

INSPECTION REPORT

Positive Approach Academy for Hair

10 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
- **learnndirect** 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*

INSPECTION REPORT

Positive Approach Academy for Hair

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Positive Approach Academy for Hair (PAAH) is a privately owned company which was established as a government-funded training organisation in 1984. The managing director founded the company and continues to play an active role in training and policy development. The provider operates from a purpose-built learning centre in Scunthorpe and provides training for salon owners in Scunthorpe and surrounding districts.
2. PAAH currently employs five members of staff who have all trained and worked with the organisation for between five and 15 years. The senior management team consists of managing director, who is responsible for equality of opportunity and health and safety, and a quality improvement manager, whose responsibilities include course director, internal verification and marketing. All staff provide off-the-job training and on-the-job progress reviews and assessment. Four are qualified assessors and three are qualified internal verifiers.
3. Learners attend off-the-job training for one day each week, and most of the 26 salons provide on-the-job training. There are six qualified work-based assessors, but not all are currently active. The provider contracts with Humberside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships and national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1, 2 and 3 in hairdressing.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** PAAH's leadership and management are good, as are the arrangements for equality of opportunity. Quality improvement is satisfactory. The provision in hairdressing is good.
5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process includes all relevant stakeholders. An initial report is circulated to staff for comments and validation. The report includes a number of strengths identified at inspection, although some of the report's strengths are no more than normal practice. A significant number of the weaknesses identified by inspectors are detailed in the report. Inspection grades agreed with the self-assessed grades in every area except quality improvement. Some of the body of the report was descriptive rather than judgemental, and retention and achievement data was not used sufficiently.
6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** A small team, with particularly effective lines of communication, responds quickly to identify areas and actions for improvement. Management set appropriate annual targets to improve retention and achievement rates. These are shared with the staff, who understand how their roles contribute to the achievement of targets. The development plan identifies actions to be taken, but some of the measurable outcomes are vague. Progress in improving the provision is difficult to evaluate at times.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR POSITIVE APPROACH ACADEMY FOR HAIR:

- further develop quality assurance processes to implement improvement
- further develop the close working relationship with employers
- continue to develop the good training and promotion in equality of opportunity
- improve learners' rate of progress through effective monitoring and review
- promote and widen staff development opportunities

GRADES

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

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

Retail and commercial enterprise			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Hairdressing</i>		2	
Apprenticeships for young people	65	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. A team of two inspectors spent eight days inspecting PAAH. All aspects of the hairdressing provision were reported on and graded.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	8
Number of learners interviewed	21
Number of staff interviewed	20
Number of employers interviewed	6
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	12

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

8. **The number of apprentices retained is particularly good.** Of the 95 learners who have begun apprenticeships since 2002-03, 74 have remained in training for the duration of their programme. Thirty-two learners completed the apprenticeship framework and 42 are still in training. Of the 22 learners who began in July and August 2004, 19 are still in training.

9. Achievement rates on the apprenticeship programme are satisfactory. Eighteen of the 27 learners who began in 2002-03 completed the apprenticeship framework within their planned training period, as did 13 of the 23 learners who began in 2003-04.

10. **Some of the advanced apprentices make slow progress.** They have been on programme for over 12 months without completing any units towards their hairdressing diploma, or their key skills communication and application of number qualifications.

11. Learners have good practical skills that reflect commercially acceptable practices. A few apprentices use good communication skills to understand clients' requirements before completing fashion cutting and colouring techniques that exceed the clients' expectations. One apprentice completed a complex colour application to a standard usually attributed to hairdressing at level 3.

12. Learners' written assignments are of an adequate standard. They give clear and detailed descriptions of services and products that show their sound technical knowledge. Assessors' feedback is specific to the NVQ requirements, and gives clear guidance on any still requiring extra work. Insufficient attention is given to the quality of presentation or content.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

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

13. **Learners have an excellent understanding of their progress towards the NVQ hairdressing qualifications.** A simple but highly effective monitoring sheet, devised by the provider and based on a traffic light system of colours, indicates if learners are ahead of target, on target or behind target. Learners are well informed and knowledgeable when discussing their training and assessment needs.

