

INSPECTION REPORT

Cheyne's Hairdressing Training

24 November 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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 aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** 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.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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Cheynes Hairdressing Training

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Cheynes Hairdressing Training (CHT) is a private training company based in Edinburgh. It is the training division of Cheynes Management Limited which operates a group of salons in Scotland. CHT provides government-funded work-based learning in hairdressing at salons across the UK. Learners in England are funded by the National Employer Service of the Learning and Skills Council. CHT also trains learners in Scotland and Ireland and also has a significant number of privately funded learners. Currently 186 learners are following apprenticeship programmes and 30 learners are on advanced apprenticeships. Each salon that works with CHT is independently accredited by the awarding body as a training and assessment centre. CHT manages the training and assessment taking place in each of these centres. It also gives guidance to salons and provides learning materials and internal verification.

2. CHT's programme director manages the company's training division from the small head office in Edinburgh. The programme director is assisted by a national vocational qualification (NVQ) technical director, five administrators, four principal training advisers and a team of 20 part-time regional training advisers. Principal and regional training advisers work from home in England. The programme director is also a director of Cheynes Management Limited and represents the training division at board level. There are 108 salon-based assessors and 16 internal verifiers. Learners are recruited by their salon and join CHT's training programme after a period of in-salon induction.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** CHT's leadership and management are good as are its arrangements for quality improvement. The company's approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory and provision in hairdressing is good.

4. **The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process is well understood by all staff, who are clear about their responsibilities and how the process links with continuous improvement. All members of staff are included in the process, contributing through a series of meetings and questionnaires. The self-assessment process is sufficiently critical, correctly identifying most of the strengths and weakness found during inspection and supporting them with sufficient evidence. Data on retention and achievement rates was used to support the process, as was feedback from employers and learners. The self-assessment process is continuous and is integrated with the overall quality management of the provision.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** CHT responds quickly to resolve any weaknesses identified through the self-assessment process and quality management systems. Since its previous inspection, the company has made significant improvements which have either fully or partially resolved most of the identified weaknesses. The development plan is well constructed and has clear strategies

CHEYNES HAIRDRESSING TRAINING

to increase further retention and achievement rates, the quality of provision and the learners' overall experience.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CHEYNES HAIRDRESSING TRAINING:

- continue to build on the strong management and quality improvement structures
- implement a structured learning plan in equality of opportunity for learners and salon trainers
- ensure that the management information system continues to be developed
- maintain the very good standard of practical training and improve the delivery of background knowledge and key skills training

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

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

Retail and commercial enterprise			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Hairdressing</i>			2
Apprenticeships for young people	216		2

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. The inspection took place over four days during one week in November 2005. Additional evidence was collected in relation to leadership and management and the area of learning from two earlier visits in September and October.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	18
Number of learners interviewed	47
Number of staff interviewed	35
Number of employers interviewed	15
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	20

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

7. Rate of retention and framework completion are generally satisfactory. Retention rates have steadily improved as have achievement rates on the apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes. **However, some advanced apprentices are making slow progress.**

8. **Learners demonstrate high levels of skill when handling scissors, combs and hairdryers.** They use advanced techniques over and above those required for the NVQ when cutting hair. For example, they have sufficient expertise to create contemporary haircuts using a variety of techniques. Many learners are able to carry out cutting and colouring techniques to a commercially good standard after only being on programme for a short period of time.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Retail and commercial enterprise	0	10	2	0	12
Total	0	10	2	0	12

9. **Learners receive good practical training in excellent salons.** The ratio of trainers to learners is good and a high level of individual attention is paid to help learners gain and rapidly improve their hairdressing skills.

10. Trainers at CHT are highly skilled and accomplished at demonstrating skills to learners. Trainers make good use of questioning techniques to assess learners' subject knowledge and technical expertise. Learners are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their practical training.

11. **Learners receive good individual support.** They have good relationships with their trainers and assessors, who they feel are approachable and easy to talk to. Trainers are skilled at creating supportive, friendly environments in which learners feel secure and able to develop their skills with confidence.

12. Planning for and practice in NVQ assessment is appropriate. Assessment is individually planned and is recorded well. Arrangements to assess learners' literacy and numeracy skills support needs is satisfactory. Support is given in the salon, but the process is not recorded well enough to identify the improvements made by the learners.

13. **Salon trainers are not given enough training to help them improve the teaching and learning of key skills.** Trainers lack confidence in providing training and few have key skills qualifications.

