



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JANUARY 2001

The Academy
(Malton) Limited
North Yorkshire

SUMMARY

The Academy (Malton) Limited offers training in the one occupational area of hairdressing and beauty. Trainees have good practical skills and learning sessions are well planned. There is little training in key skills and inadequate work-based assessment. The academy has an open-access policy. The equal opportunities policy is incomplete and trainees have a poor understanding of equal opportunities. There is flexible, individualised support for trainees, but initial assessment is ineffective and reviews of trainees' progress are inadequate. There is effective internal communication but insufficient use of management information. Feedback from trainees is used to improve learning sessions, but there is no overall quality assurance system.

GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Hair & beauty	3

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	4
Trainee support	4
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	4

KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ good development of trainees' practical skills
- ◆ well-planned learning sessions
- ◆ open-access policy
- ◆ flexible, individualised support for trainees
- ◆ particularly effective internal communication
- ◆ improvements to learning sessions through feedback from trainees

KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate work-based assessment
- ◆ little key skills training
- ◆ inadequate equal opportunities policy
- ◆ poor understanding of equal opportunities by trainees
- ◆ ineffective initial assessment
- ◆ inadequate progress reviews
- ◆ insufficient use of management information
- ◆ no overall quality assurance system

INTRODUCTION

1. The Academy (Malton) Limited (The Academy) is a privately owned business. It was established in 1979 with one commercial salon. By 1996, The Academy had five commercial salons. It expanded to offer training for fee-paying students. In 1998, The Academy was subcontracted to provide work-based training for a local training company. This subcontractual arrangement has now finished and The Academy has had a direct contract with North Yorkshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) since October 1999. Originally operating from one salon in Norton, North Yorkshire, The Academy moved its training to Malton in 1997. The training centre is on the second floor, above one of the business's five salons. The Academy's other salons are located in the towns of Kirkby, Drifffield, Pickering, and Norton. The Academy currently provides training for 18 trainees working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in hairdressing.

2. There is one owner, operating as a sole trader, who is responsible for business-planning and quality assurance. The training and development director has operational responsibility for training. Four other members of staff train and assess for hairdressing qualifications. A freelance consultant provides a ten-week course on the key skills of information technology. Generally, trainees are assessed at the training centre. All training is done in-house and there is no subcontracting.

3. The Academy operates in Ryedale. This is the most sparsely populated district of North Yorkshire and has a poor transport infrastructure. The area constitutes 18 per cent of North Yorkshire and the centre of Ryedale is only 15 miles from York. The area has, until recently, been an area of thriving agriculture and agriculture-related industries. Towns have had lively weekend markets and a livestock trade which supported local retailing and services. Recent changes have had a negative effect on the area and there are now signs of decline such as empty shops and buildings. Traditional employment in agriculture has sharply declined and the once buoyant tourism sector is declining. Ryedale District Council has been successful in bidding for funding to provide services to people in the 10 to 29 age range from the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). It hopes to stem the current migration of young people, which is having a detrimental effect on the local economy. Businesses have difficulties in recruiting skilled workers.

4. Most trainees are recruited from the Ryedale area. Ryedale has four secondary schools and 53.5 per cent of school leavers achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent. Less than 1 per cent of the population of Ryedale is from minority ethnic groups. The Ryedale area has an unemployment rate of 1.8 per cent, compared with the national average of 3.5 per cent.

INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. The Academy produced its first self-assessment report in June 2000, following a quality audit by the TEC. The group director and the training and development director wrote it, taking into account the views of trainees. The Academy's managers were asked to comment on the finished report. There was little feedback to them. The Academy did not fully understand the implications of the self-assessment process and the self-assessment report is not properly linked to the quality statements in *Raising the Standard*. Several strengths and weaknesses appear in inappropriate sections of the report. Many of the strengths were no more than normal practice. Although the self-assessment report accurately identified some weaknesses, it did not identify other significant weaknesses identified by inspectors. The Academy over-estimated grades for four areas. The action plan is unclear. It contains no indicators for measuring the effectiveness of actions. Some time scales for implementing actions have not been met, and some actions which should have been carried out by December 2000 had not been completed by the time of inspection.

