

INSPECTION REPORT

UK Training and Development

16 June 2006



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
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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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UK Training and Development

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. UK Training and Development (UKTD) is a private training company based in Hemel Hempstead and was formed in May 1998. UKTD contracts with five local Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs), Hertfordshire, London West, Surrey, Berkshire and Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, to provide work-based learning for young people. The occupational areas include business administration and law, and retail and commercial enterprise of which hairdressing is the main area of provision. The business administration and law provision was not graded because of the low number of learners at the time of the inspection.

2. UKTD currently has 364 hairdressing learners, all of whom are employed. Of these, 315 are apprentices, 43 are advanced apprentices and six are working towards a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2 or 3 in hairdressing. All assessment and training is completed in the workplace. There are 43 staff, including the managing director. All are based in the suite of offices in Hemel Hempstead. The provider has 14 training consultants, seven of whom are part time, and work directly with hairdressing learners in the workplace. Support for key skills training is provided by five specialist staff.

3. The senior management team at UKTD comprises the managing director, the senior operations manager and the training centre manager who has specific responsibility for management information and finance management. The senior operations manager manages the three operations managers, the internal verification co-ordinator and the key skills manager.

4. The operations managers monitor the work of the training consultants who are responsible for managing all of the learners' training, including initial assessment. Key skills training is delivered by a team of specialist staff which also provides additional support for learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 4

5. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is inadequate.** The quality of the hairdressing provision is satisfactory, as are the arrangements for equality of opportunity. Leadership and management, and arrangements for quality improvement are inadequate.

6. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The current self-assessment report was produced in May 2006. The report is repetitive and does not comment critically enough on the current provision. However, a number of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors were recognised in the report. A few of the strengths identified by UKTD were judged by inspectors to be no more than normal practice.

7. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** The provider has recently made some significant improvements to its provision and has developed some useful quality improvement procedures. A number of these are so recent

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that they have not had an effect on the learners' experiences yet.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR UK TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- further improve success rates for all learners
- increase the number of learners from under-represented groups
- improve the co-ordination of training
- improve the use of data to contribute to decision-making
- further develop quality improvement systems
- further develop internal verification systems

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

Leadership and management		4
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		4

Retail and commercial enterprise			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Hairdressing</i>			3
Apprenticeships for young people	358		3
NVQ training for young people	6		3

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

8. A team of five inspectors spent a total of 25 days at UKTD during June 2006. This was the only visit. The inspection covered the contributory area of hairdressing, and leadership and management which included equality of opportunity and quality improvement. The area of business administration and law was not inspected because of the small number of learners in this provision.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	25
Number of learners interviewed	54
Number of staff interviewed	35
Number of employers interviewed	21
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	24
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

9. **Most learners make good progress.** Of those learners who began training in the 18-month period before inspection, most are ahead of schedule in achieving individual NVQ units. Action plans are completed at each assessment visit and targets for the completion of work are set.

10. Learners confidently demonstrate appropriate practical, technical and communications skills when dealing with clients. In some salons, learners take part in manufacturers' events, and competitions organised between local employers and workshops for specific skills development, such as long-hair styling.

11. **Success rates have been poor.** In 2003-04, framework completions of advanced apprenticeship programmes reached 30 per cent. They dropped to 4 per cent in 2004-05. Completion rates for apprenticeship frameworks rose slightly from 30 per cent to 34 per cent during 2004-05. None of the NVQ learners achieved their qualifications in the same two-year period. Success rates are improving. Fifty-seven per cent of those who have left the programme since August 2005 have completed the full apprenticeship framework.

12. **Many learners make slow progress.** Fourteen per cent of learners still in training have exceeded the scheduled end dates of their programmes. One learner, who began in 2001 is still in training and has not achieved her key skills qualifications yet.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Retail and commercial enterprise	0	2	5	0	7
Total	0	2	5	0	7

13. **The development of key skills training is good.** Additional resources have been provided to support the delivery of key skills training, including specialist staff and laptop computers. Key skills training is now delivered at the beginning of the training programme.

14. **The internal verification process is particularly effective.** Assessors are observed regularly by their internal verifier. Assessors who are new to UKTD are observed more frequently in their first three months of employment. Internal verification systems are very effective in identifying good assessment practice. New assessors, and experienced assessors who are identified as in need of support, have more of their work sampled more frequently. Identified issues are monitored closely until they are resolved. Standardisation meetings are well attended by salon-based assessors.

15. Standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory. All learners receive weekly practical training in their salons, with a good range of models. Training consultants provide effective coaching and background knowledge support.

