

Philips Hair Salons

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Description of the provider

1. Philip's Hair Salons (PHS) has been operating as a commercial hairdressing salon group since 1974. In 1999, the group established apprenticeship training for its own employees and those of other salons in the West Yorkshire area. Currently the apprenticeship contract with West Yorkshire LSC provides training for 78 apprentice learners, 23 from the four PHS Hair Salons and 55 apprentices from other employer salons within Wakefield and surrounding areas. Currently 18 learners are advanced apprentices and 60 are following the apprentice programmes. The academy principal heads a team of four administrative staff and seven tutors, four of which have internal verifier roles. All four of the PHS salons have work-based assessors as have 22 of the 52 other partner salons PHS works with.
2. The standard training period is two years for apprentices and advanced apprentices. Apprentices attend the Wakefield training centre for off-the-job practical, related theory and key skills training and assessment one day each week. Advanced apprentices attend every alternate week but are able to increase attendance to two days each alternate week if they want to finish their training earlier. Apprentices entering the provision with good GCSE results, motivation and aptitude are offered a shorter training period of twelve months and level 2 key skills communication. These learners attend the training centre for one and half days each week. PHS recruits most learners through Connexions, marketing, careers events or employer referrals. All learners complete initial assessments to ascertain their literacy and numeracy levels, dexterity and occupational skill level and experience. While in training learner progress is monitored every eight weeks as part of an in-salon review between the learner, tutor and employer.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Hairdressing and beauty therapy	Good: Grade: 2
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade: 2

3. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are good, as is the quality of provision. Leadership and management and the capacity to improve are satisfactory. The promotion of equal opportunities and social inclusion are also satisfactory. PHS has good strategies to increase the number of men on their programmes but inclusion strategies are limited for other diverse learner groups. The provision in hairdressing is good with learners receiving high levels of individual support and guidance throughout their training.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. The provider has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Although key quality assurance practices are still being modified and improved, the provider has taken satisfactory steps to promote improvements and many of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been remedied. Apprenticeship success rates are improved from 41% during 2004-05 to 67% during 2006-07. Newly revised individual learning plans and the careful scheduling of assessors to ensure all learners have access to in-salon assessments have been implemented and are now well established. Arrangements for supporting learners' additional literacy and numeracy needs have been transformed and are now a significant strength. Team and assessor meetings are well documented, as are the employer forum meetings. However, senior management meetings remain unrecorded and there is an over-reliance on the frequent opportunity for staff contact. Significant weaknesses identified at the previous inspection such as target-setting and the establishment of a rigorous quality assurance system are still being developed. Staff contribute to and have a good understanding of the company's strategic aims, but few have formal targets that support the company's achievement of those aims. Although much improved, the targets set at some learner reviews were identified as being overly broad. A newly developed quality framework is now in place. However, it is not yet used as a cohesive management tool in planning strategies to drive improvements.
5. The self-assessment process is well established with all staff contributing to the judgements. The views of learners are taken into account, however, employers' views are not formally collected. Although the report was mostly accurate in its identification of strengths, inspectors judged some of the strengths to be normal practice. Few of the areas for improvement identified during inspection are represented in the report.

Key strengths

- Good success rates for apprentices
- Good development of practical skills for advance apprentices
- Good assessment practices to support learning
- Very effective individual support

- Good strategic planning to increase participation rates
- Very effective skills for life strategy
- Very responsive support for employers
- Good curriculum management

Key areas for improvement

- Poor timely success rates for advanced apprentices
- Insufficient involvement of employers in setting targets at progress reviews
- Incomplete teaching and learning observation practices
- Insufficiently established quality improvement strategy

