

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Hair Academy South West**

**01 February 2007**



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*

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Hair Academy South West

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Hair Academy South West (HASW) is a limited company established in 1987. Originally, the company traded as the Sarah Hodge Group and provided apprenticeship training to its own group of eight hairdressing salons in Somerset and Devon. During 2002 the company extended the offer of training to include salons other than the Sarah Hodge Group and in August 2004 the company started trading under the new name of HASW. The number of external salons with apprentices receiving training from HASW has increased year on year to the present 19 salons. The company has two training academies, a main centre in Taunton and a smaller one at Barnstable. There are currently 57 apprenticeship learners funded through the Dorset and Somerset Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Apprenticeship contracts account for 95 per cent of HASW's training provision. Other training includes a contract with Somerset County Council to provide level 1 hairdressing training to six pupils in years 10 and 11. HASW also provides level 1 hairdressing training for eight pupils at risk of disengaging from formal education. A small group of privately funded learners attend the academy to gain qualifications or to extend their practical skills.

2. Two senior managers head a team of five tutors, 18 assessors and two internal verifiers, all of whom also work as part-time stylists in commercial salons. One senior manager is responsible for quality improvement, equality, diversity, and health and safety. The other is a principle tutor and is responsible for the co-ordination of programme management and training. The principle tutor also takes the primary role for business management.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 3**

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** The provision in hairdressing is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory as are arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement.

4. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** A draft report is produced based on data reports and information from other sources such as learners' and employers' questionnaires. The draft is circulated to staff for comment and the final version takes this consultation into account. The process is not sufficiently critical or inclusive. The report recognises many of the strengths in the area of learning. However, it does not identify some key weaknesses in the area of learning and in leadership and management. Although the grade that HASW gave the area of learning matched the grade given at inspection, its grade for leadership and management and the contributory grades for equality of opportunity were too generous in comparison to inspection grades.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** HASW has a good focus on improving success rates. It has introduced a number of initiatives, such as a planned programme of off-the-job training, an individual learning plan monitoring sheet and a traffic light system to identify learners causing concern. However, their effectiveness has not been systematically monitored or evaluated. HASW does not

## HAIR ACADEMY SOUTH WEST

have sufficiently coherent systems for managing all aspects of the apprenticeship programmes, such as on-the-job training and assessment practice. The use of management information is not well developed and data is not used effectively to identify trends or plan appropriate action.

### KEY CHALLENGES FOR HAIR ACADEMY SOUTH WEST:

- continue to maintain the improving and good success rates
- develop and implement a literacy and numeracy strategy
- further develop strategies to strengthen the management of provision
- improve and extend the promotion of health and safety and equality and opportunity
- improve systems and processes to support quality improvement

### GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		3

<b>Retail and commercial enterprise</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Hairdressing</i></b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	57	2

### ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. In planning the inspection consideration was given to changes in provision that had occurred since the previous inspection. At the previous inspection, HASW only provided training for its own employees. The training offer is now extended to 19 salons and 24 learners. The inspection took place over four days and in making inspection judgements, the inspectors included all 57 learners on apprenticeship programmes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- good focus on improving success rates

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate arrangements for learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs
- insufficiently developed systems for managing apprenticeship programmes

## **Retail and commercial enterprise**

### ***Hairdressing***

#### *Strengths*

- significant recent improvements in success rates
- good progress by learners
- good development of learners' skills
- good monitoring of each learner's achievement

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient planning of learning to meet individual needs
- insufficient promotion of health and safety
- insufficient training and assessment opportunities for some learners

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HAIR ACADEMY SOUTH WEST:**

- the small groups and individual attention
- the good reputation that HASW has
- the day at the centre - 'you are kept active and complete a lot of work'
- 'the tutors are very supportive and they give you confidence'
- 'we are treated like adults'
- 'HASW makes learning enjoyable'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK HAIR ACADEMY SOUTH WEST COULD IMPROVE:**

