

Leslie Frances Training Limited

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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. Leslie Frances Training (LFT) is a privately owned limited company that has been operating as a commercial hairdressing salon in the centre of Barnsley for the last 120 years. In 1983, the salon established apprenticeship training for its own employees and those of other salons in the west and south Yorkshire area. The apprenticeship contract with South Yorkshire LSC provides training for 117 learners, 12 of whom are from the Leslie Frances salon. Currently 42 learners are advanced apprentices and 75 are following an apprentice programme. The company also provides training for 65 year 10 and 11 learners drawn from eight local schools. All apprenticeship learners are employed and attend off-the-job training on one day each week for practical and related theory, assessment and literacy, numeracy and language. Advanced apprentices are able to negotiate individual learning plans with most of the training taking place on-the-job. LFT work with 65 salons, of which 12 have work-based assessors. Three directors and the training manager form the senior management team with the training manager responsible for day-to-day operational management. Three administrative staff support six tutors, two assistant tutors and three specialist literacy, numeracy and language assessors.
2. Barnsley is the least ethnically diverse of the areas in Yorkshire and Humberside with only 2% from minority ethnic backgrounds. One third or more of Barnsley's population live in areas identified as the 10% most deprived in England. A very high percentage of adults (25%) are unemployed and claiming incapacity benefit. Young people achieving five GCSE's at grades A*-C including English and Mathematics is 31% compared with the Yorkshire and Humberside average of 42% and the national rate of 47%. Initial assessment records identify 51% of LFT's learners with literacy and numeracy levels of entry level 3 or below.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
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 satisfactory. Overall success rates are improving for advanced apprentices and are currently above national rates. Timely success rates are low for advanced apprentices but comparisons of in-year data indicates significant improvements during the current year. Apprentice success rates increased significantly during 2005/06 but over a three-year period are similar to national averages. Some 65 young people on level 1 schools provision are particularly successful with consistently good retention and achievement rates over a three year period. Learners develop good skills and progression rates are good. The quality of provision is good with particularly effective individual training in the centre and from committed employers in learners' own salons. Educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. Programmes are very responsive to the needs of employers and learners, providing good alternatives to standard off-the-job training. However, although learners are adequately supported in completing their literacy, numeracy and language qualifications, learners' literacy and numeracy needs are not always fully met. Leadership and management are good with an open and inclusive style that engages all staff in furthering LFT's ongoing improvements.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

4. LFT's capacity to improve is good. Since the previous inspection actions have been implemented to improve the provision. The provider has generally been successful in resolving weaknesses found at the previous inspection. The quality assurance arrangements have improved and now cover all aspects of the learners' experience. Quality assurance checks now cover on-the-job training and work-based assessors are included in the companies' assessment strategy. On- and off-the-job training and links with employers have improved. Good links have been made with schools. The business planning process has improved since the previous inspection and the development plan now has a clear focus on quality improvement that links well with the self-assessment action plan. Good investment has been made in resources and the hairdressing accommodation. Electronic learning and online testing have been introduced and the management information system has been improved since the previous inspection. Although LFT has implemented many good improvement strategies some of the new quality improvement actions and practices are not fully evaluated to access their overall impact.
5. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The process is clear and well understood by staff who can see how it links to quality improvement. The process is well planned and linked to the quality calendar. All staff complete their own self-assessment and then collectively identify key strengths and areas for improvement. Key questions are used to make overall judgement. Feedback from learners and employers is used to inform the process. The resulting self-assessment report generally reflects the strengths and areas for improvement found at inspection. However, evidence to support strengths and areas for improvement was weak. Grades awarded at inspection broadly matched the grades proposed in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- Good practical skill development
- Good achievements for 14-16 schools provision
- Good individual coaching and training
- Good employer partnerships that support learners development and progress
- Flexible and responsive provision that meets the needs of learners and employers
- Clear strategic direction with an open leadership and management style
- Good internal links to benefit learners
- Good operational management

Key areas for improvement

- Low timely success rates for advanced apprentices
- Poor use of initial assessment in developing key skill individual learning plans
- Insufficient evaluation of actions implemented to improve provision
- Insufficiently clear skills for life strategy

