

# Academy Education Limited

## Independent learning provider

<b>Inspection dates</b>		29 July–1 August 2014
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

## Summary of key findings for learners

### This provider is good because:

- Success rates are high and most learners complete their qualifications within the timescales planned for them when they started their training.
- The particularly good pastoral and welfare support, especially for vulnerable learners, ensures they can overcome their barriers to learning and successfully complete their training.
- Apprentices receive highly effective individual coaching and support from expert trainers and high profile industry professionals, which build their skills and knowledge well.
- The very large majority of teaching and learning are good and support learners in their development of very good technical hairdressing skills.
- Managers have a clear vision, which places the development of hairdressing skills at the forefront of their mission, ensuring that learners attain the high professional and commercial standards necessary to meet the needs of the industry.

### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Communications between provider staff and employers are not sufficiently frequent or effective to ensure that salon managers are fully involved in training, setting targets for, and assessing learners.
- Staff do not use assessment of learners' starting points sufficiently well to develop personalised learning plans or to set individual targets for learners.
- The development of learners' English and mathematics in hairdressing and barbering lessons requires improvement and the quality of written feedback on marked work does not always inform learners of what they need to do to improve.
- Managers' use of data to monitor and analyse differences in learners' performance and that of the company overall is insufficient.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Review arrangements for checking the quality of training in the workplace, providing better links between on- and off-the-job training in order to increase employers' involvement in the training programme and to provide apprentices with more opportunities for assessment.
- Make better use of initial, and ongoing, assessment to set learners individual targets which ensure they know what they have to do to improve their work.
- Achieve greater consistency in the development of learners' English and mathematics in vocational lessons through staff training, more detailed assessments of written work, and the sharing of existing good practice by trainers who already teach and assess these skills well.
- Make better use of the wide range of data already available to analyse the few areas of underperformance, to assist in putting in place plans to resolve them, and to monitor the effectiveness of the strategies for improvement.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates have improved since the previous inspection and are now high. Advanced apprentices, who previously did not succeed as well as intermediate apprentices, now have very high success rates which are well in excess of national rates. Learners aged over 19 and those learners who declare a disability achieve particularly well, with success rates significantly above national rates on both intermediate and advanced apprenticeship programmes. The very large majority of learners who complete their qualification do so within the timescale planned for them when they started their apprenticeship.
- Learners demonstrate good standards of commercial hairdressing skills. Staff emphasise to apprentices the importance of completing tasks efficiently so that they reflect industry expectations within high-quality salons. Learners develop their understanding of complex hairdressing techniques quickly through effective training. For example, in one lesson on colour theory, learners gained a rapid appreciation of how tone is perceived by the human eye. Many learners develop skills that exceed the requirements of the qualifications they are studying. For example, apprentices on level 2 courses learn nine different haircuts and not just the four required to achieve their apprenticeship. Learners acquire these high-level hairdressing and barbering skills through focused training weeks that ensure they have the opportunity to learn and practise their skills in a safe and supportive environment.
- Learners develop their personal and employability skills well. They gain in confidence and self-esteem, for example when dealing with complex cuts and when making recommendations to clients on alternative hairstyles. Apprentices develop their communication skills well. Managers and staff encourage learners to adopt a professional approach in all aspects of their work, and this is especially evident when apprentices are dealing with models in the training salon as part of their training. Learners take great care to ensure that models are comfortable, relaxed and are happy with the service the apprentices are providing.
- Achievement gaps between men and women have been reduced and are closing further. The much larger cohort of female apprentices still do not achieve as well as their male counterparts. Managers are able to identify reasons for this imbalance, some of which are outside the provider's control. They have plans to ensure that differences within the hairdressing and barbering courses, such as the length of the training programmes, do not adversely disadvantage particular groups of learners. However, managers do not currently monitor data

sufficiently to identify these differences at an early enough stage in order to take action in a timely manner.