14. **Programme management is good,** with good communication between the salons and CHT's staff. Salons are visited frequently and programme development is discussed at a variety of meetings.

15. **Good processes are in place to monitor, record and action quality improvement within the salons.** Detailed step-by-step guides enable salons to plan very effectively for monitoring visits. Clear processes are in place to measure salons' performance and evaluate all aspects of the training programme management.

Leadership and management

16. **CHT has a clear strategic direction,** based on a well-developed set of values and aims with a clear focus on the learner and the quality of training. The company's development plan has clear objectives and is used to produce a very effective operational plan that staff recognise and understand. Clear strategies are in place to increase retention and achievement rates.

17. **Operational management at CHT is good.** The senior management team works as a coherent operational team and is responsive to the day-to-day requirements of the regional training advisers. Problems raised are dealt with effectively and without delay. A range of meetings take place at all levels of the training team where the focus is on developing and planning the training programmes.

18. Staff training at CHT is satisfactory, with a wide variety of opportunities for staff to continually develop their professional skills. The staff development plan is linked to the company's overall strategic plan. Some of the salon-based assessors delivering key skills and background knowledge training are not receiving sufficient support to ensure that assessment criteria are consistently followed.

19. CHT has identified the need for a new management information system. Although capable of producing reports to support business decisions, **CHT's management information system is insufficiently mature to provide detailed trend analysis.**

20. Learners are clear about their employment rights and responsibilities, and understand what constitutes harassment and bullying and who they would contact. Comprehensive policies are in place that cover all relevant discrimination and diversity legislation.

21. **Learners and assessors receive insufficient equality and diversity training** to enable them to develop a better understanding of the wider issues of equality of opportunity and diversity.

22. **CHT has good arrangements to implement quality improvement.** The company's approach to quality improvement is systematic and understood well by staff. The self-assessment process includes all staff, who are clear about their roles, and the importance of the process in promoting continuous improvement.

23. Internal verification is satisfactory. The process is systematic, thorough and meets the awarding body's standards. Feedback to assessors is clear, with standardisation meetings ensuring a consistent approach to assessment.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good leadership in setting clear strategic direction
- good operational management
- very effective arrangements for continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed management information system
- insufficient training for learners and salon trainers in equality and diversity

Retail and commercial enterprise

Hairdressing

Grade 2

Strengths

- good development of hairdressing skills
- very good practical hairdressing training
- good individual support
- good management of programmes
- good processes to monitor, record and action quality improvement in salons

Weaknesses

- slow progress of advanced apprentices
- insufficient training to help salon trainers deliver key skills and NVQ background knowledge

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT CHEYNES HAIRDRESSING TRAINING:

- 'the variety keeps me interested'
- working with assessors in salons - 'it means that we have constant help and support'
- the progress wall chart - 'it tells me what I've done and that I am closer to completing'
- being part of a salon team
- the assessors, who are easy to talk to
- the opportunity to work on clients
- the good skills learnt
- the help and support received

WHAT LEARNERS THINK CHEYNES HAIRDRESSING TRAINING COULD IMPROVE:

- the repetition in the set written work - there's too much of it
- the amount of time given for level 3 training
- the time spent copying out of books
- the amount of key skills work - there's too much
- the chance to speak with assessors

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good leadership in setting clear strategic direction
- good operational management
- very effective arrangements for continuous improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed management information system
- insufficient training for learners and salon trainers in equality and diversity

24. CHT has a clear strategic direction, based on a well-developed set of values and aims with a clear focus on the learners and the quality of training. The company has a three-year development plan which sets clear objectives, each accompanied by a brief set of actions. This plan is developed into a very effective operational plan linked to the findings from the self-assessment process. Although the links are not made explicit, an overall timetable very effectively draws the plans together. Regular reviews of progress on the development plan take place and are well documented. The programme director gives clear leadership in ensuring that the objectives in the development plan are being met. Current objectives include improving the existing strategies to increase retention and achievement rates. CHT has been successful at collecting and improving the detailed data on reasons why learners leave the training programme early and is using this effectively to target learners at risk of leaving. Staff are clear about their priorities in meeting these aims. Very good use is made of development planning, target-setting, action-planning and reviews with staff.

