality of on-the-job training, or that employers contribute adequately to learners' progress reviews.

43. Teaching observations are satisfactory, observations of off-the-job training sessions take place regularly and feedback is given to staff. The provider focuses appropriately on raising professional standards in hairdressing teaching. Internal paperwork indicates that improvements have been made in the quality of teaching. Observations take place in the training centre, but have not been extended to the on-the-job training. New criteria have been developed to assess the quality of teaching alongside assessment practice when internal verifiers carry out their observations. Inspectors gave higher grades to teaching than those in the self-assessment report.

44. Internal verification is planned and completed satisfactorily. Appropriately detailed records are kept and the sampling of learners is monitored effectively. More recently, there has not been sufficient sampling of work-based assessors, but assessment carried out by work-based assessors was observed as satisfactory by inspectors. Many of the work-based assessors have not attended assessment standardisation meetings, although contact has been maintained through an assessor's newsletter. The internal verification procedure is detailed in the quality assurance manual, but there is insufficient detail about the frequency of sampling required, and the plan is not always amended when changes occur. Feedback from awarding body reports is considered and appropriate action is taken to resolve any weaknesses.

45. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and based on the views of all

stakeholders. Staff have a good understanding of the 'Common Inspection Framework'. The grade awarded for equal opportunities was lower than the self-assessment grade. The grades awarded by inspectors for leadership and management and quality assurance matched those in the self-assessment report. Inspectors did not agree with the strengths in hairdressing, or the self-assessment grade; however additional strengths were found. The weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report were similar to inspectors' findings.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Hairdressing & beauty therapy		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hairdressing - Work-based learning for young people	112	3

Hairdressing

Strengths

- rapid development of learners' background knowledge and practical skills
- good standard of teaching
- good workplaces

Weaknesses

- slow progress towards achievement of modern apprenticeship frameworks
- weak management of on-the-job training
- insufficient employer involvement in monitoring of learners' progress

Achievement and standards

46. Learners rapidly develop background knowledge and practical skills in the workplace and in the training centre. This strength was not recognised in the self-assessment report. Many learners develop these skills faster than would normally be expected. Learners use good techniques when sectioning and applying foil highlights and pay particular attention to client preparation and care. Learners work with confidence and use their background knowledge effectively to carry out practical tasks. Learners have very good product knowledge. Some learners demonstrate high-level skills. For example one learner, who had only been on programme for four months, displayed very good cutting and colouring skills to produce a fashionable long-layered hairstyle. Other learners demonstrated good colour application techniques and styling skills. Learners' portfolios are satisfactory. They contain an appropriate range of evidence to support learners' work, which is satisfactorily indexed and referenced. In some cases, learners' written assignment work is not corrected sufficiently for spelling or grammatical errors.

47. Learners' attendance rates at the training centre are very good, although no attendance data is collated centrally, analysed or acted upon.

48. Some learners make slow progress towards achieving their modern apprenticeship frameworks, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Learners often remain on programme beyond their planned completion dates. Achievements have been poor

in previous years, but are showing an improvement. In 2000-01, of the 25 learners who started the advanced modern apprenticeship, four successfully completed their frameworks. In 2001-02 of the 11 who started, four completed all aspects of the framework and two are still in training. Of the 41 foundation modern apprentices who started in 2001-02, eight have completed the framework. Of those learners who are still in training, 20 are awaiting certification, or have almost completed all aspects of the modern apprenticeship framework; those remaining are now on target to complete the framework within the planned time. Retention rates have improved over the past three years and are now satisfactory.