6. A team of three inspectors spent a total of 12 days at The Academics' premises during January 2001. They visited work placements, and met trainees, training staff, managers and salon owners. They also studied all relevant policies, procedures and documents. Inspectors interviewed 16 trainees, and conducted 15 interviews with staff. They also met two workplace managers and supervisors and visited six work placements. They observed four learning sessions and one assessment.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Hair & beauty		2	3			5
Total	0	2	3	0	0	5

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Hairdressing

Grade 3

7. The Academy offers training in hairdressing only. Trainees have the opportunity to study additional skills such as barbering. Trainees are either modern apprentices or national trainees and study for NVQs at levels 2 and 3. There are 18 trainees: nine are modern apprentices and nine are national trainees. No trainees are endorsed as having special training needs. Seventeen trainees are employed. There is one training centre, or training academy, situated above one of The Academics' five salons. Trainees working towards NVQs at level 2 attend the

training academy in Malton for one day each week and trainees working towards level 3 NVQs attend for one day each month. The learning programme includes theory, practical and tutorial sessions. Four days are spent working in local commercial salons, where trainers visit them to review their progress. Five of the placement salons belong to the company and two other salons are used as work placements.

8. Seven trainees are based at the academy: two are full time, two are part time and the remaining three are self-employed. Except for one self-employed trainer, all staff spend some of their week in The Academys' commercial salons. Six trainers are responsible for hairdressing training and one is responsible for training in the key skill of information technology for key skills. All trainers are occupationally competent. Five have relevant qualifications in training and assessing but two have no relevant qualifications.

9. No data on achievement rates were available for previous years. The Academy has offered government-funded training for 15 months and to date four modern apprentices hope to achieve their framework in February 2001, 16 months after starting the programme. Other trainees are expected to complete their programme within 20 months of starting. The retention rate is 66 per cent. The self-assessment report accurately identified the good use of resources as a strength. Three of the five weaknesses were more appropriate to other areas of the report. Inspectors identified some additional strengths and weaknesses, and awarded a grade lower than that given by the company.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ good development of trainees' practical skills
- ◆ well-planned learning sessions
- ◆ innovative use of resources

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate work-based assessment
- ◆ little key skills training

10. Training at The Academy is well planned and effective. There is an annual plan for theory sessions. The training methods and the pace are varied to maintain trainees' interest and trainees' participation is encouraged. All trainees are encouraged to share their relevant experiences. Trainers produce lesson plans for theory sessions with identified objectives, activities and timetables. The plans for practical sessions, run in the commercial salons with clients, identify in general terms which assessments should be completed in a given timescale. All trainees have opportunities for additional training, including barbering, manicure, Shiatsu massage and ear piercing. Most of this additional training is given in house and does not lead to nationally recognised certificates.

11. Salon managers are kept informed of their trainees' progress at monthly management meetings. Trainees' progress and a report from the training and development director are standing agenda items at this meeting, which allows salon managers to comment on and compare trainees' progress. These discussions are not always minuted, and actions are not agreed on. Only staff employed in the Academy's salons are invited to this meeting and it does not cover trainees in other salons.

12. Assessment in the workplace is not satisfactory. Although some salon managers are qualified assessors, they do not assess trainees. Trainees can ask training staff to visit them in the salons if they wish to be assessed but this rarely happens. The Academy has recognised the need for assessments in the workplace. A visiting assessor has recently been appointed to mark assignments and complete assessments in the workplace one day each week, and salon managers have been given the opportunity to gain assessors' qualifications. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of these strategies. At The Academy, there is a satisfactory range of clients for trainees to work on but this is not a substitute for assessment using naturally occurring evidence in the workplace. Suitable clients are not always available for specific assessments and trainees' progress in covering all aspects of the NVQ range is hindered.