25. Data on learners' progress and achievement is used regularly by managers and staff to review performance against the objectives outlined in the development plan. Policies, procedures and key processes are specified appropriately. Staff are encouraged to take ownership of the processes and are effectively developing them in conjunction with the programme director and senior management team. Roles and responsibilities are specified appropriately and are understood by staff. CHT uses its links with professional hairdressing bodies to respond very effectively to changes in hairdressing and promote high standards of training within the industry. CHT has also built very effective links with schools to provide good-quality work experience and training for level 1 qualifications. Many of these pupils have been successfully recruited into the hairdressing industry.

26. The operational management of CHT is good. The programme manager works closely with the NVQ technical director and the company's four principal training advisers as a coherent operational team. The senior management team is responsive to the day-to-day requirements of the regional training advisers, and problems raised by staff or learners are dealt with effectively and without delay. The programme director and NVQ technical director meet frequently with the training team to plan and develop the training programmes. Regional training advisers visit salons at least once every three months to meet with salon-based assessors and trainers. Regional training advisers give very effective support and guidance to salons with all aspects of a learner's training needs. A report on

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the salon visit covering all aspects of the training programme is completed by the regional training adviser and sent to head office to be reviewed by the programme director.

27. Regional training advisers have an opportunity to contribute to the strategic direction of the company and share good practice through a series of regular meetings held throughout the year. Detailed reports of these meetings are produced and widely distributed to employers and training staff. Standardisation meetings take place at least twice a year for salon owners and assessors to attend. Assessors who miss more than one meeting are not allowed to assess in the salon. Regional training advisers meet with principal training advisers frequently to monitor progress. The programme director meets with salon owners regularly to discuss the progress of training and ensure that employers are clear about their responsibilities to the learner. CHT produces and distributes to all employers, assessors and learners a monthly e-mail update of useful and valuable information on key issues linked to training or their role within the process.

28. Employers receive good support and clear guidance on what is required of them in supporting their learners' training. Salons are of a good quality and benefit learners by allowing additional opportunities for learning. Regular contact between employers and CHT ensures that learners' training is well co-ordinated. Employers are kept informed of learners' progress through quarterly reviews and monthly newsletters.

29. Staff training at CHT is satisfactory. Staff have access to a wide variety of staff training opportunities that form part of their individual development plans and continued professional development. Regional training advisers' development needs are identified through observation by principal training advisers, and the staff development is planned on an individual basis or as part of the regional training advisers' conference. The staff training and development policy is linked to the company's business goals and strategic plan. Some of the salon assessors who are delivering key skills and background knowledge training are not receiving sufficient support to ensure that they have enough confidence in their teaching skills to provide learning sessions.

30. CHT has a clear strategy for managing literacy, numeracy and language skills support. All learners undergo a screening test at the start of the course. Individual support is provided in the salon by the head of centre. Assessors are made aware of the learners' support needs and give additional help in the workplace. However, the staff who provide support are not appropriately qualified in literacy and numeracy support, although some have achieved key skills qualifications. There are indications that the provision of support for the small number of learners requiring it is effective but no analysis takes place to measure the overall success of the support.

31. A new management information system has recently been introduced but is currently insufficiently developed. CHT identified that its previous management information system was not sufficiently capable of producing detailed reports to support business decisions. The new system has a greater potential for trend analysis and CHT has a clear understanding of how it will be used. Data from the earlier system has been transferred to the new system, but the data held on learners' progress is very limited. Currently the system is unable to carry out sufficient in-depth analysis to give clear management information on the overall progress that learners are making.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 3**

32. Learners understand their employment rights and responsibilities. They are clear about how their employers should treat them. Learners understand what constitutes harassment and bullying in the workplace and are very clear about who to contact, either in their employment or through their regional training adviser, if a problem occurs. They receive good pastoral support in their salon and are supported well. Thorough checks at quarterly reviews identify if any learners are vulnerable or at risk, and immediate action is taken by the regional training adviser. These learners are placed on an 'at risk' register and the situation is closely monitored, with thorough records being kept. CHT has developed an equal opportunities fitness check to identify further how well salons are complying with policies and procedures. This initiative has not yet been introduced into the salons.

33. CHT has comprehensive policies and procedures that are regularly updated and extended to take new legislative requirements into account. Salons that work with CHT formally agree to comply fully with the company's equal opportunity policy. Salons receive regular updates to ensure they have relevant and current information.