- The effective teaching and promotion of English and mathematics within discrete lessons have resulted in learners achieving their functional skills qualifications successfully. Within discrete English and mathematics lessons, staff place a strong emphasis on the value of functional skills and how such skills are essential in developing learners' careers. Trainers and managers have supported a small number of learners to achieve functional skills at a higher level than that needed to achieve their apprenticeship.
- Learners benefit from regular attendance on specialist manufacturers' courses and at trade events and exhibitions. They are encouraged to experiment and explore their creative skills, which in turn support the development of their commercial portfolios. Staff make good use of social media to promote learners' work and their accomplishments. Examples on Academy Education's website show learners participating in events across London with prestigious organisation such as the Fellowship for British Hairdressing.
- A very high proportion of learners who achieve the apprenticeship continue in employment in their existing salons. Progress from level 2 to level 3 apprenticeships is good. Staff encourage learners to practise their skills prior to progressing to level 3 courses; as a result, most learners achieve the higher level qualification, many of them quickly.
- Attendance at training sessions in the provider's two academies is good. Staff have very high expectations regarding attendance and punctuality and learners fulfil these. Teachers deal promptly with any lateness, promoting a very strong work ethic to the learners at all times.

### **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, leading to good outcomes for learners. Apprentices enjoy their training and make good progress. They develop essential customer care and technical skills to professional levels and work very well with their trainers, their clients and each other.
- Apprentices value the high standards of care and support provided by their trainers which help them develop very good practical and creative skills, such as putting up long hair into elaborate styles such as 'Victory Rolls', graduated hair cutting and contemporary colouring techniques. Trainers are excellent role models, with strong industry profiles, and have high expectations of their apprentices and of the standards of work they are required to produce. They use their considerable abilities well to develop apprentices' skills and knowledge of key technical aspects of hairdressing, often going further than the requirements of the qualification, and widening the learners' skills.
- Trainers use their detailed knowledge of industry and their skills and experience to provide very good demonstrations that help apprentices to fine tune their practical skills to a very high level. Advanced apprentices improve their speaking skills and build their confidence by giving mini-presentations. In practical sessions, trainers allow apprentices to learn from their mistakes, whilst providing detailed verbal technical feedback that enables them to improve. Health and safety practices in the training salons are good and are routinely reinforced during all sessions.
- In the best sessions, trainers develop the apprentices' understanding well, for example by using modelling clay to illustrate how primary colours mix together to create secondary colours. In a very good functional skills session, trainers participated in role-play scenarios to help apprentices gain a better understanding of how to interpret clients' body language.
- In a small minority of sessions, trainers do not always ask sufficiently detailed or challenging questions to broaden learners' understanding to help apprentices develop their technical hairdressing language.
- Practical skills assessment is good. Assessors provide good verbal feedback to apprentices during, and at the end of, practical assessments and ensure that clients' requirements are well matched to apprentices' development needs. Written feedback in assessed work, however,

requires improvement. Marked assignments do not always contain sufficiently detailed feedback to enable apprentices to improve further.

- Whilst functional skills teaching in discrete lessons is good, the focus on apprentices' development of mathematics and English in vocational lessons is more variable. Apprentices accurately calculate basic percentages and ratios when colouring hair. They develop their communication skills through client consultations and improve their written English through the completion of good quality workbooks, such as hair colouring theory booklets. However, in a minority of sessions, trainers do not yet integrate and thereby develop learners' understanding of mathematics into hairdressing related content. For example, cutting hair at an angle relative to the clients' fringe or forehead. The systematic development of apprentices' literacy in their assessed work is insufficient; trainers do not routinely identify and correct spelling and grammatical errors.
- Apprentices receive good initial advice and guidance and a thorough induction that introduces them to the hairdressing industry in a realistic manner and ensures they fully understand the commitment they are making. However, the use of initial assessment to plan training that meets individual needs requires improvement. Whilst apprentices complete an assessment that identifies any learning needs, the results do not influence training plans sufficiently nor assist trainers in devising personalised action plans for apprentices who require support.
- Trainers do not promote equality and diversity effectively. Staff do not routinely plan activities which deepens learners' understanding of different cultures despite the diversity of apprentices, clients and hair types and styles they encounter on a daily basis.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Good