13. The training academy is small, but satisfactorily equipped. The salon is large enough for eight trainees to work on one client each. This means groups are small and trainees have individual attention. The salon is light, clean and recently decorated and equipped with a video and flip chart. Textbooks are available for trainees. The equipment and small tools provided are of a commercial standard. The range of commercial products which trainees use is the same as that used in The Academy's commercial salons. There is no separate room for sessions in theory and one-to-one sessions with trainers, and the salon at the training academy is used for theory training, with trainees using foldaway desks. A portable commercial colour station is used to create a demonstration area when required. The innovative use of the small salon creates a suitable environment for training.

14. Although all the trainees are foundation or advanced modern apprentices, for whom key skills is an important part of their training programme, the trainees have been poorly informed about key skills by their assessors. Many trainees are unaware which key skills they are taking. They do not gather evidence towards their key skills units. There are plans to rectify this. A part-time member of staff has recently been appointed to internally verify key skills and external verification was planned for February 2001. However, trainees have been denied valuable opportunities to gather naturally occurring key skills evidence, and to understand the importance of key skills and their relationship to the rest of the programme. Workplace supervisors have no knowledge of key skills and there is no integration of key skills into workplace activities. Trainees do not understand the transferable nature of key skills and cannot relate them to their workplace. Trainees undertake a 10-week course, for two hours each week, and gain a basic, nationally recognised qualification in information technology. This is not started until the second year of training, which is too late for trainees to be able to use the knowledge in other

areas of their training. Trainees believe that the information technology course constitutes the whole of their key skills training.

15. Trainees demonstrate a high level of practical competence for their time in training. They are enthusiastic and well motivated. They work with confidence and as they become more competent they are encouraged to progress to working on paying clients. Trainees are encouraged to participate in local and national competitions and have had regular success at these events. Professionally produced photographs of the competition models are displayed in all The Academy salons and the training academy. Some photographs of trainee's work have also been reproduced in national hairdressing magazines. Trainees' portfolios are well presented. A satisfactory variety of evidence is accumulated and used to demonstrate the completion of assessments. This includes validated witness testimonies and clients' comments. Trainees understand their part in the assessment process. They agree with the trainer at the training academy when they will be assessed. Assessment is carried out according to the awarding body's guidelines. The assessor asks questions as soon as possible after the trainee has completed the practical work. Feedback given to trainees is clear about trainees' achievements and where improvements are needed. Internal verification is satisfactory.

GENERIC AREAS

Equal opportunities

Grade 4

16. The Academy has an equal opportunities policy. It is included in the trainees' induction handbook and a copy is displayed on all staff notice boards in The Academy salons. The policy does not refer to some recent legislation and it does not meet the TEC's requirements. It is not dated or signed. The training and development director is responsible for equal opportunities. No equal opportunities data are collected on recruitment of staff and trainees in terms of gender, age and ethnicity. All the trainees are women. One has a disability. The training academy's staff comprise six women and one man. The self-assessment report identified three strengths, two of which the inspectors considered to be normal practice. Of the four weaknesses identified, two were accurate and inspectors identified an additional weakness relating to lack of staff training in equal opportunities. The grade awarded is lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ action to recruit from under-represented groups
- ◆ open-access policy

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate equal opportunities policy

- ◆ insufficient staff training in equal opportunities
- ◆ poor understanding of equal opportunities by trainees

GOOD PRACTICE

The training and development director works as a youth worker in the local area. Teaching young men life skills including skin care, personal presentation and hair care is a strategy used to encourage men to enter hairdressing training.

