

# Debut Training Academy Limited

Independent learning provider

**Inspection dates**

5–8 March 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>		<b>Good</b>	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>	Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>	Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>		
Outcomes for learners	<b>Good</b>		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Leaders are highly ambitious for the success of the training academy. Staff share their vision and passion for the beauty industry and use this well to enthuse learners and apprentices.
- Learners and apprentices gain good skills that make them employable within the competitive beauty industry.
- Leaders have created a highly supportive training environment in which learners and apprentices thrive.
- Most learners and apprentices achieve their qualifications. They make good progress in developing new skills and knowledge in beauty therapy.
- Leaders and employers work closely with apprentices to enable them to develop the skills they need in the workplace.
- Teachers check learners' and apprentices' understanding carefully and deepen their knowledge through skilful use of questioning.
- Leaders do not do enough to make sure that staff continue to improve their teaching skills.
- Teachers do not enable learners and apprentices to improve their theoretical skills to the same high standards as their practical work.
- Teachers do not challenge learners to improve their written English skills, including spelling and grammar.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Debut Training Academy Limited (Debut Training) is a small independent learning provider specialising in courses in beauty therapy. Debut Training started offering beauty courses over 10 years ago. They received their first funded contract for adult learning provision in 2016 and began offering apprenticeships in January 2018. Most of the 93 adult learners study at level 3. There are 10 apprentices on intermediate apprenticeships and 63 on advanced apprenticeships. The majority are on frameworks and around half are 16- to 18-year-olds. Debut Training's main site is in Wickford, Essex, with a smaller site in Ware, Hertfordshire.

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

- Leaders should improve teachers' skills in teaching and assessment by:
  - clearly identifying weaknesses in teachers' practice
  - setting actions to improve teachers' skills and reviewing these regularly.
- Leaders, managers and teachers should ensure that learners and apprentices improve their higher-level theoretical skills.
- Teachers should make sure that learners and apprentices know how to improve their written English skills.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Directors, leaders and staff have a clear and ambitious vision for the training academy and a passion for the beauty industry. Directors set challenging improvement performance targets which are successfully communicated with, and understood by, staff. Leaders have very high expectations and ambitions for the quality of programmes and success of staff and learners.
- Leaders have prepared carefully for the move to standards-based apprenticeships. They are well informed about the requirements associated with these new apprenticeships, including the final test. However, they are yet to work with their wider employer network to fully prepare them for the changes. Leaders are determined to maintain the quality of their provision and their focus on providing good-quality employees for the beauty industry. They have realistic plans for steady and manageable growth. Adult learners have a clear understanding of the conditions of the adult learning loans which they have taken to access their learning.
- Leaders accurately assess the quality of training. They ensure the accuracy of their self-assessment through external scrutiny. They seek to continually improve. Leaders actively seek learners' views on their learning experience and take these views into consideration when assessing the impact of planned actions. However, managers do not focus sufficiently well on how teaching and learning can be further enhanced. Leaders do not make full use of learners' performance when assessing the impact of their actions.
- Leaders ensure that the content of learning programmes is successfully aligned to the needs of the beauty industry. For example, the addition of learning lash treatments on massage programmes results in more employable learners on completion, as this is not part of the qualification requirements. Employers' views are sought to establish their specific needs, and the majority work well with Debut Training's staff in ensuring that apprentices further their skills in the workplace. Teachers and assessors maintain their professional practice in current and developing techniques through their own practice in salons and regular training in new treatment methods.
- Leaders carefully track the progress that learners and apprentices make. Leaders meet with teachers weekly to discuss learners at risk of not achieving. They work well together to help learners achieve and succeed. As a result, a very high proportion of learners and apprentices achieve their qualifications by the planned end date. However, leaders do not monitor the achievements of different groups of learners sufficiently well, although there are no differences in achievement currently.
- Leaders have successfully created a culture at the training academy that is welcoming and safe. Leaders and teachers work with learners and apprentices to help them feel confident to express themselves and discuss sensitive issues in an appropriate way. Staff prepare learners well for life in modern Britain. As a result, learners have a good understanding of diversity. Learners work with clients from different backgrounds and learn about their specific needs. For example, learners on the makeup artist programme practise wedding makeup for Asian and African clients.
- While leaders recognise the importance of developing learners' and apprentices' English and mathematics skills, they have not ensured that staff have high expectations to

improve learners' English skills. As a result, learners and apprentices do not develop their written English skills sufficiently well. Staff make mistakes in their spelling and grammar and do not model best practice to learners.