- the number of clients at the training centre
- 'the number of assessments completed on the job if you are not employed by HASW'
- the amount of space where learners can relax and eat
- the attention given to learners' views
- the action taken if employers are not training learners - it is not enough
- 'time is not always used constructively - theory is sometimes spread over too many weeks'



## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

#### Strengths

- good focus on improving success rates

#### Weaknesses

- inadequate arrangements for learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs
- insufficiently developed systems for managing apprenticeship programmes

7. HASW has a good focus on improving success rates. Originally, the company offered training to learners employed at its own salons. It expanded its operations to include learners employed in other salons in 2002. It has introduced a number of initiatives to ensure that success rates continue to improve with the expansion of provision. The main change has been the introduction of a structured training programme in September 2004. All HASW-employed learners have work-based assessors and attend the training centre for off-the-job training for background knowledge and key skills qualifications only. Other learners have an additional three-hour off-the-job practical salon in which to complete practical assessments. The introduction of additional practical assessment salons when training is not taking place extends the assessment opportunities of learners without work-based assessors. A very effective individual learning plan and monitoring sheet combines the agreed national vocational qualification (NVQ) hairdressing and key skills unit completion date with an ongoing monitoring sheet. Tutors, learners and employers are all very conversant with each learner's achievements against their target completion dates. HASW places much importance on the monitoring of learners' progress and achievement. Although staff do not have set targets for learners, monthly team meetings effectively monitor the progress of learners. A traffic light system effectively identifies learners causing concern. Effective actions support those who fall behind with their progress.

8. Internal communications at HASW are satisfactory. HASW has a regular cycle of monthly meetings for tutors. Meetings of the senior management team are usually informal and not minuted. However, many of the items covered and the information given at team meetings reflects discussion and decisions made at senior management level. A quarterly cycle of quality improvement meetings is the main mechanism for monitoring the effectiveness of the training programmes. The cycle of meetings does not include regular assessors' and standardisation meetings. Internal verification is currently an agenda item at some of the managers' meetings, but not all assessors attend these meetings.

9. Resources at the training centre are satisfactory. None of the tutors has teaching qualifications, although relevant training by an external consultant has effectively improved the quality of teaching practice. HASW introduced an interactive approach to the teaching of background knowledge sessions in September in response to learners' and tutors' comments. As stylists in the Sarah Hodge salons, HASW's staff are included in the twice-yearly review process used throughout the group of salons. In addition, one of the

senior managers with responsibility for the training programmes also carries out regular reviews of tutoring staff. The review process does not include target-setting and is not sufficiently focused on managing staff performance in relation to training. Similarly, staff development activity does not sufficiently focus on the development needs of the staff or the training company.

10. Arrangements for learners with literacy, numeracy and language skills support needs are inadequate. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. HASW does not have a strategy for skills for life provision, and does not have staff with appropriate qualifications in providing literacy or numeracy support. Initial assessment to identify literacy and numeracy skills is not followed by further diagnostic testing to identify individual learning needs. HASW does not plan, implement and monitor individualised programmes of support for learners with additional learning needs. For example, although initial assessment identified some learners as dyslexic, HASW does not make appropriate arrangements for formal ongoing support. However, the company has put in place some strategies to enable these learners to complete their programmes, such as reading assessment questions to them and recording their responses.

11. HASW has insufficiently developed systems for managing apprenticeship programmes. It is too reliant on systems and processes developed to fit the business needs of the Sarah Hodge groups of salons. For example, staff review and development processes do not sufficiently focus on developing the appropriate staff skills for those involved with apprenticeship programmes. HASW has not developed a coherent set of procedures to manage all aspects of the learning process. It does not have appropriate processes to ensure that assessment practice is standardised. There is no formal audit to monitor that employers are compliant in providing on-the-job training. HASW has not developed its use of management information to manage the provision in the most effective way. It uses a nationally available management information system to provide the local LSC with data as required. However, it has not extended the use of this system to produce regular reports for internal management and monitoring purposes. Much data is generated through written records and is not recorded electronically, with examples including the individual learning plan monitoring sheets and the traffic light system. Although management systems are not yet fully developed, learners are working to a good standard and progressing well and success rates are significantly improved.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