17. The Academy has taken steps to address the gender imbalance on its training programmes. Representatives from The Academy attend local careers conventions and school open days. These events allow staff from the academy, accompanied by trainees currently on programmes, to demonstrate their practical skills and raise the profile of the industry. One male hairdresser, who recently qualified with The Academy, attends the events and there are opportunities for potential male recruits to discuss any concerns. The training academy uses its own video as a marketing tool and a new leaflet advertising the training is being developed. In both instances, positive images are used to attract under-represented groups. The training academy has close links with local schools. An after-school club has been introduced for young people considering hairdressing as a career. Ten-week taster courses in basic hairdressing skills are well attended and have resulted in some recruitment. Links have recently been formed with a local business partnership which has traditionally struggled to encourage women onto its programmes in engineering. This networking arrangement allows both organisations to access a broader range of potential trainees. A taster course has been specifically designed for potential male trainees who have currently applied for engineering programmes with the business partnership.

18. There are no barriers to access for trainees with disabilities or trainees from minority ethnic groups. One young person from South Korea was offered the opportunity to update her skills as a fully qualified hairdresser and beautician. Another applicant, who used a wheelchair, was supported by The Academy in finding a suitable work placement. Continued support was given when the trainee herself identified that her disabilities prevented her completing her training. The Academy helped her make a smooth transition to a local training programme in business administration. Some of The Academy's premises are not accessible for trainees with restricted mobility. Action is being taken to add a separate entrance with a lift to the first floor but, as a temporary measure while awaiting planning permission to extend the property, arrangements have been made for trainees to work downstairs in The Academy's commercial salon.

19. The equal opportunities policy is incomplete. It does not cover disabilities and the harassment policy is in draft form only. The policy does not cover all aspects of training. There is no mention of employers. The policy is not dated. It does not specify target dates for review, or record reviews which have been carried out. There has not yet been a review of the policy. The policy is written in complicated, and at times inappropriate, language for trainees. There are no equal opportunities data on recruitment of either staff or trainees. The Academy has no strategy for equal opportunities and there are no specific targets or performance indicators.

20. There has been no specific equal opportunities training for The Academy's staff, apart from the training and development director attending an awareness

session given by the TEC. Staff awareness of the broader issues of equal opportunities is low. An awareness-raising programme for staff has been planned but has not yet started.

21. Trainees lack understanding of equal opportunities. They have no awareness of the broader issues of equal opportunities. A brief overview of the equal opportunities policy is included in the induction for trainees and the policy is displayed on notice boards in the salons, but there is no reinforcement of equal opportunities in training sessions. The equal opportunities policy is not given to employers and there is no monitoring of equal opportunities in the workplace.

Trainee support

Grade 4

22. Trainee support is the responsibility of the training and development director. Trainees are referred to The Academy by local schools and the careers service and through direct recruitment. All applicants are interviewed. Requirements for additional learning support are identified and relevant support organised to address individual needs. Links with external support agencies have been formed. Trainees have an induction on joining the programme and receive an induction handbook. The self-assessment report identified three strengths, relating to the approachability of staff, the trainees' induction programme and work placements. These strengths were no more than normal practice. The weakness identified in the self-assessment report, relating to individual learning plans, was agreed with by inspectors. Two additional weaknesses were identified. The grade awarded is lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ flexible, individualised support for trainees
- ◆ celebration of trainees' success
- ◆ valuing of trainees as salon employees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ ineffective initial assessment
- ◆ poor use of individual learning plans
- ◆ inadequate progress reviews

23. Staff at The Academy give close consideration to the individual needs of trainees and ensure that support is available. Trainees with disabilities discuss their needs with the training and development director. One trainee, who has a back problem following an accident, finds it difficult to stand for a full day and has been given a flexible timetable to attend The Academy for training on half days if necessary. Another trainee, who has been diagnosed as having dyspraxia, has been

offered weekly support from a local association. The trainee is also given one-to-one learning sessions. The Academy offers a wide range of competition and photographic work for those trainees who intend to become more involved in this area. One trainee who had entered a national competition was unable to travel on public transport because of an operation on her feet. She was temporarily using a wheelchair. The Academy's staff made arrangements with the organisers of the competition so that the trainee could compete. Ramps were set up to the stage and a hydraulic chair was made available. The Academy's staff transported her to the event in its own transport.