14. **Support for learners is very effective.** Attendance at off-the-job training is adapted to suit the learners' individual needs. Learners who have lost their work placements follow a full-time training programme to develop the skills needed to be successful in placement. To improve the ratio of trainers to learners, the provider's staff attend large employers' training evenings. Effective intervention strategies to support learners include joint meetings with learners, parents, Connexions and employers. Other actions have included work-placement changes to suit learners' financial situations and travel time, extra time in

the training centre with individual tuition, and worksheets completed on the job with the support of the employer.

15. Teaching is satisfactory and appropriate to the level and development of the learners. Key skills training is integrated effectively and uses occupational services and practices effectively in the development of good communication and number skills. Some activities are not allocated sufficient time to cover the topic fully or to check learning outcomes.

16. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessment judgements are explained clearly to the learners. Assessors provide detailed information about the elements of the unit that remain outstanding and create opportunities for learners to complete them.

17. **Progress reviews are not detailed enough to monitor or measure learners' progress towards key skills qualifications.** Most key skills qualification targets are too generalised. Tutors do not monitor the learners' progress and development sufficiently as they work towards key skills qualifications.

Leadership and management

18. **PAAH has developed very good partnership arrangements and links with external agencies.** Senior managers work successfully with many secondary schools in Scunthorpe to promote careers in hairdressing to school pupils. PAAH provides level 1 NVQ training to a group of young mothers and a group of pupils who have been excluded from school. One school now provides level 1 NVQ training in hairdressing at the school, and PAAH is working with the school team to train assessors, and to share good practice. External agencies and community groups provide guest speakers at the training centre to give help and information.

19. **Internal and external communications are good.** The management team at PAAH is very responsive. Staff are well informed about operational and strategic priorities and are consulted and involved in the decision-making process. The team meets formally every month and actions resulting from monthly team meetings are monitored and reviewed effectively. Employers are contacted regularly. They receive good information about the apprenticeship programme, which is updated regularly.

20. Strategic and business planning are satisfactory. Key strategic objectives are linked well to the self-assessment development plan and to the mission provider's statement. Development planning is satisfactory and actions are reviewed regularly at monthly staff meetings.

21. Management set appropriate annual targets to improve retention and achievement rates. These targets are shared with staff, who understand their contribution in meeting them. Other data is not used sufficiently to set targets. Currently, the data is collected manually, but a new management information system has been installed and learners' data has been added to it.

22. The provider responds quickly to complaints from learners and employers. All details of the complaint and actions taken to resolve the issue are clearly recorded.

23. Staff appraisals are satisfactory. All full- and part-time staff have an annual appraisal

where job performances are measured and job roles are reviewed. Staff training opportunities which support personal development and business needs are identified and are financed mostly by PAAH.

24. The initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy requirements is thorough. All learners receive the results of their assessments. Only one learner has been identified as requiring additional literacy and numeracy support. PAAH does not have staff qualified to provide this support. The provision is subcontracted to a local provider.

25. PAAH's training facilities are adequate. There is a spacious training room with an interactive whiteboard and two computers. The training salon is equipped to commercial standards. Working areas within the salon become slightly restricted if all appointments have been filled, and if extra staff are present giving individual support to learners.

26. **The management team does not give sufficient emphasis to widen staff development opportunities.** Tutors are well supported in updating and extending their vocational hairdressing skills, but not enough emphasis is given to improving staff's performances in delivering training and target-setting for key skills. No member of staff currently holds a key skills teaching qualification. Good information technology (IT) equipment is available, but staff do not have sufficient IT skills to be able to use the equipment confidently during training sessions.

27. **Training in equality and diversity is particularly effective.** Learners are very well informed and have a very good understanding of equality and diversity. A well-planned training programme raises learners' awareness and understanding. Effective links have been established with a local community group to improve access for minority ethnic groups. Members of the community group speak to the learners about their religious beliefs and cultures.

