

Inspection of Lookfantastic Training Limited

Inspection dates: 14–17 January 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Lookfantastic Training Limited (LFT) is an independent training provider based in Brighton, East Sussex. In 2015, it was acquired by Rewards Training Recruitment Consultancy, an independent training organisation operating across the south-east of England and London. LFT is currently being rebranded to align itself with its parent company. As a result, LFT's new hair training salon in Brighton is now known as the Rewards Hair Academy.

LFT has 269 apprentices currently on programmes. Of these, 135 are on framework apprenticeships and 114 are on standards-based apprenticeships. Eighty apprentices are on the level 2 hairdressing standards-based apprenticeship; 36 apprentices are on levels 2 and 3 engineering manufacturing frameworks; 26 apprentices are on the level 3 information technology (IT) application specialist framework; and 25 apprentices are on a mix of levels 2 and 3 business administration frameworks and standards-based apprenticeships.

Nearly two-thirds of programmes are delivered by six subcontractors.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Apprentices gain substantial new skills, knowledge and behaviours through the apprenticeship programmes delivered by LFT and its subcontractors. Hairdressing apprentices learn how to improve the quality of bob cuts through texturing and clipping techniques. Engineering apprentices use their mathematical knowledge to program machines to the right levels of tolerance.

Apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as their peers. They achieve their qualifications and progress on to higher training at the same rate as those they train alongside.

Apprentices recruited straight from school benefit from the high level of individual support they receive from their trainers. As a result, they make a smooth transition from formal education into the world of work.

Apprentices grow in personal confidence through their programmes. They feel empowered to ask questions when they do not understand something. They become more independent in the pursuit of their studies and when they take on additional responsibilities at work.

Apprentices are highly motivated and committed to their apprenticeships. They talk with pride about the new skills they acquire. They turn up on time to attend their classroom training sessions.

Apprentices appreciate the way that trainers make sure that they are kept on track to complete their programmes and tell them how to improve their work.

Groups of apprentices take their wider communal responsibilities seriously. Apprentices employed by a faith school overcome barriers between different groups by using their IT skills to support community groups.

Apprentices feel safe. They develop very good safe working practices. For example, construction apprentices know how to work with asbestos when maintaining old buildings.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Across a diverse range of vocational areas, managers and trainers at LFT and its subcontractors design a curriculum that enables apprentices to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that meet their personal aspirations and the needs of employers. They have replaced framework apprenticeships with new standards-based programmes in hairdressing and adult social care at the request of employers.

Trainers ensure that apprentices receive a secure foundation in the basic skills and underpinning theoretical knowledge of the subject before extending these skills and knowledge through the introduction of more complex tasks. For example,

construction apprentices first master basic hand-tool techniques and how to take accurate measurements before moving on to more advanced tasks where they can apply these skills.

Trainers work well with employers to plan and deliver effective links between the content of off-the-job training sessions and the development of skills and knowledge in the workplace. Engineering employers rotate apprentices through the various departments in their companies to enable them to practise a wide range of skills. A minority of apprentices in construction are not in roles at work to build the technical skills they need to progress swiftly through their programmes.

Apprentices gain skills and knowledge securely and quickly through observing practical demonstrations and then practising them repeatedly under the watchful guidance of their trainers. In hairdressing, trainers provide professional tips through demonstrations, such as correctly sectioning hair prior to colouring and mixing products. Apprentices then apply these immediately back in the workplace.

Trainers combine regular assessment with constructive verbal feedback to motivate and guide apprentices to progress on to the next stage of their programme. In hairdressing, trainers use observation and verbal learning checks effectively to provide advice to apprentices on how to develop their technical skills to a higher level.

Trainers ensure that apprentices acquire good working practices and develop a professional approach to their jobs by modelling the behaviours that employers want to see in workplaces. Apprentices are inspired to progress in their careers by being taught in salons and workshops, using the latest products and technologies.

Employers provide apprentices with additional training opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge beyond those they learn in the classroom. For example, hairdressing apprentices attend additional colouring training organised by manufacturers.

Managers support trainers to maintain their vocational expertise and knowledge of the latest developments within their sectors. For example, hairdressing trainers return to the commercial salon floor every two months to work with clients.

Trainers do not provide written feedback effectively to highlight where apprentices have excelled and to indicate how to improve their work further. They do not use progress reviews well to set curriculum and personal development goals to accelerate the learning of the most able apprentices.

Too few hairdressing trainers in LFT's directly delivered programme feel equipped to support apprentices with their English and mathematics. As a result, too many apprentices are reluctant to study these subjects, and pass rates in functional skills remain too low.

Managers and trainers do not provide apprentices with structured and explicit

careers advice at different stages of their programmes. Often, advice about future careers is given informally or comes from employers. As a result, apprentices do not have a full picture of the range of options available to them in the sector in which they work.

A high proportion of apprentices in hairdressing and engineering achieve their qualifications. They remain in secure employment. Many of them, particularly in engineering, progress on to higher-level qualifications.

Directors have set a clear strategic direction for the company and set high expectations for their staff and apprentices. They have grown the size and widened the breadth of the curriculum through the judicious acquisition of other providers and the selection of subcontractors with specific vocational expertise and geographical reach.

Directors have a particularly good understanding of the quality of the company's directly delivered hairdressing programmes. They know these apprentices well, finding out about their personal issues through frequent visits to the training salon. They know less about the quality of the provision of subcontractors. As a result, they do not provide sufficient challenge to managers to improve this provision.

A few aspects of the management of subcontractors are weak. Managers are not curious enough about the programmes delivered by established subcontractors. They do not intervene decisively on the few occasions when the quality of provision declines.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Directors, managers, trainers and subcontractors ensure that apprentices are kept safe. Apprentices know how and to whom they should report any safeguarding concerns. They have a good level of awareness of the risks that are relevant to their lives.

Managers make timely interventions when concerns are reported. They refer concerns to the relevant external agencies, sharing information sensitively and on a need-to-know basis. Managers follow through reported concerns to their conclusion. They learn lessons for future action.

Managers ensure that subcontractors have up-to-date safeguarding policies in place and that all their staff have appropriate employment checks. They monitor subcontractors' actions on safeguarding at every contract review meeting.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Directors and managers need to strengthen the arrangements for the management of subcontractors so that they have a better understanding of the quality of the provision and can intervene more swiftly when it declines.
- Directors and managers should ensure that apprentices receive impartial careers advice at different stages through their programmes so that they understand all of the options available to them once they have completed their programmes.
- Directors and managers should support their trainers, particularly those delivering hairdressing programmes, to become more adept at supporting apprentices with the development of their English and mathematical skills.
- Managers should ensure that apprentices on construction programmes are placed with employers who can provide them with roles at work that enable them to apply the skills they learn in the classroom.
- Trainers need to improve the quality of the written feedback they give at reviews so that most-able apprentices know how to improve and make more rapid progress through their programmes.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53697
Address	Tower Point 44 North Road Brighton BN1 1YR
Contact number	01273 778 631
Website	www.rewardshairacademy.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Andrew Ayres
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	15–18 November 2016
Main subcontractors	Aldridge Education Changes Promotions Ministry of Hair London Vocational Training RM Training SIGTA

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by a company director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Charles Searle, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ian Goodwin	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Dearnley	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Winchcombe	Ofsted Inspector
Simone Collpitts	Ofsted Inspector
Montserrat Perez-Parent	Her Majesty's Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2020