16. Formal progress review interviews with learners are satisfactory. Training consultants develop good relationships with the learners and their employers. The employers receive a copy of each review in order to co-ordinate and plan salon training. Progress reviews are held every 12 weeks, or more frequently for learners with additional learning needs.

17. In the better salons the learners have opportunities to develop a broader range of life skills. These are achieved through team-building days, competitions and trips to places of cultural interest.

Leadership and management

18. **Staff development opportunities are good.** The annual appraisal system effectively identifies training and development needs effectively. Staff have enrolled for a wide range of appropriate external qualifications. Internal staff training is also good and two weeks each year are allocated for updating vocational and skills training.

19. **The provider has introduced a number of particularly effective strategies to improve learners' success rates.** Success rates are improving. Fifty-seven per cent of those learners who left training after August 2005 had completed the full apprenticeship framework.

20. A new 'Pathway' scheme of work has been developed for the hairdressing programmes. Subjects for study and assessment are clearly identified for each month throughout the programme, including key skills.

21. **Some of UKTD's key processes are poorly managed.** Lines of accountability are

unclear. Staff and managers concentrate on the completion of specific tasks, and do not give sufficient attention to the co-ordination of activities.

22. Senior managers and staff do not have an accurate view of individual learners' achievements. Senior managers do not have an accurate record of the numbers of learners who have exceeded their planned training periods, or the effectiveness of the strategies which are being used to improve their progress.

23. UKTD has effective internal communications supported by a well-defined structure. Operations managers hold regular individual meetings with the training consultants to monitor the provider's performance against LSC contracts. However, there is too much reliance on staff having an informal, overall understanding of their learners.

24. **UKTD's use of data is poor.** The management information system is satisfactory, but the provider does not analyse the data sufficiently for senior managers to be able to use this information in decision-making. It was difficult for the provider to supply inspectors with information about all current learners.

25. The implementation of procedures is not monitored systematically. UKTD has a wide range of policies, procedures and guidelines, but does not ensure that they are implemented consistently for all learners. The practice of training consultants is not consistent in some areas.

26. Minutes of discussions are very brief and do not show actions to be taken effectively, or identify the person responsible, or the agreed target dates for completion. Action points from previous meetings are not reviewed regularly.

27. Operations managers spend a lot of time working alongside each training consultant in the salons. Observations of the quality of this work are informal and poorly recorded, and are not used during annual staff appraisals to identify development needs.

28. **Learners have a well-developed understanding of equality.** They all gain an external certificate in employment rights and responsibilities. Equality and diversity are reinforced sufficiently at progress reviews, where learners' understanding of equality and diversity is discussed using standard questions.

29. UKTD has comprehensive equal opportunities procedures for dealing with bullying, harassment, and current legislation. Employers also receive very useful information about the subjects, and an explanation of how they can contribute to the five objectives of 'Every Child Matters'.

30. The provider contracts with two external organisations for regular information about legislative changes in company law and equal opportunities. Staff are updated about these changes at team meetings and training days.

31. **UKTD has not taken sufficient positive action to recruit under-represented groups.** The current profile of learners does not reflect the ethnic profile of the regional populations of the five counties where UKTD currently provides training. Actions detailed in the quality improvement plan are unsatisfactory. There is no formal analysis or use of equal opportunities data to identify trends, comparisons between different groups, areas

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for improvement, or good practice.

32. **The provider does not have an adequate strategy to support learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs.** Currently, none of the staff have skills for life qualifications, and no provision has been made to use external agencies for advice or to supply specific support for learners' needs. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language.

33. Since the reinspection of 2003, UKTD has introduced and revised a range of quality improvement procedures. However, **the current quality improvement arrangements are unsystematic.** The provider carries out a mock inspection of the provision and uses the outcomes to form the self-assessment report.

34. The provider does not monitor the implementation of procedures consistently. There are few clearly defined quality assurance arrangements for the procedures and forms used by training consultants. The minutes of management meetings provide little evidence of evaluations of learners' needs.

35. Operations managers work closely with the training consultants in the salons and a schedule has been agreed for formal observations of salon-based activities with learners. However, there is no sampling plan to ensure that all key aspects of the programme are observed.

36. There is little formal analysis and use of management information. Data is collected regularly, but it is not analysed to identify trends, or to review the quality of the training as a basis for management decisions.

37. Operations managers hold monthly meetings with each training consultant, but the focus is on performance against the LSC contract, and the quality of training is not considered. Management meetings are not used sufficiently to formally review the quality of training. There is no systematic process for reviewing the quality of the provision and identifying areas for improvement.