24. Trainees' success is publicly celebrated. There is an annual award evening when trainees are presented with awards gained throughout the year. The presentation is made by a local hairdressing celebrity and this gives the event a high profile. Throughout the year, there are press releases on the many competitions the trainees take part in. These are at local, national or international levels. It is not only winners who are recognised. Trainees showing particular progress in their work are recognised for their efforts.

25. Trainees at The Academy are valued as members of its staff. They are given the opportunity to work on paying clients as soon as they are competent and to have their own clients, alongside the qualified staff. Financial targets are set for this work and the trainees are included in the commission and bonus schemes which operate for sales above the basic rate. Trainees are motivated to build their clientele. Salon managers appraise all salon staff quarterly and trainees working at The Academy have the same opportunity to be appraised.

26. There is no initial assessment of key skills or occupational skills. Trainees do not complete any occupational tests such as manual dexterity tests. Some trainees do not take a basic skills test designed to identify additional learning support needs. Some trainees who have taken this test do not know their results. The training and development director is responsible for holding the test results for all trainees, but the records are not updated and omissions have not been identified. Prior experience is not always accredited and there is no accreditation of prior learning for key skills.

27. Individual learning plans are not always completed accurately, and some lack information, dates, and staff and trainees' signatures. Some target dates for completing units are unrealistic and others do not take into account trainees' prior experience. Most dates of progress reviews are missing. Additional learning support is not systematically recorded. The individual learning plan is not used as the basis of trainees' progress reviews and is not updated.

28. The progress-review process is ineffective. Progress reviews vary in frequency and regularity. Completion of the forms is poor, with some sections of the progress review not covered. Salon managers' comments are not always received. The frequency of visits varies from once every four weeks to once a term. Some trainees have not had a progress review since the start of their programme. Targets are discussed but not always recorded, and so trainees have no records to refer to.

There is no joint discussion between the trainee, the assessor and the workplace supervisor or salon manager. The Academy's salon managers meet the training and development director every month to receive feedback on their particular trainees and reports on the trainees are completed by The Academy each term and sent to the salons. Information from progress reviews is not used to update trainees' individual training plans.

Management of training

Grade 3

28. The training academy is based on the second floor above one of The Academy's five commercial salons. Of the 50 staff employed by the business as a whole, seven are involved in training and assessment. The group director acts as assessor, internal verifier and quality assurance co-ordinator, and also takes strategic responsibility for financial management and business-planning within The Academy as a whole. The training and development director has operational responsibility for training, assessment and TEC contracts. A further four members of staff train and assess in hairdressing. A freelance consultant provides a separate 10-week training course on the key skill of information technology. All training academy staff have job descriptions. They receive a copy of the staff handbook when they join The Academy. Employees are appraised twice each year. The Academy was successfully reassessed for the Investors in People standard in March 1998. The self-assessment report provides some brief contextual information for this aspect of training. Most of the strengths identified by The Academy represent no more than contractual compliance. One of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report is more appropriate to trainee support. The other weaknesses had been rectified by the time of inspection. Inspectors found other strengths and weaknesses. The grade awarded is the same as that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ particularly effective internal communication
- ◆ good external networking
- ◆ well-focused staff development

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ inadequate development plan
- ◆ unsystematic staff induction
- ◆ insufficient use of management information