12. HASW has appropriate policies to promote equality of opportunity. The learners' handbook includes the equal opportunities policy and an equal opportunities in practice document. It also includes an equality and diversity policy statement, a disability and access and inclusion statement, a bullying and anti-harassment policy and procedure, a child protection policy, a complaint and grievance procedure and an assessment appeals procedure. However, the handbook is only available to learners at the centre. They do not receive a personal summary of the policies or their rights and responsibilities. HASW does not ensure that all learners fully understand the contents of all the equal opportunities policies. However, a recently produced, well-laid out leaflet summarising equality and diversity information will be given to future learners at the beginning of their programmes. The leaflet is attractive and easy to read, its content is clear and it provides useful reference to key issues.

13. HASW recognises the importance of ensuring that learners have a good understanding of equal opportunities issues. Learners feel safe and value the support of HASW's staff. There is a strong focus on respect and teamwork in the training centre and in the workplace. HASW was particularly helpful on behalf of a learner who was not in receipt of the minimum wage. Learners are fully aware of the appeals procedure and who would help them with personal issues. Staff provide good role models in their approach to learners and clients. However, equality of opportunity is not formally included in the induction sessions at the beginning of the learning programme. The first of two sessions planned into the off-the-job programme of learning, currently occurs in week 16 of the programme. Learners' reviews are held every 12 weeks and include questions on equality of opportunity. However, the questions posed do not fully explore learners' responsibilities in relation to equality of opportunity within the workplace. HASW implements complaints procedure effectively, as demonstrated by its effective follow-up and action taken because of a complaint about a racist joke.

14. HASW is committed to promoting equality of opportunity. However, it does not have a regular and planned programme of staff development activity to ensure that all staff have an appropriate understanding of equality of opportunity issues. When staff attend external training events the key outcomes are disseminated at team meetings.

15. Data reports on the recruitment and performance of under-represented groups are available and reviewed regularly. HASW has an action plan to promote equality of opportunity. However, the provider does not use this effectively to implement and review strategies to increase the number of learners from under-represented groups or to set targets.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 3**

16. HASW recognises the importance of quality improvement. Staff are highly motivated and are committed to improving the quality of provision. A structured programme of off-the-job training has been offered since September 2004. Assessment falls in line with this programme and progress is carefully monitored to support learners to keep up to date. HASW has introduced a number of recent initiatives to improve the quality of provision and improve success rates. These include interactive background knowledge teaching, an individual learning plan monitoring sheet, reports sent to external employers every eight weeks and a traffic light system for identifying learners whose progress is causing concern. Overall and timely success rates have significantly improved over the past year and are now good. However, HASW does not systematically monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its quality improvement initiatives. For example, reports to external employers were introduced without an explanation to employers of their purpose and the monitoring of the initiative in improving background knowledge sessions is restricted to staff self-evaluations after each session. HASW has recently introduced a process of auditing the effective completion of key documents such as individual learning plans and records of the quarterly progress reviews. However, the audit does not systematically evaluate the quality and effectiveness of these procedures with a view to improving the quality of the learners' experience.

17. HASW recognises the importance of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Formal observation of teaching and learning has recently been introduced and informal peer observation is encouraged. The process does not include the recording of agreed action-planning with clear targets to improve practice. It is not formally linked to staff

appraisal and development arrangements. HASW has plans to introduce formal observations of other key activities such as progress reviews.

18. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets the awarding body's requirements. HASW has identified improvements to be made to its internal verification activity. Examples include more detailed feedback to assessors, planning the sampling matrix in advance and holding a regular cycle of meetings for internal verifiers. Although standardisation activities are arranged by internal verifiers, these are not planned as part of a formal programme of standardisation activities.

19. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The draft report is based on data reports and information from other sources such as learners' and employers' questionnaires. The draft is circulated to staff for comment and the final version takes this consultation into account. The process is not sufficiently critical and the self-assessment report is descriptive and lacks detail. Inspectors broadly agreed with the strengths identified in the report for the area of learning, although some areas that HASW identified as strengths were considered to be no more than normal practice. There was little similarity in the identified weaknesses. There was little similarity between the strengths and weaknesses of leadership and management identified at inspection and the self-assessment report. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessed grade for the area of learning. The inspection grade for leadership and management and the contributory grades for equality of opportunity and quality improvement are lower than the self-assessed grades.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Retail and commercial enterprise

### Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Hairdressing</i></b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	57	2

20. HASW provides hairdressing apprenticeship training for nine advanced apprentices and 48 apprentices. Twenty-four learners are employed in external salons and 33 are employed by the HASW salon group. HASW recruits learners after referral from Connexions, in response to adverts or directly by employers. Two learners are men and there are no learners from minority ethnic groups.

21. HASW has its main training centre in Taunton but also provides a small training room adjacent to one of its salons in Barnstable. Currently, two of HASW's employees attend the Barnstable centre. All other learners attend the training centre in Taunton. After completing a formal written application, each learner is interviewed before initial literacy and numeracy assessments are completed. All learners have an extended induction before joining the apprenticeship programme. During this time they complete the NVQ unit in health and safety and parts of key skills qualifications in communication and application of number. All learners from external salons attend the training centre for off-the-job training and assessment in background knowledge, key skills and practical hairdressing for one day each week. Apprentices employed by HASW attend the training centre for three hours a week for background knowledge and key skills training. Work-based assessors complete all practical assessments in their salons. Advanced apprenticeship programmes run for 12 months, while apprenticeship programmes are 24 months in duration. Advanced apprentices have all progressed onto the programme after completing their apprenticeship. Tutors visit salons every 12 weeks to complete learners' progress reviews. At the time of the inspection, HASW has three work-based assessors completing on-the-job practical assessments.

### ***Hairdressing***

#### *Strengths*

- significant recent improvements in success rates
- good progress by learners
- good development of learners' skills
- good monitoring of each learner's achievement

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient planning of learning to meet individual needs
- insufficient promotion of health and safety
- insufficient training and assessment opportunities for some learners

## Achievement and standards

22. Success rates for apprenticeships have significantly improved over the past year and are good. Advanced apprenticeship success rates have declined over three consecutive years, from outstanding in 2003-04 to poor in 2005-06. However, of the nine advanced apprentices who left between August 2006 and October 2006, 89 per cent successfully completed the full framework. Similarly, apprenticeship success rates have remained satisfactory at 50 per cent over the two years of available data. These rates have also significantly improved. Of the 22 learners who left the programme between October 2005 and October 2006, 73 per cent have successfully completed.

23. Learners make good progress towards their achievement targets. Timely success rates are particularly good and have equalled the overall success rates each year for three years. No learners have remained in learning past their expected end date since 2001-02. Learners leaving over the past 12 months have a timely success rate of 80 per cent for advanced apprenticeships and 73 per cent for apprenticeships. Current learners are making good progress towards completion of the framework. Most learners achieve their realistically set unit achievement targets at or before the planned completion date.

24. Learners develop good occupational and communication skills. All learners have a professional and motivated approach to their work. They are well organised and methodical while preparing for and completing client services. Learners develop good interpersonal skills and work well as a team. More able learners support and guide less able learners. Learners understand the benefits and are able to give knowledgeable explanations of the products they choose for their clients. Some apprentices who have been on programme for 12 months complete complex colouring and cutting techniques. Many advanced apprentices have a well-established client list within their own salons before completing the framework.

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	4	100	43	100	32
		timely	4	100	27	100	20
	2004-05	overall	31	48	40	42	29
		timely	31	48	28	42	20
	2005-06	overall	2	50	45	0	36
		timely	2	50	26	0	19
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	4	100	62	50	49
		timely	4	100	38	50	30
	2005-06	overall	16	56	55	50	52
		timely	16	56	38	50	35

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](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)).