- Leaders have comprehensive and well-structured arrangements and activities for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, their actions have not improved teachers' skills sufficiently.
- Leaders do not make effective use of information available to them about what learners do on completing their programme of learning. Although they gather information about learners' next steps and use case studies effectively, they do not analyse this information carefully enough to understand how many learners are successful in gaining sustained employment. As a result, leaders are not able to assess fully the success of their provision.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Leaders work effectively with external partners to improve the quality of their provision and to hold themselves effectively to account. For example, they have invested in external support to ensure that their self-assessment and quality improvement plans are of a good standard. They have also recently engaged with an external organisation to improve their approach towards learners' English and mathematics development. They identify weaknesses and act quickly to make improvements.
- Directors share sector best practice with staff, who benefit from opportunities to develop their skills through these links. Leaders work effectively with employers to help shape the strategic direction of the training academy. They ensure that learners and apprentices complete their studies with the skills employers need.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff understand well their safeguarding responsibilities. They understand the need to make sure that learners are safe from the threats of extremism and radicalisation. Safeguarding lead staff are appropriately trained. They make detailed records of all disclosures and track the progress of safeguarding concerns to their resolution. Leaders use their contacts with the local safeguarding board and local authority to support learners effectively.
- Managers make sure that the necessary checks are in place to verify staff's suitability to work with learners. They carry out appropriate checks on all staff prior to starting employment. However, some of the more recently appointed staff have not completed core training in safeguarding or the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders have clear arrangements in place to ensure that all have done this by the end of April 2019.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Learners and apprentices enjoy their learning. They support each other effectively. They develop the confidence they need to be successful in the beauty industry. Teachers make good use of a wide range of teaching and learning strategies that enthuse and motivate learners. As a result, learners quickly develop, consolidate and improve their practical

skills.

- Most teachers have high expectations of what learners and apprentices can achieve. They encourage learners to discuss topics in detail and make sure that they use and understand technical language. They use questioning expertly during learning sessions to ensure that learners apply theoretical concepts to the practical and commercial aspects of the treatments they offer. For example, teachers carefully questioned learners carrying out a pedicure to make sure that they knew that if a client shows signs of erythema following the application of a product they would need to rapidly cool the foot.
- Teachers make sure that the environment and resources available for learners and apprentices are good. They meet the high standards required by the beauty industry. Staff use their skills and experience effectively to plan and teach lessons that interest learners. Learners develop their practical skills to professional standards. They become confident about working with clients and each other. They improve their interest and enthusiasm for their future career in the beauty industry and understand well what they need to do to be successful.
- Teachers make good use of online learning to enhance learners' understanding and knowledge. They have developed effective online resources that help learners study independently, revise thoroughly and prepare well for their online examinations. For example, learners use the information and assessments within the online platform to improve their knowledge about how to recognise skin conditions, recommend products and remedy conditions.
- Teachers make good use of learners' and apprentices' abilities and prior experiences to plan learning. They use this knowledge effectively to guide learners through practical tasks and to ensure that the learners and apprentices learn technical terms and commercial aspects of the beauty industry. For example, during a pedicure session, learners were able to accurately explain the practical impact of not preparing the nail well for varnish. They could explain how this might affect subsequent reviews of the salon on social media and, consequently, the potential negative impact on the reputation of the business.
- Staff ensure that learners and apprentices receive useful, frequent and constructive feedback on their practical skills, which helps them improve quickly. Learners value the detail that teachers include in this feedback. They act on this feedback to improve their practical and client care skills.
- Staff effectively track learners' progress towards the achievement of the qualification in detail. As a result, learners and apprentices are clear about the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve.
- Staff quickly identify learners and apprentices who need extra help. Support for these learners is appropriate and timely. However, too often this results in staff focusing on qualification achievement and they have lower expectations of what these learners can ultimately achieve.
- Staff do not take enough account of learners' starting points when helping them to improve their written English or mathematical skills. Not enough teachers emphasise the importance of written English, particularly spelling and grammar; essential skills for employment in the beauty industry. Although teachers assess learners' and apprentices' English and mathematical skills when they start their programmes, they do not use this

information carefully enough when planning lessons. Consequently, learners do not make the same rapid progress in developing these skills as they do in the rest of their learning.