34. CHT has reviewed and updated its marketing materials to present positive non-stereotypical images. It has also recently updated its website. Improvement targets have been set to increase recruitment of men and minority ethnic group members. CHT has had some success in recruiting men, increasing their representation in its intake to 10 per cent, which is slightly above the national average in England. The company has been less successful in attracting members of other under-represented groups. While national targets are set, little use is made of local market intelligence to identify the under-represented groups in specific regional areas. As a consequence, individual salons do not concentrate localised marketing initiatives at specific groups.

35. Learners and assessors receive insufficient equality and diversity training. Learners receive a copy of the equal opportunities policy and information on their rights and responsibilities at induction. They are given no further ongoing training to illustrate the concepts of equality and diversity, improve their understanding and help them apply positive practices to their employment and everyday lives. Equality of opportunity is a regular item at the regional training advisers' quarterly conference. However, the training advisers, salon assessors and trainers receive no formal training to help them develop their understanding and further support learners in their understanding. Salon training plans efficiently set out how and when NVQ skills training will take place, but do not identify opportunities to promote equality and diversity. There are no learning resources to support training in equality and diversity.

Quality improvement**Contributory grade 2**

36. CHT has good arrangements in place for continuous improvement. The company's approach to quality improvement is systematic and understood well by staff. Staff are clear about their role within the quality assurance system and understand its importance and how it is linked to continuous improvement. The quality assurance management system is clear and comprehensive. It includes a wide range of procedures relating to key aspects of the learners' experience. Very effective systems are in place to monitor that procedures are being carried out to the correct standard. Regional training advisers visit each salon at least every 12 weeks to review each learner's progress and each salon's compliance with CHT's procedures. A well-managed approach to evaluating the quality of training includes

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detailed reports produced by the regional training advisers and the principal training advisers on the quality of training taking place. After each visit, training advisers produce a precise 'meeting action plan', clearly identifying the actions that need to be taken by each learner and the salon's staff. Completion of the action plan is checked to ensure that a prompt and effective response takes place. CHT has very clear guidelines on the responsibility of each of the salons in ensuring the quality of the learners' training. CHT applies a well-developed quality assurance system when selecting its salons to ensure that all training takes place in well-equipped and professionally run salons.

37. The self-assessment process is part of the overall quality management structure at CHT and is a very effective key part of the overall continuous improvement strategy. The company has made improvements to provision since publishing its seventh self-assessment report in August 2005. Staff are fully involved in the self-assessment process through regular team meetings during which, over a period of time, each of the key questions of the Common Inspection Framework is considered. Feedback from employers and learners is also used to support self-assessment. The current self-assessment report is an honest and broadly accurate appraisal of the company's current strengths and weaknesses.

38. CHT collects learners' feedback and compiles data about satisfaction levels. It uses this to identify trends and to develop and improve the programme. However, insufficient arrangements are in place to report back to learners on how their comments have been used. Course evaluations are generally based on summaries of learners' comments and have been used well to generate actions for improvement.

39. Internal verification is satisfactory. The process is systematic and thorough, and meets the awarding body's requirements. Feedback to assessors is clear. Internal verification standardisation meetings are held to improve the consistency of approach and to discuss learners' individual progress and actions needed. External verifiers' reports are discussed and actions are assigned. All work-based assessors are required to attend standardisation meetings, and are removed from the assessment team if they do not attend.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Retail and commercial enterprise

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hairdressing</i>		2
Apprenticeships for young people	216	2

40. CHT offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in hairdressing. It has 186 apprentices and 30 advanced apprentices, of whom 10 per cent are men and 2 per cent are from a minority ethnic group. Each salon is independently accredited as a training and assessment centre. All training and assessment is carried out in the salons but is managed by CHT, which provides learning materials, monitors the standards of training, assessment and administration and carries out internal verification.

Hairdressing

Grade 2

Strengths

- good development of hairdressing skills
- very good practical hairdressing training
- good individual support
- good management of programmes
- good processes to monitor, record and action quality improvement in salons

Weaknesses

- slow progress of advanced apprentices
- insufficient training to help salon trainers deliver key skills and NVQ background knowledge

Achievement and standards

41. Learners demonstrate a very good standard of practical skills over a wide range of techniques. Within three months of starting the programme, some learners are performing cutting, styling and colouring techniques to a good standard on clients within a commercially acceptable time. Learners demonstrate high levels of skill when handling scissors, combs and hairdryers. They make use of advanced techniques over and above those required for the NVQ when cutting hair. For example, they have enough expertise to create contemporary haircuts using a variety of techniques. On completion of practical tasks, learners have the confidence to describe clearly to their peers the techniques involved and the products used to complete finished hairstyles. Most learners who complete their training programme gain permanent employment.