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Overall success rates for advanced apprentices have improved over the last three year period and are currently seven percentage points above the national average. Conversely timely success rates have declined during 2006/07 and are evaluated in LFT's self-assessment as an area for improvement. Good actions taken by LFT have resulted in an in year 32% improvement in timely success rates compared with the same period last year. Over a three year period, overall and timely success rates for apprentices are similar to national rates. Particularly good overall success rates of 70% during 2005/06 declined to 60% during 2006/07. The in-year success rates for 2007/08 are similar to those of the previous year which were around national average.
7. Hairdressing level 1 provision for 14 to 16 year olds is particularly successful. Retention and achievement rates are high remaining consistently above 80% over the last three years. Progression rates onto LFT apprenticeship programmes for those learners completing during 2006/07 are good at 75% with a further 8% of learners progressing onto beauty provision with other providers.
8. Learners develop good practical and employability skills. They work professionally and confidently providing a wide range of services to a good standard. Learners on programme for only one year are able to complete complex colouring techniques, basic cutting, styling and perming techniques. Those learners developing more complex cutting and styling techniques approach their work with high levels of perseverance, conscientiously involving clients in discussion to ensure their requirements are met. Learners effectively evaluate their client's hair condition and characteristics, making good product choices that benefit styling and treatment services.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

9. The quality of the provision is good. Experienced tutors provide very good individual coaching and training. Tutors' timely intervention during practical sessions includes mini demonstrations of techniques, guidance on how learners can improve their skills and clear explanations of the benefits of differing techniques. During group demonstrations tutors use questioning that challenge learners' understanding of techniques and process, linking activities well to learners' commercial experience and existing skills. Theory related sessions are less successful. The planning and teaching of theory sessions takes insufficient account of learning. Tutors use a good range of activities to motivate learners but their purpose is not always sufficiently linked to the sessions learning outcomes.
10. LFT actively selects and works with good, professional and supportive salons. Learners benefit from the wide range of experience and training they receive from good quality commercial salons. Employers are well informed through relevant and informative newsletters, frequent LFT staff visits and a comprehensive employer information pack. Most salons are highly committed to training and the development of their learners' skills. Many employers have a clear and detailed understanding of the training and support needs of their learners. They use this effectively when planning salon based training targets as

part of their learners' eight weekly progress reviews. Employers support their learners in the development of good occupational skills through continued access to good role models, specific salon training, manufacturer's workshops and visits. Assessment practices are good. Enrichment activities are satisfactory with LFT planned internal competitions and visits to exhibitions. Tutors effectively monitor learners' progress with outcomes reported at the monthly team meetings. However, some targets recorded during progress reviews are insufficiently detailed.

11. The planning of provision is good and responsive in meeting the needs of employers and learners. LFT effectively negotiates individual learning plans, taking good advantage of the specialist staff available to learners within their salon and at the training centre. This is particularly beneficial for advanced apprentices. The choice of learners' optional units takes good account of their salons client groups and any extended activities or services within the salon. Good flexible training plans allow learners to complete early through additional attendance at the training centre or increased assessment in their salons. Electronic learning is constantly available through either employer computer systems or laptops carried by all staff. Learners make good use of online testing.
12. Ongoing literacy, numeracy and language support is effectively provided through occupational staff. Satisfactory arrangements for more specialist help in literacy, numeracy and language are available either at the centre or through planned visits to employer salons. A high proportion of learners enter training with literacy and numeracy levels of entry level 3 or below. However, initial literacy and numeracy assessments insufficiently inform individual learning plans of any additional support learners may require. literacy, numeracy and language targets are based on an end achievement date with little account taken of a learners starting point. Interim targets are insufficiently detailed and learners progress is not always recorded. However, if learners are experiencing difficulties specialist help is quickly available.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Leadership and management are good. LFT have developed clear strategic actions to develop and improve the provision. LFT's open and transparent style encourages staff to actively contribute and own the strategic business plan. Strategic plans place good emphasise on improving the experience of learners and improving overall success rates. The development plan clearly identifies progression targets and is regularly reviewed and

monitored. Staff are kept well informed on progress towards achieving the primary objectives. Early indications show that the strategies to improve timely success rates are having a positive impact with most learners making good progress and some achieving early.