28. **PAAH has developed good strategies to target under-represented and disadvantaged groups.** In 2004, a marketing campaign successfully attracted more men into hairdressing. Fourteen per cent of current learners are men. The provider has worked successfully with learners who have social problems. Good support is given to the learners to help them succeed.

29. Equal opportunities policies and procedures are comprehensive and include all current legislation. A simplified version is given to learners. All employers are given a copy of PAAH's policy and encouraged to adopt it if they do not have one of their own.

30. The training centre provides good facilities for learners. Posters are displayed prominently throughout the building, promoting equal opportunities and diversity and giving learners useful information.

31. There is no wheelchair access to the first-floor training room. However, the provider's disability policy clearly sets out how PAAH will make alternative arrangements if required. Most of the salon work placements have good access facilities.

32. Insufficient use is made of data and target-setting. Data is collected about age, gender and ethnic backgrounds as required by the LSC, but no analysis is made of the success rates of different groups of learners, or the achievement of improvement targets.

Attendance and punctuality are monitored and recorded, but this information is not collated or used in the learners' progress reviews.

33. Internal verification is satisfactory. Three of the five staff are internal verifiers. All staff hold trainer/assessor awards. Internal verification is planned satisfactorily. Regular standardisation meetings are held and are well attended by work-based assessors.

34. Quality assurance policies and procedures are based on key learning processes. The course director carries out regular planned audits, in line with the audit cycle, and any resulting actions are managed effectively. Actions to improve retention rates, the co-ordination of on-the-job training, and the recruitment of male learners have been successful. Learners and their employers have a thorough knowledge of progress made with the hairdressing NVQ, and targets to be achieved. Monitoring, progression and targets associated with key skills achievements are not understood so well.

35. The self-assessment process includes all relevant stakeholders. The report identified a number of the strengths found by inspectors, although some of the strengths that PAAH identified are normal practice. The self-assessment report also identified a significant number of the weaknesses highlighted by inspectors. Some of the body of the report was descriptive rather than judgemental.

36. **Some quality assurance processes have not been developed sufficiently to influence improvements.** Data is collected about retention and achievement rates and improvement targets are set, but there is no further analysis to review the performance of different types of learners. Data is not used to measure and set year-on-year improvement targets, or to contribute to planning.

37. There is insufficient observation of teaching and learning. Staff have not had sufficient training in the process to ensure that they fully understand what they are measuring, or that they are applying the criteria consistently. The criteria used to measure performances focus mainly on teaching, with insufficient consideration of learning or attainment.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good partnership arrangements and external links
- good internal and external communications
- particularly effective training and promotion in equal opportunities for learners
- good strategies to target under-represented and disadvantaged groups

Weaknesses

- insufficient emphasis on wider staff development opportunities
- insufficient development of some quality assurance processes to effect improvements

Retail and commercial enterprise

Hairdressing

Grade 2

Strengths

- particularly good retention rates for apprentices
- very good monitoring of learners' NVQ progress
- very effective support for learners
- particularly effective and well-managed employers' involvement in hairdressing training

Weaknesses

- slow progress for some advanced apprentices
- insufficient monitoring of progress and achievements in key skills training

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT POSITIVE APPROACH ACADEMY FOR HAIR:

- 'everything, I love it'
- 'treated like adults'
- 'how the college day is arranged, a mix of theory and practical depending upon what I need'
- 'we get lots of encouragement that helps us get through the NVQ'
- 'they listen to what we say, do not judge'
- 'we get one-to-one help and support'
- 'when things went wrong with my placement they sorted it the same week. I am still working there and things are good now'
- 'give you deadlines you can achieve'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK POSITIVE APPROACH ACADEMY FOR HAIR COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of writing in learning packages - there is too much
- 'sometimes you feel you have missed something attending for only half a day'
- the size of the practical salon - it is cramped
- the content of progress reviews - they can be repetitive
- the amount of paperwork - there is too much
- 'we can't all do practical at the same time'

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good partnership arrangements and external links
- good internal and external communications
- particularly effective training and promotion in equal opportunities for learners
- good strategies to target under-represented and disadvantaged groups