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

6. Achievements and standards overall are good. Overall apprentice success rates remain high in 2006-07 against a significant increase in the number of learners leaving the programme. Timely success rates for apprentices are very high and are consistently above the national average by a minimum of 18 percentage points.
7. Overall success rates for advanced apprentices have significantly improved during 2006-07 to 83% from a low 21% during 2004-05. However, timely success rates for advanced apprenticeships are low and have remained low over the last three years.
8. PHS has reduced the number of learners who stay in learning beyond their expected end date. The percentage number of unfunded learners has increased each year from 2003-04 to 2005-06. However, at the time of inspection no learners remain in learning beyond their expected end date.
9. The standard of practical skills of advanced apprentices is good. They demonstrate high fashion cutting and styling techniques. These learners are very professional in their personal appearance and attitude towards clients and staff, reflecting good industry standards. They exhibit high levels of confidence and have good communication skills. The standards of apprentices' practical skills are satisfactory and are appropriate for their level of training. Apprentices who are following the fast monitor programme present their key skills topics with confidence, demonstrate good research skills and produce good visual aids.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade: 2

10. The quality of provision is good with much emphasis placed on individual guidance and support. Assessment planning is good. All learners understand assessment criteria and processes fully. They carry out assessments with purpose and confidence. Assessment opportunities are frequent with 40% of salons having work-based assessors. Tutors and assessors give very good verbal and written guidance on how learners can improve and how to make those improvements. Tutors give good evaluative feedback for written assignments. For example, tutors give guidance on improving spelling and grammatical errors. Teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. Tutors use the company's detailed scheme of work to develop lesson plans that reflect the level and needs of their learners. In better sessions tutors take account of individual learning styles and questioning is used to extend a topic and check understanding. High ratios of staff to learners enable tutors to provide individual and small group support. Teachers are enthusiastic and develop a good relationship with learners. Less effective teaching sessions lack pace and have insufficient challenge. During practical sessions staff do not systematically guide learners in good health and safety practices. For example, tutor intervention is not systematic when learners place clips in their mouth or onto clothing and bags and files are left around the salon.

11. Individual support for learners is particularly effective in promoting learners' development of skills and successful achievement. Learners value the impartial advice and guidance they receive during recruitment. Individual learning plans, key skill entry levels and the degree of tutor support take good account of all initial and diagnostic assessments. In agreement with employers, learners with good entry profiles are able to complete their programme within twelve months. One apprentice completed their training in seven months and has now progressed onto the advanced programme. Learners with additional literacy and numeracy needs benefit from experienced and well-qualified staff providing very effective support before starting their key skills and occupational assignments. The successful completion of additional literacy and numeracy worksheets is monitored as part of the in-salon review process. Tutors are particularly attuned and responsive to learners requiring additional support. Together with learners and employers they plan actions to ensure support is appropriate and available at a time and place to best suit the learner. For example, learners have attended extra sessions at the training centre and tutors have increased the frequency of workplace assessments and in salon reviews.
12. Learners benefit from a full programme of enrichment activities. PHS encourages learners to enter hairdressing competitions and three have applied to join a manufacturer's protégé team. Learners have also been put forward for young stylist of the year. The work of advanced apprentices is photographed and displayed in wall mounted frames.
13. Arrangements for monitoring learner progress are satisfactory. Reviewers take good account of tutor evaluations and learners' comments during the frequent meetings. However, written targets do not reflect the detailed discussion and generally relate to whole units of the national vocational qualification (NVQ).
14. Salon trainers are not actively involved in negotiating targets. Their input is restricted to approving the pre-set targets decided by tutors and their evaluations of their learners' development needs have limited influence on any targets set.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade: 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade: 3

15. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. PHS takes good strategic actions to increase participation rates. The senior manager understands the strengths of the provision, has clearly defined long-term goals and takes good account of all existing local training provision. Good and successful actions to increase participation rates include providing Key Stage 4 learners with work placement and part-time work before starting the programme. PHS is planning a realistically phased approach to establishing

a second training centre in the neighbouring geographical area. Effective financial planning to support the strategy includes a sponsorship agreement with a professional product manufacturer.