14. LFT have good working links with salons across the Yorkshire area. This good understanding of the training needs of local employers has been beneficial in developing flexible training programmes. Employers receive good information on their role in helping their learners' achieve. LFT is careful to work with good salons and monitors them frequently to ensure that learners receive appropriate on-the-job training. In response to local needs, LFT have developed a very successful schools provision. LFT carefully works with local schools to identify pupils who will benefit from the programme.
15. The overall operational management of the training school is good. Frequent team meetings have a clear focus on actions to improve the provision. Communication is good with both formal and informal meetings taking place. Staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are clear about the targets they have to achieve and the progress they are making. Good opportunities are in place to enable staff to share good practice and staff have good access to continued professional development. Well-planned programmes enable level 3 learners the choice of completing most of their qualification in the workplace. Progression from level 2 courses to level 3 is good.
16. Quality assurance systems are comprehensive and cover all the key processes of a learners programme. An audit cycle, linked to an overall quality calendar, is in place to ensure the consistent application of the strategy. Staff understand key improvement processes and are observed for compliance. An annual observation of teaching and learning links systematically to staff appraisals and forms the basis of staff development plans. Although many new quality assurance processes are in place, in some key areas the evaluation of their impact is insufficient. Teaching observations are insufficiently thorough. Comments made by the observer do not always lead to clear key areas for development. In some cases, learners' views are insufficiently analysed and areas for improvement are missed. The management information system is much improved since the previous inspection, providing good and reliable statistical data. However, LFT recognise that some aspects of data analysis are underdeveloped.
17. LFT's strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support is insufficiently clear and does not systematically meet all learners' needs. Initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy needs at induction satisfactorily identifies where learners require support. Individual learning plans have literacy, numeracy and language targets that lack detail but learners receive sufficient support to complete literacy, numeracy and language qualifications. However, LFT does not systematically provide support for those learners needing help to improve their overall literacy and numeracy skills. Effective strategies are in place to refer learners with particular literacy and numeracy needs for external specialist help and support.
18. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. LFT have an appropriate equality of opportunity and diversity policy that gives clear information on bullying and harassment. Learners have a clear understanding of what bullying is and LFT have used local celebrities to good effect to give talks and raise learners' awareness. Well-designed promotional materials challenge the stereotypical view of hairdressing and promote social inclusion. Male recruitment is satisfactory and currently accounts for 10% of learners. LFT have unsuccessfully targeted a recruitment strategy to minority groups within the community. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups completing apprenticeship

programmes is lower than that of the local community. LFT effectively promotes an appreciation of cultural differences through equality and diversity weeks. Staff have received ongoing training on diversity and child protection. All staff are criminal records bureau checked to help ensure learners remain safe.

19. Access to the training centre for people with restricted mobility is poor. LFT has good links with external agencies to help support learners with social problems. The provider frequently helps learners overcome barriers to learning by providing financial support and ensuring that essential tools and reference books are provided as part of the programme.

What learners like:

- Supportive and friendly tutors
- Increased visits from assessors if you want to achieve the qualification earlier
- The advantages of being taught different practical techniques by employers and tutors
- Good practical training
- Online testing

What learners think could improve:

- More trips, competitions and exhibitions
- More clients at the beginning of the first year of training
- More tutors in practical sessions when more advanced services are booked
- More information about apprenticeships programmes at the initial interview

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship** programmes managed by the provider
2004 to 2007

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	2004/05	overall	13	41	49	38	29
		timely	12	28	31	17	20
	2005/06	overall	17	45	54	29	36
		timely	22	26	34	23	19
	2006/07	overall	26	58	64	58	51
		timely	20	41	43	15	35
Apprenticeships	2004/05	overall	48	50	52	44	42
		timely	52	33	29	23	28
	2005/06	overall	54	55	59	70	52
		timely	54	38	38	37	36
	2006/07	overall	113	61	65	60	59
		timely	108	47	47	46	45

* 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

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