## The quality of provision

25. The monitoring of learners' progress against individual learning targets is good. A simple yet effective monitoring grid identifies learners' achievements against pre-set target completion dates. Learners and employers fully understand what assessments are complete and what is still outstanding. Employers use this information effectively in planning on-the-job training to support future assessments. Staff team meetings held every four weeks evaluate the progress of each learner and colour code their progress. Tutors agree appropriate actions for learners who are falling behind target or at risk of missing targets.

26. A wide range of commercial and supportive salons provides learners with a good range of clients and experience. Most salons either schedule particular time for on-the-job training with senior staff or plan training as part of learners' daily duties. Salon trainers take good account of the learners' individual learning plans during salon training. Learners value this training and make good use of senior stylists as role models in their personal development. Off-the-job training and assessment is satisfactory overall. Of the three sessions observed by inspectors, two were good. During background knowledge sessions, small-group work is used to good effective. Learners develop good teamwork skills as they research planned topics before confidently presenting their findings to the whole group. Practical sessions benefit from good, well-explained individual demonstrations and coaching. Resources are adequate, although the practical salons are dated and can become congested if all learners have clients. Learners extend their experience and skills further through an annual in-house competition, regional competitions and by attending an annual hair and beauty exhibition which HASW arranges at a subsidised cost. Learners complete a 12-week induction before joining the apprenticeship programme. During the 12 weeks, learners complete literacy and numeracy initial assessments, have an introduction to health and safety and commence their training and assessment for the hairdressing NVQ and key skills qualifications. At the time of inspection, no learners were receiving additional literacy and numeracy support. HASW has no formal strategy for supporting learners with identified additional needs. However, if learners fall behind target, additional support from tutors is available. Advice and guidance are satisfactory. All learners and employers are aware of the apprenticeship framework. The learners' handbook gives clear guidance on the awards to be achieved and the methods of training. However, there is little information on what learners can expect from tutors and employers and what they in turn will expect of the learner. Reviews are frequent and completed in the workplace, and although the employer is not always included in the discussion, they make written comments and read and sign all completed review forms. During reviews, the setting of training and assessment targets is a systematic and effective process. The reviewer uses the individual learning plan, the previous review and the training schedule to develop targets for the learner. However, this mechanistic approach reduces the contributions made by the learner and employer in developing individualised training and assessment targets.

27. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory, the planning of learning does not sufficiently take account of learning outcomes or learners' individual needs. In some instances, lesson plans are no more than a tutors' checklist of activities. During practical sessions, some tutors make notes on where learners need further development. These records do not systematically guide future lesson planning.

28. Health and safety practices are satisfactory overall. However, there is insufficient promotion of health and safety during some aspects of clients' services. Small pieces of equipment used by learners are clean and debris-free but, although sterilising fluid is available, few learners have developed the habit of systematically sterilising their equipment. When completing foil colours, learners fully protect their clients taking particular care when measuring and mixing the products. However, learners who are not yet fully competent do not wear protective gloves and get colour and bleach on their hands. During the inspection, HASW took action to improve the promotion of health and safety and learners are now working with improved safety.

### **Leadership and management**

29. Operational management of hairdressing is satisfactory. Staff are well informed and highly committed. Although communication is effective in improving the learners' experience, much is informal and unrecorded. Tutors meet at the close of each day. They use this time effectively to share good practice and discuss learners and related training issues. All team members understand and share the company's focus on retaining learners and supporting their success. Tutors and managers have established good relationships with employers. All employers interviewed spoke of the responsive and helpful provider team. All staff are occupationally qualified and experienced, spending part of the week working in HASW's own salons. However, none of the teaching team has or is working towards a teaching qualification. Internal verification is satisfactory. An appropriate amount of sampling is completed but this is not sufficiently planned as part of a quality cycle.

30. There is no formal auditing in place to monitor the effectiveness of salon employers in supporting the development and success of their learners. Although employers sign a contractual agreement to provide training in the salon, not all employers allow time for training. Learners in external salons have little opportunity to complete on-the-job assessments. Although HASW will visit salons for assessment purposes, not all learners are aware of this and few take up the offer.