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		1998-99		1997-98			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	11		5		11		25		69		53		48			
Retained*	0		2		6		8		20		12	23	11	23		
Successfully completed	0		2		4		4		17		12	23	11	23		
Still in learning	9		2		2		1		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									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	63		61		41		18									
Retained*	0		12		10		6	33								
Successfully completed	0		9		8		6	33								
Still in learning	52		33		12		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

49. Teaching is good in the workplace and at the training centre, as partly recognised in the self-assessment report. Off-the-job training is challenging, and health and safety knowledge is regularly reinforced. Learners demonstrate good progress in practical work. Teachers use good questioning techniques and provide good individual coaching. The learning environment is good and teachers have a good rapport with learners. Learners are enthusiastic about practical training and are very well motivated. Games and a variety of imaginative activities are used well to teach background knowledge. In one session the appeals procedure was cut into pieces and learners worked in groups to

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re-assemble it, which effectively reinforced their awareness. Learners enjoy attending off-the-job training. Most work placements have designated training times throughout the week and learners progress quickly through the NVQ units. Key skills training is appropriately integrated and supported. Learners build portfolios which meet awarding body standards.

50. Workplaces are good, a strength partly recognised in the self-assessment. Many are high-quality hairdressing salons in prime locations, that give learners the opportunity for training and assessment on a wide range of clients. Most have a good corporate image and the latest modern equipment and facilities, with extensive ranges of high-quality products for use in the salon and for retailing to clients. Some salons have good access to computer facilities in the reception areas. Employers provide stimulating learning environments where staff act as good role models and learners observe good skills at work. Other resources are satisfactory; accommodation and learning resources are appropriate to meet learners' needs.

51. Assessment is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the awarding body. Learners are appropriately briefed and prepared for assessment. Opportunities for assessment are available both on and off the job, but most assessment takes place during off-the-job sessions. For a few learners there are not enough opportunities for assessment at work in the early stages of training.

52. Programmes and additional opportunities for learners are satisfactory and meet the needs of employers and learners. Many learners have opportunities to attend hairdressing competitions, additional training is offered in workplaces and there are opportunities within the workplace for learners to progress in their careers.

53. The assessment of learners' numeracy and literacy skills is satisfactory. Learners' needs are identified during induction and all learners are given a good, separate individual learning plan for key skills training. Learners identified as having additional learning needs are referred to a trained tutor for support and there are also opportunities for learners to be referred to external agencies if necessary.

54. Learners receive satisfactory pastoral and vocational support from the provider's staff; they provide support and advice to learners experiencing problems in the workplace. Staff create a supportive, friendly learning environment which enables learners to develop their skills with confidence.

Leadership and management

55. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Trainers have a good commitment to hairdressing training. Staff are well qualified and experienced. They have a particularly good understanding of modern techniques and industry practice. The team are enthusiastic and work well together to share good practice.

56. The internal verification system is satisfactory and is comprehensively planned, but work-based assessors do not receive sufficient internal verification; in some cases

assessors have been assessing for up to 12 months and have not been visited by a verifier. There is not enough monitoring of work-based learning. Leslie Frances's trainers receive frequent, graded observations of learning sessions, but work-based trainers are not observed and the standard of training provided is not formally monitored for quality. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and all staff contribute to the report.

57. Management of on-the-job training is weak. This was not recognised in the self-assessment report. Employers do not receive a copy of learners' individual learning plans. An outline of off-the-job training is provided to employers, but insufficient guidance is given for a structured, on-the-job learning plan. Individual learning plans are not updated when learners have met targets before the planned achievement date. Long-term target-setting is inadequate. Learners and employers are not sufficiently involved in long-term target-setting. No long-term assessment targets are set within progress reviews to enable learners to measure their progress, or plan NVQ unit completion throughout their programmes. Short-term target-setting is satisfactory, but targets are broad and generally identify whole units of the NVQ.

58. Employers are not sufficiently involved in monitoring learners' progress. They are not involved enough in the learner review process; the reviews often do not include employers' comments about learners' progress, targets, or actions needed for improvement. Progress reviews are often completed in the training centre and the paperwork is then sent to the employer for comments, but many employers do not complete the form.

59. Equality of opportunity is not reinforced sufficiently during progress reviews. Standard questions in reviews do not develop or promote equal opportunities, or focus learners' awareness on how issues relate to the workplace. The reviewer's questions and learners' responses are not fully recorded. The storage of learners' personal details is inadequate. Records are left on the reception desk, which does not comply with the data protection act.