38. The current self-assessment report was produced in May 2006. Some staff are unaware of the self-assessment report. There is little evidence that the views of learners and employers have been taken into account in the production of the report. A number of the judgements in the report matched the findings of the inspection, although a few of the strengths identified by UKTD were judged by inspectors to be no more than normal practice.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good opportunities for staff development.
- particularly effective strategies to improve success rates

Weaknesses

- poor management of some key processes
- poor use of data

- inadequate strategies to provide learners with literacy, numeracy and language support
- insufficient positive action to recruit under-represented groups
- unsystematic quality improvement process

Retail and commercial enterprise

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good progress by most learners
- good development of key skills
- particularly effective internal verification system.
- well-developed learners' understanding of equal opportunities

Weaknesses

- poor success rates
- slow progress by many learners
- weak programme co-ordination in some areas

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT UK TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:

- 'one-to-one support from the training consultants'
- 'good practical training in the salon'
- 'structured approach to the training'
- 'making good progress'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK UK TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT COULD IMPROVE:

- the frequency of visits to salons by training consultants
- continuity in staffing - staff changes sometimes interrupt the programme
- the advice given before starting the programme

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

Strengths

- good opportunities for staff development.
- particularly effective strategies to improve success rates

Weaknesses

- poor management of some key processes
- poor use of data
- inadequate strategies to provide learners with literacy, numeracy and language support
- insufficient positive action to recruit under-represented groups
- unsystematic quality improvement process

39. Staff development opportunities are good. Training consultants have a well-planned, comprehensive four-week induction programme, which includes shadowing experienced consultants. All staff work for a nationally recognised health and safety qualification. The annual appraisal system identifies training and development needs effectively. Staff have gained a range of external qualifications that includes health and safety, management, and assessor and verifier awards. Training is supported financially by UKTD if it will have a positive effect on the learners' training experiences, and contribute to the development of the member of staff. Internal staff training is also good and includes briefings about changes to the provider's procedures, and internal verification, or legislative changes in employment law, health and safety or equal opportunities. Two weeks each year are allocated for updating vocational and skills training. The provider was accredited with the Investors in People standard in March 2002 and was recently re-accredited. This is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

40. The provider has introduced a number of strategies to improve learners' success rates. These are improving. Fifty-seven per cent of learners who left the programme after August 2005 completed the full apprenticeship framework. A new 'Pathway' scheme of work has been developed for the hairdressing programmes. Subjects for study and assessment are clearly identified for each month throughout the programme, including key skills. More frequent meetings have been arranged between operations managers and training consultants to critically analyse success rates and individual learners' progress. Additional resources have been invested in the recruitment of appropriately qualified key skills support staff, and the purchase of laptop computers for learners to complete online tests.

41. Monitoring of employers is satisfactory. UKTD has contracts with employers and effective monitoring takes place through the operations manager and the training consultants' visits.

42. Some key processes are poorly managed. Since the reinspection, the structure of

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UKTD has been revised twice, and almost 50 per cent of the current training consultants were recruited in the 12 months before this inspection. The monitoring of staff performances is ineffective. Training consultants have clearly defined roles with a comprehensive handbook of procedures, policies, and guidelines, but the quality of the provision varies. Monitoring of the implementation of procedures is unsystematic. UKTD has a wide range of policies, procedures and guidelines, but does not review them adequately to ensure that they are implemented consistently for all learners. Very few documents are dated, or indicate whether they are a revised version. Inspectors identified some inadequate progress reviews, some ineffective action-planning and incomplete individual learning plans. Training consultants' working practices are not consistent throughout UKTD's provision. Arrangements to observe the quality of teaching and learning are informal and incomplete.

43. Lines of accountability are unclear. Staff concentrate on the completion of tasks, but managers do not give sufficient attention to the co-ordination of activities to meet the objectives of UKTD's development plans. For example, the responsibility for reviewing individual equal opportunities procedures is delegated to staff, but the results are not collected and used by managers to design appropriate strategies to improve equal opportunities arrangements.

44. UKTD has effective internal communications supported by a well-defined meetings structure. Minutes of discussions are very brief and do not show actions to be taken, or agreed target dates for completion, and identify the person responsible. Action points from previous meetings are not reviewed regularly to monitor progress and ensure compliance.