Weaknesses

- insufficient emphasis on wider staff development opportunities
- insufficient development of some quality assurance processes to effect improvements

38. PAAH has developed very good partnership arrangements and links with external agencies. Senior managers work successfully with many secondary schools in Scunthorpe to promote careers in hairdressing to school pupils. The level of recruitment from these schools is good and data about applications is collected and monitored to be used in planning and marketing activities. One school now delivers the level 1 NVQ in hairdressing at the school, and PAAH is working with the school team to train assessors and to share good practice. PAAH also provides the NVQ at level 1 in hairdressing for school pupils who have been, or are about to be, excluded from school. This provision has been extended to include a group of young mothers who are referred by North Lincolnshire County Council and other agencies. Schools also use PAAH for work experience. Success rates on this programme are good. Many of these learners retain links with their work-placement salon and progress to apprenticeships.

39. PAAH is responsive to the social and health issues which many of its learners experience. The provider uses external agencies effectively to provide information and support.

40. Internal and external communications are good. The management team at PAAH is very responsive and uses a hands-on approach. The staff are well informed of the provider's operational and strategic priorities and are consulted and involved in the decision-making processes. The staff team is small and meets formally every month. Meetings are recorded and actions resulting from these meetings are very effectively and regularly monitored and reviewed. In addition, there is a range of assessor and verifier meetings. Daily briefing meetings ensure that the learning needs of learners are well integrated with the day's activities. Staff are clear about their job roles and responsibilities. Contacts are very regular with employers and salon supervisors, who receive good information and updates about the apprenticeship programme. A newsletter keeps them briefed on events and new developments in the training centre. Staff respond to matters raised by learners and employers, and resolve them quickly.

41. PAAH has a clear mission statement and strategic and business planning are

satisfactory. Key strategic objectives are integrated well with the self-assessment development plan and the provider's aims and objectives. Development planning is satisfactory and actions are reviewed regularly at monthly staff meetings. However, some milestones and targets in the plan are vague, and progress is difficult to measure.

42. Management set appropriate annual targets to improve retention and achievement rates. These are shared with the staff, who understand their roles in achieving the targets. Other data is not used sufficiently to set targets. Data is currently collected manually, but a new management information system has been installed and learners' data has been added. Managers recognise that the new system will allow them to produce a wider variety of more detailed reports.

43. Complaints from learners and employers are responded to quickly. All details of the complaint, and actions taken to resolve the issue, are documented clearly.

44. Staff appraisals are satisfactory. All full and part-time staff have an annual appraisal. Staff conduct a self-assessment of their performance which focuses the discussion during the meeting. Job performance is measured and the job role is reviewed. Staff training opportunities that support personal development and business needs are identified and financed by the company.

45. Initial assessments of learners' literacy and numeracy requirements are thorough. All learners receive the results of their assessments. Only one learner has been identified as requiring additional literacy and numeracy support. PAAH does not have staff who are qualified to provide this support. It is subcontracted to a local provider. PAAH does not have a formal subcontract agreement with this provider.

46. The management team does not emphasise wider staff development opportunities sufficiently. Tutors are well supported in updating and extending their vocational hairdressing skills. However, not enough emphasis is given to improving staff's performances in delivering key skills training. No member of staff currently holds a key skills training qualification. Some staff are not sufficiently confident about key skills criteria to measure learners' progress at reviews, and rarely set targets for key skills achievements. The NVQ is well promoted and understood by employers, but key skills are not. Good IT equipment is available to support the delivery of background knowledge training, but staff do not have sufficient IT skills to be able to use the equipment confidently. Similarly, no staff training has been given in lesson observation techniques to support the peer assessment process and to ensure understanding, accuracy and consistency.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