16. A very effective and established skills for life strategy provides very good literacy and numeracy support for learners. All staff are working towards either level 3 or level 4 literacy and numeracy qualifications with 50% of staff already accredited at literacy level 4. Good account is taken of initial and diagnostic assessments when guiding learners onto appropriate programmes and levels of key skill qualifications. Although each learner's progress is monitored by tutors, PHS has no overall strategy for assessing the success of this. However, the framework success rates of learners with identified literacy and numeracy needs are the same as those of other learners.
17. PHS is responsive and supports its employer salons well. Employers actively use PHS as a source of information on such issues as employment contracts, minimum wage, conditions of service and equality and diversity legislation. Employers value the frequent assessor visits, the good and informative employer pack, twice-yearly employer forum meetings and termly newsletters. PHS is highly responsive to employer queries, providing supportive intervention on such issues as learner punctuality and attitude. Work-based assessors are particularly well supported through well planned twice-yearly assessor meetings and good supportive internal verification practices.
18. Curriculum management is good. Staff take very seriously their contribution to continual improvement and constantly evaluate and amend learning materials and practices. Managers allocate tutor schedules taking good account of the time required to develop resources, complete learner reviews and on-the-job assessments. Weekly team meetings include the monitoring of learners' progress and the sharing of information and good practice. Meetings are generally well documented apart from senior management meetings where meetings between the academy principal and contract manager are not formally recorded.
19. PHS has an adequate equal opportunity policy that is shared with learners during induction. Equality and diversity targets are set for gender only. Evaluations of learners' success extend to gender and learners with identified literacy and numeracy development needs. Although access to the training centre is by steep stairway PHS has a strategy for learners with mobility restrictions. However, PHS has not commissioned a disability and discrimination audit to evaluate the suitability of the strategy. Learner success is recognised and celebrated through awards evenings, displays of work and marketing material. The safety and well-being of learners is important to PHS. Early in the programme learners receive good and extensive information on sexual health, personal safety and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. In response to increased incidents of unplanned pregnancies PHS now includes a comprehensive and detailed session on contraception, and provides free condoms to all learners. As part of a local council initiative to reduce the incidence of dermatitis, PHS raised the profile of safe practices to learners and employers, providing free non-latex gloves.
20. Observations of teaching and learning practices are incomplete. Each observation is graded with strengths and areas for development identified. However, actions for improvement are not agreed, recorded or monitored. PHS does not systematically evaluate outcomes of observations at appraisal or when compiling annual staff

development plans. The grade profile from PHS observations is higher than those of the inspection team.

21. PHS has been slow to implement quality assurance practices to support quality improvement. It places too much reliance on informal processes to monitor some key learning activities. Incomplete quality assurance processes was a significant weakness at the previous inspection and PHS have recently introduced a quality improvement framework. The framework includes the quality assurance of key aspects of provision but these are not yet used effectively to inform strategic decision-making or improve practice. For example, observations of teaching and learning are graded but not collated and used as an effective management tool. Although targets are set for employer engagement these do not include employers' level of commitment to their learners' training. PHS understands the limitations of some of their quality assurance practices and are evaluating and modifying the framework accordingly.

What learners like:

- 'The tutors treat you like an adult'
- 'Learning at work as well as at the training centre'
- 'You are allowed to work at a pace that suits you'
- The very supportive staff
- The amount of practical work at the training centre
- 'All the new things you learn'
- 'The friendly atmosphere, everyone is very helpful'

What learners think could improve:

- The lack of space in the academy training salon
- The temperature in the training salon

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship programmes** managed by the provider

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	14	50%	41%	21%	29%
		timely	18	28%	28%	17%	20%
	05-06	overall	14	36%	45%	36%	36%
		timely	14	0%	26%	0%	19%
	06-07	overall	12	83%	N/A	83%	N/A
		timely	6	17%	N/A	17%	N/A
Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	19	58%	50%	58%	42%
		timely	19	58%	33%	58%	28%
	05-06	overall	14	71%	55%	71%	52%
		timely	15	67%	38%	67%	36%
	06-07	overall	85	69%	N/A	67%	N/A
		timely	84	62%	N/A	60%	N/A

Note 'At the time of the inspection - LSC data for 2006-07 had yet to be fully validated'

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** Provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'