45. Senior managers and staff do not have an accurate view of individual learners' achievements, or of the number of learners who have exceeded the expected duration of their training. Managers and staff have developed a variety of informal systems to monitor their allocated learners, but some of the information they use is incomplete or inaccurate. No analysis is made of the different success rates of groups of learners. Operations managers hold regular meetings with individual training consultants each month to monitor their performance against LSC contracts, establish targets in relation to this performance and to monitor their work. However, there is an over-reliance on staff having an informal, overall understanding of their learners.

46. Operations managers spend a lot of time working alongside each training consultant in the salons. Observations of the quality of this work are informal and poorly recorded, and are not used during annual staff appraisals to identify development needs.

47. UKTD's use of data is poor. The management information system is satisfactory, and is maintained with sufficiently accurate data to ensure contract compliance. However, the provider does not analyse the data sufficiently for senior managers to use the information in decision-making. The reports generated consist of different presentations of data, rather than useful summaries or reports. Managers have developed individual strategies to understand these reports, but draw different conclusions from the results. It was difficult for the provider to supply inspectors with information about all current learners.

48. The provider does not have an adequate strategy for giving support to learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. The key skills team provides good literacy and

language support for learners who are identified as having low to moderate additional learning needs. Fifteen per cent of learners are currently in this category. However, none of the staff have skills for life qualifications and no provision has been made to use external agencies for advice, or to supply specific support for learners' needs. The information, advice and guidance provided at the recruitment stage of the apprenticeship programme are inadequate for a small number of learners with very specific learning needs. The provider does not use all available information in the initial assessment process. It does not identify what reasonable adjustments could be made to help learners achieve their qualification aims.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

49. Most learners have a well-developed understanding of equality and diversity. Learners enjoy the thorough and well-planned equality and diversity training which is included in their induction. They all undergo training in employment rights and responsibilities, and receive an external certificate. There are specific guidelines for employers, outlining their responsibilities for the recruitment, selection and employment of learners. Equality and diversity is reinforced during progress reviews, where learners' understanding of equality and diversity is discussed, using standard questions.

50. UKTD has comprehensive equal opportunities procedures to cover bullying, harassment and current legislation including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The equality statement is up to date and is included in the learners', staff's and employers' handbooks. Employers also receive very useful information about how they can contribute to the five objectives of 'Every Child Matters'. The provider's monitoring and reviewing of policies is not systematic. For example, the procedure related to the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, has not been reviewed for two years.

51. Staff receive appropriate equality and diversity training when they join UKTD. The provider subscribes to two organisations which supply it regularly with information about legislative changes in company law and equality of opportunity. Staff are updated about these changes at team meetings and on training days. Equality of opportunity is included in the contract with employers. There are records in formal progress review documents of the ongoing monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace.

52. UKTD has taken little positive action to promote and encourage under-represented groups to join programmes. The self-assessment report does not identify any weaknesses in equal opportunities. This situation was not identified in the self-assessment report, which does not identify any weaknesses in equality of opportunity.

53. Managers collect and monitor recruitment data by learners' gender, ethnic background and disability. They are aware that minority ethnic groups are under-represented, but the provider has not reviewed or summarised current statistical data to set realistic improvement targets. For example, one of the business plan's targets is to improve the recruitment of under-represented groups by 30 per cent in 2007. No account has been taken of regional population variations in setting this target and no strategy exists to achieve this aim. The current learner profile does not reflect the ethnic proportions of the regional populations of the five local counties where UKTD provides training. Only 4 per cent of all learners are from minority ethnic groups.

54. Actions detailed in the quality improvement plan are unsatisfactory. The plan's target date to increase the availability of training to minority ethnic groups is January 2007, which is too far ahead and gives no indication of how this objective will be achieved. There is no formal analysis or use of equal opportunities data to identify trends, comparisons between different groups, areas for improvement or good practice. UKTD makes some use of positive role models in its marketing and publicity materials.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 4

55. Since the previous inspection UKTD has introduced and revised a range of quality improvement procedures, but the current quality improvement arrangements are not systematic enough. The cycle of quality improvement processes is incomplete and is not clearly understood by staff and learners. The provider completes a useful internal inspection of the provision and uses the outcomes in the self-assessment report. Inspectors' findings did not match a number of the judgements in the self-assessment report, or the overall grades. Feedback is collected regularly from employers and a sample of learners in training, but the response rates are low, the results are not critically analysed and are not used systematically to plan improvements to the provision.