42. Learners' written assignments are of a satisfactory standard. The quality of written feedback that learners receive varies widely. The best feedback is constructive, detailed and meaningful to learners. However, some poor feedback does not give learners enough

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detail on their performance or correct their spelling and grammatical errors.

43. Retention and completion rates on the apprenticeship frameworks are generally satisfactory. The retention rates for apprentices have improved from 45 per cent for the 2001-02 intake to 49 per cent for learners starting in 2002-03, and stands at 49 per cent for 2003-04 learners with 22 per cent still in learning. Achievement rates on apprenticeships follow similar improvement trends. On the advanced apprenticeship programme, the retention rate has improved from 43 per cent to 52 per cent between 2001-02 and 2002-03, with 10 per cent of 2003-04 starters retained and 52 per cent still on programmes. There is some slow progress on the advanced apprenticeship programme. Achievement rates are showing similar improvement trends. However, overall progress is slow for some learners.

44. Attendance and punctuality are good in most salons. One salon gives learners financial rewards for consistently good time-keeping and attendance and for NVQ-unit achievement. A star system is also used to identify learners' good and poor practices within the salon and contributes to the 'trainee of the month' award. Apprentices are very appreciative of the opportunity to top up their wages and their performance has improved.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																	
Advanced apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	1		10		21	100	40	100	30	100							
Retained*	0		0		2	10	21	52	13	43							
Successfully completed	0		0		0	0	11	28	7	23							
Still in learning	1		6		11	52	9	22	3	10							

*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																	
Apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02								
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	34		118		133	100	134	100	109	100							
Retained*	0		0		29	22	66	49	49	45							
Successfully completed	0		0		17	13	49	37	39	36							
Still in learning	34		72		65	49	9	7	6	6							

*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

The quality of provision

45. Learners receive very good weekly practical training sessions in excellent salon placements. The ratio of trainers to learners is very good, with generally one trainer to two learners, and learners get good individual attention to help them gain and rapidly improve their skills. Trainers at CHT are highly skilled and are accomplished at demonstrating these skills to learners. Learners routinely benefit from observing good standards of hairdressing

in their workplaces which exceed the requirements of their NVQ. Many learn advanced techniques early in their programmes. For example, a group of apprentices are proficient at hair-colouring procedures normally only learnt towards the end of the programme. Trainers make good use of questioning techniques to assess learners' subject knowledge and technical expertise, and offer appropriate further advice and encouragement when needed. Learners are highly motivated and enthusiastic about the practical training at CHT. Most salons are of a high quality with very modern furnishings, and use a wide range of commercial products and innovative technology, such as flat-screen monitors that learners use to show types of hairstyle, to clients. Most salons have designated training areas that provide a positive learning environment. Learning materials to support training sessions are clear, well written, have good visual imagery and are produced to a high standard. Learners benefit from additional training opportunities such as product updating, attending hair shows, working in their salon's artistic team and external training events. Health and safety practices are mostly good. Regular checks are made and salons achieving the highest category in health and safety checks receive a CHT beacon award. However, learners in some salons do not make enough use of protective gloves when applying hair colour. Some salons do not always give learners enough time to be assessed. In background knowledge training sessions, too much reliance is placed on individual study to support written assignment work.

46. Good individual support is given to learners, who feel very well supported in their training, personal and social development needs. Learners have good relationships with their assessors and trainers, finding them easy to talk to, and feel that any problems that they have at work are resolved quickly. The regional training advisers work hard to develop good communication with the learners at the salons they visit. They are skilled at creating a supportive, friendly learning environment in which learners feel secure and able to develop their skills and confidence. The advisers intervene effectively when necessary and deal with personal issues in a sensitive manner, particularly when employers are involved. The regional training advisers and the salon trainers correctly identify any barriers to learning experienced by the learners and provide appropriate and timely support. For example, good action was taken to support a learner with a physical disability who required more time to complete practical assessments. The awarding body was contacted and agreed an extension in salon timing for practical assessments. The learner is now making good progress. An 'at risk' registrar closely monitors the support provided for apprentices who fall behind their targets or who are struggling to succeed.