47. Training in equality and diversity is particularly effective. Learners are very well informed. They have a very good understanding of equality and diversity and talk about the subjects with confidence. A well-planned training programme raises learners' awareness and understanding. The programme is delivered at regular intervals during the hairdressing training. Tutors have developed good learning materials. They use good examples and present information in an interesting and innovative way to learners. For example, learners watch a music video that is used to encourage discussion about stereotyping and homosexuality. This creates lively discussions and helps learners to explore alternative viewpoints. Staff are sensitive in their approach when delivering controversial topics and manage the discussions well. Effective links have been established with a local community

group whose aim is to improve access for members of minority ethnic groups. Members of staff from this group speak to learners about different religious beliefs and cultures which have helped to broaden learners' and staff's understanding. Staff receive equal opportunities training annually, and equality of opportunity is a standard agenda item at monthly meetings.

48. PAAH has developed good strategies to target under-represented and disadvantaged groups. In 2004, a marketing campaign successfully attracted more men into hairdressing. Fourteen per cent of current learners are men. PAAH has been less successful in attracting learners from minority ethnic groups but has recently received one application. Links with the community group are being extended, with training centre staff attending their women's group meetings. Staff hope to encourage more Asian clients in the training centre. PAAH is running a campaign to promote training to prospective learners from the local community. The provider has worked successfully to deliver level 1 NVQ hairdressing to learners who have social problems. The learners receive good support to help them succeed. Sixteen of 25 learners on the programme have progressed to become apprentices, or entered full-time education, or have obtained a full-time job.

49. Equal opportunities policies and procedures are comprehensive and include all current legislation. A simplified version is given to learners. All employers are given a copy of PAAH's policy and are encouraged to adopt it if they do not have one of their own.

50. The training centre provides good facilities for learners. Posters are displayed prominently throughout the building. They promote equal opportunities and diversity and give learners useful information. For example, a list of helpline telephone numbers and detailed information on different types of drugs and their effects are displayed in the kitchen area. A noticeboard displays leaflets and interesting newspaper articles which are related to equality and diversity.

51. There is no wheelchair access to the first-floor training room. However, the disability policy clearly explains how PAAH will make alternative arrangements if necessary. Most of the salons have good access facilities.

52. Data and target-setting are not used sufficiently. Data is collected about age, gender and ethnic background as required by the LSC, but no analysis is made of the success rates of different groups of learners or improvement targets. Attendance and punctuality are monitored and recorded, but this information is not collated or used in the learners' progress reviews.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

53. Quality assurance policies and procedures are based on key learning processes. The operational management of quality improvement is the responsibility of the course director, who carries out regular, planned audits in line with the audit cycle. Any resulting actions for improvement are identified and managed effectively through monthly staff team meetings. Actions to improve retention rates, co-ordination of on-the-job training and the recruitment of male learners have been successful. The development of the learner traffic light monitoring system is showing learners' progress and making significant improvements to in-year retention rates. Learners and their employers have a thorough knowledge of progress made with the NVQ, and plan targets effectively. The monitoring of targets and learners' progress in key skills programmes is not understood so well.

54. Internal verification is satisfactory. Three of the five staff are internal verifiers. All staff hold trainer/assessor awards. Internal verification is planned satisfactorily and regular standardisation meetings are well attended by work-based assessors. When assessors cannot attend the meetings, the course director visits them in their salons to brief them.

55. The self-assessment process includes all relevant stakeholders. The directors compile an initial report which is then shared with the staff team to agree and challenge the strengths and weaknesses identified. An updated report was provided for inspection. The report identified a number of the strengths found by inspectors, although some of the strengths that the provider identified are no more than normal practice. The self-assessment report also identified a significant number of the weaknesses highlighted by inspectors. Inspection grades matched the self-assessment grades in every area except quality improvement. However, some of the body of the report was descriptive rather than judgemental and retention and achievement data was not used sufficiently in making judgements. The development plan identifies actions to be taken, but some measurable outcomes are vague and progress towards improvement is at times difficult to measure.