56. UKTD has clearly defined policies, procedures and guidelines which cover a wide range of training and monitoring activities. The senior operations manager has responsibility for monitoring the implementation of procedures, but this monitoring is inconsistent. The provider has no clearly defined quality assurance arrangements to cover the procedures and forms used by training consultants. The minutes from management meetings show little evidence of evaluation of learners' needs.

57. Reviews of the quality of training are incomplete, and UKTD has identified this as a weakness in its self-assessment report. Operations managers hold a monthly meeting with each training consultant, but the focus is on performance against the LSC contract, and the quality of training is not considered. Management meetings do not include sufficient formal reviewing of the quality of training. The provider has no systematic process for reviewing the quality of the provision and identifying areas for improvement.

58. Operations managers work closely with training consultants in salons and a schedule has been agreed to formally observe salon-based activities with learners. However, no sampling plans exist to ensure that all key aspects of the programme are observed, and the guidelines for grading teaching and learning are inadequate.

59. The provider has a clear procedure for registering and responding to complaints. No complaints have been recorded since 2003, despite staff receiving complaints during salon visits and by telephone.

60. There is little formal analysis and use of management information. Currently, data is used to monitor performances against LSC contracts. Evidence from the management information system was not reliable during the inspection. Data is collected regularly, but it is not analysed to identify trends, or to review the quality of the training as a basis for management decisions. The improvement targets for retention and achievement rates throughout UKTD are inadequate.

61. The current self-assessment report was produced in May 2006. Few staff were involved in the writing of the report and some staff are unaware of the self-assessment

report. There is little evidence that the views of learners and employers have been taken into account in the production of the report. The report is repetitive and is not critical enough of the current provision. Many of the judgements are not supported by clear evidence. Inspectors' findings matched a number of the strengths and weaknesses detailed in the report, although a few of the strengths identified by UKTD were judged by inspectors to be no more than normal practice.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Retail and commercial enterprise

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hairdressing		3
Apprenticeships for young people	358	3
NVQ training for young people	6	3

62. UKTD has 364 learners in total. Forty-three of them are advanced apprentices, 315 are apprentices, and six learners following NVQ programmes at level 2 and level 3.

63. All learners are employed. They complete a trial period in a salon before beginning their training. Thirty-five learners are men, and 18 learners are from a minority ethnic background. The senior management team of UKTD consists of the managing director, training centre manager, and a senior operations manager. The provider employs 12 full-time and seven part-time staff who deliver, assess and manage the learning process in occupational training and key skills.

64. All training and assessment takes place in the salons, with qualified assessors in 33 of the salons which carry out practical training and assessing. An occupationally qualified training consultant visits each learner in the salon every three to four weeks to support the learner with their NVQ programme and to carry out assessments. Initial assessment is carried out at the beginning of the learning programme in order to identify literacy and numeracy needs. Health and safety, and equality and diversity training is included in the induction process.

Hairdressing

Strengths

- good progress by most learners
- good development of key skills
- particularly effective internal verification system.
- well-developed learners' understanding of equal opportunities

Weaknesses

- poor success rates
- slow progress by many learners
- weak programme co-ordination in some areas

Achievement and standards

65. Most learners make good progress. This strength was partly recognised in the self-assessment report. Of those learners who began training in the 18-month period before inspection, most are ahead of schedule in achieving individual NVQ units. For

example, one learner has completed the key skills qualifications and three NVQ units after only six months. UKTD has introduced a structured programme called 'Pathway' that informs salon trainers about what learners need to cover in each week of the programme.

66. Learners have satisfactory practical and technical skills. They demonstrate good levels of confidence and communications skills when dealing with clients and are able to recommend suitable commercial hair products. In some salons, learners take part in manufacturers' events, and competitions organised between local employers. There are also workshops on specific skills development, such as long-hair styling. Most salons are well resourced and have a professional range of products to support their training.

67. Success rates have been poor. In 2003-04 framework completions of advanced apprenticeship programmes reached 30 per cent. They dropped to 4 per cent in 2004-05. Apprenticeship completion rates rose slightly from 30 per cent to 34 per cent, during 2004-05. None of the NVQ learners achieved their qualifications in the same two-year period. This weakness was not acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Some recent improvement has been achieved, in that 57 per cent of all learners who have left the programmes since August 2005 have completed their apprenticeships.