- Too often, teachers do not enable learners to develop higher-level theoretical skills such as analysis. Consequently, learners are not prepared to progress confidently to higher levels of learning. While learners are able to articulate their understanding of underpinning theory throughout classroom-based activities and practical sessions, too many learners do not demonstrate the depth of understanding required at level 3 in their written work.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Staff work diligently with their learners to help them develop their personal as well as their professional skills. Learners gain in confidence and become more positive about learning. They learn to manage their lives more effectively. For example, learners learn how to manage their money. They use information about their personal income to learn budgeting skills.
- Learners and apprentices attend regularly. They arrive at lessons on time and ready to learn. Staff track learners' attendance in detail and take swift action to identify and support learners who miss lessons. They inform employers immediately if apprentices are absent. All learners make good use of online learning for revision, for out-of-class learning and to recap theory sessions they may have missed. Teachers help those who miss lessons to catch up quickly.
- Learners develop good practical skills which meet the requirements of the beauty industry. They enjoy their learning. Learners take opportunities offered to them to attend extra lessons to perfect skills they find difficult. For example, apprentices who work in salons where they offer specialist treatments, such as Russian lashes, attend additional lessons to spend time concentrating solely on improving these specific techniques.
- Learners and apprentices know how to keep themselves and others safe. They know who to talk to if they have concerns about their peers or clients. They use interesting and informative online learning which tests and improves their knowledge, including of their personal online safety. Through these, they consolidate their understanding of British values, safeguarding, who to trust and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Learners and apprentices have a good understanding of the impact their work has on their community. They benefit from a broad range of additional activities to further develop their professional skills and raise money for local charities. For example, 10% of the takings from the training salon open days go to a charity chosen by the clients. At Christmas, Easter and on Mother's Day, donations collected by learners go to a women's refuge and orphanage. These activities help ensure that learners have a good understanding about the impact that they as individuals have on their community.
- Teachers prepare learners and apprentices well for employment in the beauty industry. They learn in detail about the requirements of working professionally. For example, learners understand and apply their knowledge that good posture is essential to carry out beauty treatments without feeling physically tired. Adult learners improve their professional and commercial knowledge through useful work experience placements. Apprentices are proud of the skills they learn. Employers value the contributions

apprentices make to their businesses.

- Learners and apprentices receive useful careers guidance, which enables them to make sound choices about the next stages of their careers. Learners speak with confidence about their next steps. They understand the contribution that their training is making to their own businesses or the salons in which they work.

## Outcomes for learners

**Good**

- Learners and apprentices make good progress in developing new knowledge and behaviours. They quickly develop new practical skills to a high standard. They accurately apply their knowledge of anatomy and physiology to decide on and carry out the treatments they provide.
- Most learners and apprentices remain on their programmes. A very high proportion of adult learners achieve their qualifications. Although at an early stage in offering apprenticeships, most apprentices who have already reached their planned end date achieve their apprenticeship on time.
- All groups of learners achieve equally well. Teachers effectively support the small number of learners who have a learning difficulty or disability to achieve their qualifications and to progress into employment.
- Most learners and apprentices move into employment or further study as a result of the skills they learn while at the academy. Adult learners progress into work or on to subsequent learning programmes. Most apprentices remain in employment at the end of their apprenticeship or move into self-employment. However, leaders do not track the proportion of learners who remain in sustained employment.
- Learners and apprentices develop the good practical skills that they need to be successful in the beauty industry. Most learners work to demanding commercial timescales when completing treatments on clients. However, learners' and apprentices' written work lacks detail and does not reflect the depth of knowledge which they can articulate in lessons. Learners do not develop in enough depth the theoretical concepts that underpin their good practical skills.

## Types of provision

### Adult learning programmes

**Good**

- Adult learners study predominantly beauty therapy courses at level 3. A very small number take level 4 awards in education and training. All adults use learning loans to fund their studies. Currently, 93 adults are in learning.
- Teachers plan challenging activities for learners which help them to understand their subjects quickly and to develop detailed subject knowledge. Teachers use and adapt questions well to support and challenge learners and check learning. Teachers structure animated discussions which make sure that learners are fully engaged in their learning. For example, in level 3 nail technology, learners improve their knowledge of the history and development of nail technology through teachers' skilful questioning on learners' research and subsequent presentations. Learners reflect well on their progress and



performance and further their awareness and understanding of the treatments they provide.