56. Some quality assurance processes are not developed sufficiently to promote improvements. Data is collected about retention and achievement rates and improvement targets are set. Learners' and employers' feedback is collected and reviewed and effective action is taken to resolve issues, but this data is not analysed and used to set improvement targets. Learners' attendance records are monitored regularly, but are not collated and used at learners' reviews, or used by senior management. There is insufficient observation of teaching and learning. A peer assessment process is used to measure the quality of training sessions. Staff have not had sufficient training in the process to ensure that they fully understand what they are measuring, or that they are applying the criteria consistently. The criteria used to measure performances focuses mainly on teaching, with less emphasis on learning or attainment.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Retail and commercial enterprise

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hairdressing</i>		2
Apprenticeships for young people	65	2

57. PAAH offers apprenticeships and NVQ hairdressing qualifications at levels 1, 2, and 3 from a purpose-built training centre in Scunthorpe. At the time of inspection, 42 apprentices, 22 advanced apprentices and one learner taking NVQ hairdressing at level 2 were attending the centre. The NVQ learner is not represented in the tables overleaf. In addition, 10 school pupils attend one day each week as part of a school links programme. The expected completion time for apprentices is 18 months. They can progress to the advanced apprenticeship programme when they have successfully completed the apprenticeship framework. Advanced apprentices are expected to complete the full framework within 18 months.

58. Apprentices can join the programme at any time of the year and are referred from Connexions or local employers, or they approach PAAH directly through schools careers events and in response to advertising. All potential apprentices attend an interview and are given the opportunity of taster days in salons. Most learners attend the training centre for one day each week for off-the-job training and practical assessments. A small number of learners only attend the training centre for background knowledge, and all their practical training and assessment activities are carried out in the workplace. There are three PAAH assessors and six work-based assessors. During induction, learners' receive literacy and numeracy assessments, and practical skills tests.

Hairdressing

Grade 2

Strengths

- particularly good retention rates for apprentices
- very good monitoring of learners' NVQ progress
- very effective support for learners
- particularly effective and well-managed employers' involvement in hairdressing training

Weaknesses

- slow progress for some advanced apprentices
- insufficient monitoring of progress and achievements in key skills training

Achievement and standards

59. The number of apprentices retained is particularly good. Ninety-five learners have begun apprenticeships since 2002-03, of whom 74 learners remained in training, 32 of whom completed the full apprenticeship framework, and 42 are still in training. In 2002-03, 18 of the 27 starters remained in training and completed the framework. Of the 22

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learners who began in July and August of 2004, 19 are still in training and one learner has already achieved the apprenticeship. Of the 36 advanced apprentices who began training during 2003-04, 22 are still in training.

60. Achievement rates on the apprenticeship programme are satisfactory. In 2002-03, 18 of 27 learners achieved the apprenticeship framework within their planned learning period, as did 13 of the 23 learners who started in 2003-04.

61. Learners have good practical skills that reflect commercially acceptable practices. A few learners are very effective in interpreting each client's requirements. They use good communication skills to gain the client's trust. The learners understand what the client wants and use high fashion cutting and colouring techniques that exceed the client's expectations. One apprentice completed a complex colour applications at a standard usually attributed to hairdressing at level 3.

62. Learners' written assignments are adequate. The learners give clear and detailed descriptions of services and products that show sound technical knowledge. Assessors' feedback clearly identifies for the learner all the areas that need further work. The feedback is specific to the NVQ criteria requirements, with only a few comments on the standard of presentation, or the quality of the content.

63. Although all learners are making very good progress towards their NVQ in hairdressing, the progress of most learners towards framework qualifications falls behind their individual learning plan targets. Some advanced apprentices make slow progress. They have been on programme for over 12 months without completing any units towards their hairdressing diplomas or their key skills communication and application of number qualifications. PAAH has recognised this problem and has developed action plans to support successful achievement.