68. Many learners make slow progress. Fourteen per cent of learners still in training have exceeded the scheduled end dates of their programmes. In one instance, a learner who began in 2001 is still in training and has not achieved her key skills qualifications. Another apprentice who began in January 2005 has only completed three units of the NVQ. This weakness was recognised in the self-assessment report.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	48	48	43	30	32
		timely	47	17	27	11	20
	2004-05	overall	46	29	41	4	20
		timely	42	5	28	5	20
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	125	47	62	30	49
		timely	147	19	38	14	31
	2004-05	overall	256	49	49	34	41
		timely	227	11	32	6	28
NVQ training for young	2003-04	overall	13	45	46	0	0
		timely	12	17	31	0	0
	2004-05	overall	35	21	47	0	0
		timely	30	0	28	0	0

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk).

The quality of provision

69. Support for, and the development of, key skills training is good. Additional resources have been provided to support the delivery of key skills, including specialist staff and laptop computers. Key skills assignments are relevant to the occupational sector, and integrated effectively to make good use of the evidence available within the salons. Key skills training is now delivered at the beginning of each programme. Key skills staff from UKTD carry out progress reviews during additional visits to the salons. Learners have a detailed understanding of key skills qualifications and their individual progress towards achieving them. Many learners have either completed, or are on target to complete their key skills qualifications within the first year of their programmes. The self-assessment report recognised this as a strength.

70. The standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory. All learners receive weekly practical training in their salons, with a good range of models. UKTD's training consultants provide coaching and support for background knowledge. In the better sessions, very effective use is made of verbal questioning to test the range of learners' knowledge. In two observed sessions, learners responded well to detailed questioning demonstrating a sound understanding of the subject matter. The training delivered in most of the wide variety of salons used by UKTD is inconsistent. Learners speak highly of the individual training that they receive from their salon trainers and UKTD's training consultants. Action plans are completed at each visit and include targets for practical and background knowledge. Most learners have a clear understanding of what they have to complete by the next visit from the training consultant.

71. Learners' formal progress reviews are satisfactory. These are held every 12 weeks, or more frequently for those learners with additional learning needs. Training consultants develop good relationships with learners and employers. Employers receive a copy of the review records, which some use to co-ordinate and plan salon training. Progress reviews include action-planning to meet the targets within the structured 'Pathway' scheme of work. The quality of action-planning is unsatisfactory in some reviews. Plans are not detailed enough and the same targets are repeated over several months with no explanation, or additional support, recorded.

72. In the better salons the learners also have opportunities to develop a broader range of life skills through team-building days, inter-salon competitions and trips to places of cultural interest such as museums and art galleries. Advanced apprentices select their optional units to suit their personal development and salon situation. Most employers' needs are being met by UKTD.

Leadership and management

73. Internal verification systems are particularly effective and very good at identifying good and poor assessment practice. The strategy is clear and the sampling plans are thorough and well documented. New assessors and those experienced assessors who have been identified as in need of support, have more of their work sampled more frequently. Results of internal verification are used by senior managers to identify staff training and development needs. Actions identified by the internal verifier are recorded accurately and followed up to improve assessment practice. An effective communication strategy is used to share best practice among salon-based assessors. UKTD has a good

proportion of salon-based assessors and ensures that they receive regular training. Attendance at internal verifiers' meetings is very good. Twenty-eight of 33 salon-based assessors, from across five counties, attended recent standardisation meetings. Individual training was provided at their place of work for the small proportion who could not attend. The internal verification co-ordinator quality assures the assessment process.

74. Learners have a well-developed understanding of equal opportunities. Induction materials are easy to read and contain relevant information. Employers' rights and responsibilities workbooks are good. They contain relevant case studies in hairdressing that focus on sensitive issues in a professional way and raise awareness of issues concerning gender and ethnic background. Learners give accurate and knowledgeable responses in discussions about ethnicity and disabilities. All learners speak fluently and with confidence about equality and diversity issues. Learners' knowledge of equality and diversity are checked through questioning, as part of the formal progress review interviews. This was not recognised as a strength in the self-assessment report.

75. Staff team meetings are held regularly. Operational managers and training consultants discuss learners' progress. Within most of the operational teams, communications are satisfactory. In some regions, training consultants, employers, and operational managers have very effective working relationships.

76. Few staff were fully involved in the self-assessment process. Staff do have the opportunity to comment on development plans in staff meetings.

77. Some of the programme co-ordination is weak. The quality of training, support for learners and assessor practice varies throughout the areas of the provision. In a few areas, the number of assessments and reviews carried out has been inconsistent variable for a small number of learners. In some instances, staff are not fully aware of learners' support needs. Systems for monitoring slow progress by learners and the strategies used to overcome this are not fully understood by staff. Aspects of this weakness, such as the poor use of individual learning plans, were recognised in the self-assessment report.