- Teachers know their subjects well and make good links to professional practice. They use new developments in their industries and news headlines to illustrate and reinforce learning. For example, teachers refer to recent news headlines to explain cases of discrimination. During practical assessments, learners work independently and to commercial timings, maintaining professional work areas and using well-developed techniques.
- Teachers give good feedback to learners on how to improve their practical skills. They identify clearly areas of good practice and skills needing further development. Teachers use learners' target grades well during feedback to help raise learners' aspirations. Learners understand the progress they are making, the grades they are achieving and the grades they are working towards.
- Teachers prepare learners for employment effectively. Adult learners either complete work experience or have experience of working in the industry. For example, many learners return to the provider to add to their skill set and, in some cases, build their own businesses. Learners who have worked in the beauty industry previously develop a better understanding of the underpinning theory, such as anatomy, physiology, treatment techniques and benefits of treatments, as a result of being on programme.
- Learners do not improve their English skills because teachers' own skills are weak. Teachers provide too few opportunities to help learners to improve their spelling and grammar. They do not identify where learners make these errors or enable them to improve their skills. As a result, learners' written work does not reflect the high standards of their practical work.

## Apprenticeships

**Good**

- Currently, 73 apprentices study beauty therapy courses. Most are on frameworks qualifications at advanced level. Around half of apprentices are aged 16 to 18.
- Leaders make sure that courses meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. They work closely with employers to enable apprentices to attend weekly training at the academy. These close links also enable employers to provide useful additional product training such as extra makeup and skin care courses to improve apprentices' employment prospects.
- The small proportion of apprentices who need to gain English and mathematics qualifications attend useful specialist classes at the academy. Most apprentices achieve these qualifications.
- Apprentices develop the mathematical skills that they need to be successful in work. For example, apprentices calculate the correct mix of solutions. They assess the time taken and time remaining for a treatment and calculate payment and costs accurately.
- Staff provide useful careers advice to apprentices to help them plan their future employment. Assessors discuss apprentices' future plans and career goals in detail as part of workplace visits. For example, assessors provided useful help to two apprentices close to completing their apprenticeship programme who wanted to move into sports massage



and nutrition.

- Leaders and staff work closely with employers to ensure that the apprentices make good progress. Employers receive weekly reports to inform them about their apprentices' off-the-job training at the academy. Employers know what skills apprentices need to improve and the progress they are making with assessments. Employers provide valuable feedback to assessors on the progress apprentices make in the workplace. Employers value their apprentices' positive contribution to their businesses, particularly the excellent skills that apprentices learn in dealing with customers.
- Teachers prepare apprentices well for assessments. At the academy, apprentices attend monthly practical assessments in a realistic work environment with external clients. This helps them build confidence and improve their skills rapidly. Teachers use these assessments effectively to check apprentices' progress and provide any help they need.
- Assessors use monthly workplace visits successfully to further develop apprentices' skills. Prior to the visit, assessors contact teachers and employers to check their priorities for apprentices. Assessors use this information well to plan effective reviews for apprentices. As a result, progress reviews are comprehensive and useful to learners, teachers, assessors and employers.
- Apprentices develop a comprehensive knowledge of health and safety in the beauty industry. They learn how to prepare thorough treatment plans for clients. They understand the need to carry out risk assessments to avoid any adverse reactions and do so successfully. Apprentices recognise the importance of protecting clients' personal information. They use personal protective equipment appropriately to protect themselves and ensure adequate ventilation when using volatile chemicals.
- Advanced apprentices' written work does not demonstrate higher-level skills, such as analysis and evaluation. Teachers are not rigorous enough in ensuring that apprentices use good English, in particular the correct spelling and punctuation. Display work contains spelling errors, which does not promote best practice to apprentices.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	1237224
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	138
Principal/CEO	Carla Hales
Telephone number	01268 560552
Website	<a href="http://www.debutacademy.com">www.debutacademy.com</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	-	-	-	-	90	-	3
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	9	1	33	30	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

### Inspection team

Rebecca Perry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ruth Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
Penny Fawcus	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Barrett-Mold	Ofsted Inspector

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