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											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	9		14		13											
Retained*	0		0		0											
Successfully completed	0		0		0											
Still in learning	9		8		5											

*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	23		22		23	100	27	100	27	100						
Retained*	0		1		13	57	18	67	15	56						
Successfully completed	0		1		13	57	18	67	15	56						
Still in learning	23		19		0	0	0	0	0	0						

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

The quality of provision

64. Learners have an excellent understanding of their progress towards achieving NVQ and key skills units. A simple, but very effective monitoring sheet devised by the provider indicates if learners are ahead of target, on target or behind target, by using the traffic light system of colours. Unit completions have improved since the introduction of the scheme. All learners work diligently in managing their practical and background knowledge assessments to avoid slipping into the red target zone. Learners are well informed and knowledgeable when discussing their training and assessment needs with their employers and tutors. They are skilled in using the system grid to plan their training effectively and in arranging appropriate clients to develop and improve their skills in readiness for assessment. All successful assessment outcomes are entered on group monitoring sheets on the training room wall.

65. Support for learners is very effective. Off-the-job training is adapted to suit the learners' individual attendance needs. One advanced apprentice, who became self-employed, negotiated an individual learning plan that successfully fitted off-the-job training into her work schedule. Apprentices who have lost placements because of poor punctuality, professional attitude or poor hairdressing skills, follow a full-time training programme in the training centre that concentrates on developing the skills needed to meet work-placement requirements. One employer, which has a large number of apprentices and only one work-based assessor, required help to support the training and assessment needs of its learners. A member of PAAH's staff now attends the evening salon training sessions and supports the training and assessment process. Learners and employers speak very well of PAAH's timely and responsive approach in helping to resolve personal issues and in providing very good learning support. Effective intervention strategies have included group meetings with learners, parents, Connexions and employers to discuss and resolve issues affecting the learners' progress. Other actions to support learners have included work-placement changes to suit learners' financial situations and travel time, individual tutoring and worksheets completed on the job with the support of the employer.

66. Teaching is satisfactory and appropriate to the level and development of the learners. Well-integrated key skills training uses occupational services and practices effectively to develop good communication and number skills. Some sessions are well planned and provide a good range of activities and well-phrased, challenging questions that check on learning. In the less effective sessions, individual learning needs are not considered sufficiently. Some activities are not allocated sufficient time to cover the topic fully, or to check learning outcomes.

67. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Six work-based assessors complement the PAAH assessment team. Assessors make sound judgements that are clearly explained to learners. On completion of the assessment, the assessor provides detailed information about what elements of the unit remain outstanding and what opportunities are available to complete them.

68. Progress reviews are not detailed enough to monitor or measure progress towards key skills qualifications effectively. Very few targets are set to measure learners' communication and application of number development in achieving their key skills qualifications. Most key skills qualification targets are too generalised. For example, in some progress reviews the whole qualification is used as the target. Initial key skills assessments at the beginning of the programme provide a very detailed report of any areas that need improvement. Work packages that support the identified learning needs are provided. This information is not used effectively during reviews. Tutors do not monitor the learners' progress and development sufficiently as they work through the support packages.

Leadership and management

69. Employers' involvement in salon training and assessment is particularly effective and well managed. Off-the-job training provides good development of learners' practical skills in readiness for formal assessments. Employers have a very clear and extensive understanding of the training and development needs of their learners. Employers take an active role in the progress review process, agreeing on-the-job training targets with learners that complement off-the-job training and assessment activities. To support learners' development, a number of employers have attended the training centre to extend their own understanding of the background knowledge requirements of the qualification.

70. Learners have a well-developed understanding of equal opportunities. Equality and diversity are introduced to learners at induction and explained further during regular, taught sessions in the training centre. Health and safety is regularly monitored by PAAH's staff to ensure that the learners work in a safe environment.

71. Internal verification is well planned and detailed records are kept that meet the awarding body's requirements. Assessors receive detailed feedback about their assessment practices. Work-based assessors who are unable to attend the standardisation meetings receive minutes of the meetings and individual feedback during work-based assessment observations.

72. PAAH's training facilities are adequate. There is a spacious training room with an interactive whiteboard and two computers. Both computers have internet access and there are sufficient reference books for learners to use. The salon is equipped to commercial standards. Small equipment, such as combs, brushes and scissors, is supplied to all learners. Working areas within the salon become slightly restricted if all appointments have been taken and extra staff are present to give individual support to learners.