47. Planning for and practice in NVQ assessment is appropriate. Assessors carefully plan assessment for each learner. Assessment is thorough and recorded well. Trainers and assessors ensure that learners have enough models to practise on and for their skills to be assessed.

48. Arrangements to assess and meet learners' literacy, numeracy and language support needs are satisfactory. All learners complete an appropriate initial assessment which correctly identifies those who may require additional help. When assessment results indicate that a learner needs additional help, support is provided by the head of centre within each salon. Support is provided to help these learners achieve their NVQ and improve their literacy skills, but the process lacks structure and does not enable the assessor or learner to sufficiently measure improvements. At the time of the inspection, seven learners had additional support needs.

49. Salon trainers are not given enough training to help them improve key skills teaching and learning. Some trainers have insufficient knowledge of key skills qualifications and lack confidence in providing training in this area. A minority of salons are resistant to the concept of key skills training and this leads to isolated, fragmented and often delayed delivery of key skills qualifications in communication and application of number. Few assessors have a key skills qualification. Learners are given key skills workbooks to support their learning, but are not given sufficient coaching to help them understand how to answer some of the questions. CHT has identified two key skills champions whose role is to train and support salons to improve key skills teaching, but the logistics of covering the whole country when CHT is based in the south of England is proving difficult. CHT has realised this and is currently recruiting additional staff to support salons with key skills training. In addition, it is planned that all regional training advisers and salon trainers achieve qualifications in learning and development to improve and develop their teaching practices. CHT is encouraging salons with new learners to start key skills qualifications at the beginning of their apprenticeship programme. In one salon, three new learners have successfully completed the key skills elements of the framework within the first three months of starting their apprenticeship. On-line testing is now being used to help learners receive immediate feedback on their test results. However, level 3 NVQ learners do not get enough coaching to help them prepare for these tests.

Leadership and management

50. Programme management is good. The regional training advisers are employed by CHT to support and monitor individual salons. They also provide internal verification. There is strong and very effective communication between the regional training advisers and salons through regular visits and telephone contact. Visits occur at regular intervals, at least once every three months and sometimes more frequently depending on each individual salon's needs. A newsletter and regular e-mailed briefings inform salons of changes in the hairdressing sector and programme developments. Quarterly meetings are held for salon assessors to discuss programme developments and standardisation activities. Meetings are held at various locations throughout England on different days to give all assessors the opportunity to attend. Learners' progress towards NVQ achievement is monitored very effectively, with good use of visual wall charts to map progress. A graph on the learners' review document effectively shows if the learner is on target, falling behind or ahead of target. CHT supports salons in establishing links with schools. Some salons have developed weekly after-school clubs for school pupils aged 14 or over, some of whom have now progressed to the apprenticeship programme. Other salons offer level 1 NVQs to school pupils.

51. CHT has developed very effective processes and systems to support regional training advisers to prepare for and carry out salon support visits. These include detailed step-by-step guides for planning before, during and after the salon visits. Each stage of the visit has clear and detailed criteria associated to measure salon performance and to evaluate aspects of training and programme management. Areas for development are accurately recorded and clearly fed back to the salon, and timebound actions are negotiated and agreed. Progress against targets is reviewed at subsequent visits using a document for the review of salon targets and achievements. A risk assessment initiative is currently being trialled to identify the salons that are underperforming and to identify support needs. Regional training advisers provide good support and solutions for trainers and assessors to help them improve how they work with the learners. Trainers and assessors greatly value the feedback and help that regional training advisers give to them,

and respond effectively to improvement targets.

52. The self-assessment report is critical and analytical, and accurately identifies CHT's strengths and weaknesses in the hairdressing programme. The company's quality improvement log monitors actions taken to rectify weaknesses and maintain and build on strengths identified in the self-assessment report. It also effectively evaluates the effect of actions on the learner.

53. Internal verification is satisfactory. A new and improved policy and strategy have been introduced over the past year. Documents are completed appropriately and plans are sufficiently developed. Assessors receive good feedback on performance which details areas for improvements. Internal verification has recently been extended and covers aspects of teaching and learning. However, the process does not identify poor practice as a personal development method or sufficiently identify good practice that can be shared.

54. Learners receive satisfactory information on their rights and responsibilities as part of the equality of opportunity content of induction. They receive a copy of the equal opportunities policy that includes policies on bullying and harassment. Equality of opportunity is revisited at learners' 12-weekly progress reviews. Learners are not given enough training during the rest of their programme.