29. Communication within the training academy, and between the training academy and The Academy's salons, is regular and well organised. Trainers and assessors meet once each month to discuss the progress of trainees and practical

training issues. Meetings of all staff at The Academy are regular and well attended. Each salon has a minuted team meeting once a week. Salon managers meet once a month. At both these meetings, issues relating to training and trainees are included, although not always minuted. These meetings are also well attended. The minutes of the salon managers' meetings are comprehensive and are written to be understandable to employees and trainees. They include reference to staff and trainees' achievements, and thanks to those who have made a particular contribution during that month. All staff at The Academy receive the minutes of the salon managers' meetings, and freelance staff have recently begun to receive copies of the minutes at their homes. Between meetings, employees are kept well informed through memorandums and briefings. They are routinely consulted about important issues. For example, staff and trainees have been invited to contribute ideas regarding the wording of a mission statement for The Academy. Staff feel well informed and are very clear about their roles with regard both to the training academy and to The Academy as a whole.

30. The Academy's directors network effectively with external agencies and companies. The group director and the training and development director have attended several meetings of a local business partnership, attended by other local training companies. They have sought the advice of other training companies on issues such as internal verification. The Academy is in frequent contact with the local press and provides newspapers with press releases and invitations to photographic shoots. Newspapers give The Academy regular, positive publicity about its activities and trainees' achievements at competitions.

31. Opportunities for staff development are readily available to all staff at The Academy. Training is linked to the needs of the organisation as well as the individual. Staff are encouraged to attend courses aimed at improving their practical or training skills. The training and development director has recently completed a survey of the professional development needs of all The Academy's staff. She has used this as the basis of a comprehensive staff development plan, which lists a range of short courses on offer to both staff and trainees. The courses include practical topics, such as cutting and colouring, and wider issues, such as management. Employees receive a twice-yearly appraisal, which focuses on their achievement, any barriers to their progress, and their professional development needs. The group director scrutinises all appraisal records. Staff value the opportunities to develop their skills and to improve their performance.

32. The training academy is included in The Academy's development plan, which is updated annually. This outlines the business's objectives for the year and the ways in which they can be achieved. It is very brief and lacks necessary detail. There is no reference to progress against previous development plans. The objectives outlined are not always clear and are not quantified. For example, one objective refers to the need for salons to attract more clients but does not indicate by how much. None of the objectives relates clearly to training or assessment. It is not clear how the actions identified are intended to meet the objectives. For example, none of the actions specified relates to attracting more clients. There are no timescales and there is no identification of those people responsible for carrying

out the actions. The business plan is insufficient as an indicator of The Academy's strategic objectives and how to achieve them.

33. Over the past few months, three of The Academy employees have taken on responsibility for training or assessing in the training academy. The training and development director is working with them to introduce them to the training academy's working methods. She discusses schemes of work and learning sessions with them, and shows them how to complete documents. This is not however a formal induction and is not carried out in a systematic way. There is no staff induction procedure or check-list to ensure that staff new to The Academy receive all the information they need, or that they have demonstrated full competence in all aspects of their job role before being expected to carry it out without supervision. Two freelance consultants have recently been invited to work for the training academy on a sessional basis: one as a key skills internal verifier and the other as a trainer in the key skill of information technology. Neither of these has been given any form of induction.

34. The Academy has a management-information system provided by the TEC. The Academy uses this to administer its claim to the TEC. It makes no other use of the system. The Academy collects data about the recruitment, achievement and destinations of trainees. Staff members have detailed knowledge of why particular individuals withdraw their applications for learning programmes, or leave before they have completed their training. But managers do not analyse these data to establish trends. They do not use them for decision-making or to improve training. Data are not used to define the business's strategic objectives or to produce its business plan.

Quality assurance

Grade 4

35. The owner is responsible for quality assurance across The Academy. She carries out most of the internal verification for the training academy. A consultant has recently been appointed to internally verify trainees' key skills. The company has some quality assurance policies and procedures. It is subject to external auditing by the TEC, and external verification by the awarding bodies. Feedback is sought from trainees after most learning sessions. The owner and the training and development director wrote the self-assessment report. The views of trainees were gathered and included in the report. The draft self-assessment report was circulated to Goody's salon managers, who were asked to complete a sheet giving their views about it. The contextual information provided in the self-assessment report for this aspect of training is inaccurate in places. The three strengths identified represent no more than normal practice. The weaknesses are expressed as actions to be taken. Inspectors found additional strengths and weaknesses. The grade awarded is lower than that given in the self-assessment report.