- Managers at Academy Education Limited have a clear vision which places the development of hairdressing skills at the forefront of their mission to ensure that learners attain the highest professional and commercial standards to meet the needs of the industry. Trainers work together collaboratively to create a lively training environment, which enables learners to develop the confidence, skills and enthusiasm to progress in their hairdressing careers. The majority of trainers have a very well-established industry profile, a wide range of experience and are well qualified.
- Managers have made good progress in addressing the two most critical areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Outcomes for learners have continued to improve and are now high; additionally, the quality of teaching and learning has also improved significantly and is now consistently good. However, effective links between training in the workplace and the academy and the use of initial assessment to plan lessons remain as areas requiring improvement.
- Managers have recently implemented a system for observing the quality of teaching, learning and assessment four times a year. Observation reports identify some of the same weaknesses identified by inspectors, such as the need to improve learners' English and mathematics skills and their awareness of equality and diversity in lessons. However, the records focus on what the teacher does in lessons rather than the knowledge and skills that learners develop. Issues identified during observations inform both trainers' appraisal and the bi-annual staff training days. Best practice, for the most part, is shared widely. Performance management is effective and meets business needs.
- Self-assessment, judged to be overly generous and descriptive at the previous inspection, is now an accurate and evaluative process. Managers produce a quarterly summary report that gives a snapshot of the current quality of provision, including learner outcomes. However, it does not indicate what progress is being made against identified areas for improvement. Staff respond appropriately to concerns raised by individual learners and employers, but do not collate or analyse their views to improve the quality of provision overall.

- Arrangements to assure the quality of training at apprentices' workplaces are ineffective. Communication between the provider and employers regarding learners' progress is insufficient. Progress reports, sent at the end of each period of training, inform employers of the skills developed by learners and their areas for further development. However, staff do not have a formal process for gathering feedback from the employer on learners' progress and the development of their skills gained in the workplace between off-the-job training sessions; as a result, employers are not sufficiently involved in target setting for the apprentices under their care.
- Leaders' and managers' use of data requires improvement. Managers are aware of the overall performance of learners, but do not receive regular reports on how well learners are progressing towards achieving their qualification so that they can make timely interventions to improve the provision.
- Leaders and managers work with a wide variety of high quality commercial salons and local training organisations to ensure that training responds to the demands of the industry. In Ipswich, managers' work with employers and learners to develop an effective training timetable that meets their individual, business and learning needs. However, in London, the model is less flexible and does not always meet the needs of employers. Nevertheless, learners enjoy, and value highly, the training they receive.
- Appropriate policies, covering equality and diversity and bullying and harassment, are in place. Trainers cover equality and diversity effectively at induction and learners have a clear understanding of the issues they might face working in the industry. An atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect pervades the training environment. However, the promotion of equality and diversity in training sessions varies considerably and is not yet consistently good.
- Academy Education Limited meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. All trainers and key staff have had Disclosure and Barring Service checks. Learners receive information about safeguarding at induction and know who to go to if they have any concerns about their safety. Managers require new salons to meet minimum health and safety standards. However, managers do not routinely visit apprentices in the workplace and check health and safety standards.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Academy Education Ltd

<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b>  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Outcomes for learners	<b>2</b>	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>2</b>	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>2</b>	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-

<b>Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Hairdressing</b>	<b>2</b>

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	92							
Principal/CEO	Mr Edward Hemmings							
Date of previous inspection	February 2013							
Website address	aland.co.uk/							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	51	38	2	47	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16	NA							
Number of community learners	NA							
Number of employability learners	NA							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	No subcontractors							

## Contextual information

Academy Education Limited offers apprenticeship training in hairdressing and barbering. Learners attend Academy Education Limited training centres in London or Ipswich and work in salons across London, the south and the east of England.

## Information about this inspection

### Lead inspector

Shane Langthorne HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of Education as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject area listed in the report above.



## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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