STRENGTHS

- ◆ improvements to learning sessions through feedback from trainees

WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no overall quality assurance system
- ◆ insufficient internal verification by observation of training and assessment

36. Goody's trainers routinely ask trainees for their feedback about learning sessions. They are asked to provide written feedback about the training provided for each unit of the NVQ. They are also asked to give verbal feedback at the end of each learning session. The feedback is discussed by trainers and assessors, and is used to improve the quality of training. For example, trainees' feedback suggested that the information technology key skill course was not long enough. Its length was increased from six weeks to 10 weeks. A group of modern apprentices objected to the timing of one of their off-the-job learning sessions, which took place in the evening. They found it difficult to concentrate after a full day's work. The session was moved to an earlier time.

37. Although trainees' feedback about their learning sessions is collected and acted upon, other aspects are not systematically evaluated. The Academy does not systematically gather trainees' views about their learning programmes as a whole. The training and development director has collected feedback about the induction from trainees who recently started their programmes but she has not yet analysed these data. There are plans to collect trainees' views at key stages of their programme but these have not been implemented.

38. Since taking up post in 1997, the training and development director has written policies and procedures for some aspects of training and assessment but these are neither clear nor comprehensive. They do not adequately express Goody's expectations with regard to training and assessment and they do not provide sufficiently detailed or accurate guidelines about how these processes should be carried out. There are no policies or procedures for important elements of training and assessment, such as initial assessment, the accreditation of prior learning, or of trainees' progress reviews. Goody's does not have an overall quality assurance policy. The policies and procedures which have been written are undated. There is no schedule for their review or evaluation, and no system for ensuring that they are appropriate. They do not constitute a satisfactory quality assurance framework.

39. The owner acts as the internal verifier for hairdressing NVQs. A freelance consultant has recently been appointed to take on the role of key skills internal verifier. Internal verification of trainees' portfolios is satisfactory. It takes place at regular intervals and involves a suitable sample of trainees, assessors and units and elements of the NVQ, or key skills. The process is thorough and clearly recorded. Written and verbal feedback is provided for assessors. This gives brief information about the sufficiency of evidence and the quality of the portfolio overall.

40. The Academy's internal verifiers examine trainees' portfolios of work, but they do not observe assessments. This is a significant omission, since observation of performance constitutes a large part of hairdressing NVQs. Internal verifiers have no way of knowing whether assessors are carrying out and recording observations correctly, or feeding back the results of assessments appropriately to trainees. They do not offer guidance to assessors on developing their technique or improving their performance. The training academy has four members of staff and one freelance consultant providing training. The Academy has no structure for the observation of training. The owner has carried out one informal observation of one trainer's performance, after which she provided brief feedback. None of the other trainers have been formally observed. There is no system by which The Academy can ensure that its trainers consistently provide good quality training and receive structured feedback about their performance.

41. The Academy's self-assessment report is objective in tone. It makes some attempt at critical evaluation, and accurately identifies some weaknesses. However, it fails to identify other, significant areas of weakness found by inspectors. Many of the strengths identified represent no more than contractual compliance. The Academy is overgenerous in its estimate of most of the grades. The business's action plan lacks clarity. The items listed are not systematically linked to the quality statement in *Raising the Standard*. Some of the timescales set for addressing weaknesses have not been adhered to. It is not clear how The Academy will know whether an action has been successful. The first action plan was written in June 2000 following a quality audit by the TEC. Some actions which should have been carried out by the end of 2000 have not been completed. The action plan has not been updated.