Armonia Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2578445
Name of lead inspector:	Cath Jackson, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Armonia Health and Beauty 10 Park Street Selby North Yorkshire YO8 4PW

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Armonia Limited began delivering levy funded apprenticeships in February 2019. Currently, 26 apprentices are on the standard for beauty therapist at level 2. All apprentices work for one employer and are based in seven hotel and spa resorts across the country. Most apprentices are aged 19 or over, with eight aged 16 to 18.

The impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgements below.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?	**Significant progress**

Leaders and managers have a clear strategy and vision for the training that they offer. They work closely with employers to devise a curriculum that fully meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship and thoroughly prepares apprentices for employment in the beauty industry. Leaders and tutors ensure that apprentices benefit from high-quality on- and off-the-job training that meets their needs very well. As a result, apprentices make rapid progress in developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Leaders have considerable expertise in the beauty industry. They recruit well-qualified and experienced staff and ensure that tutors benefit from frequent industry-relevant training to maintain their professional credibility and to respond to changing circumstances. For example, tutors are trained in COVID-19 infection prevention for beauty therapy and nail services.

Leaders and tutors provide highly effective advice and guidance to apprentices at the start of their training. Leaders hold comprehensive recruitment events for apprentices that include discussions with existing employees and apprentices, taster sessions in hand massage, and detailed information on assessment methods. Apprentices benefit from having a thorough and realistic understanding of what their training entails from the outset.

Leaders effectively assure the quality of their training provision. They maintain frequent contact with tutors and employers, and have clear oversight of apprentices' progress. Leaders accurately identify any actions for improvement. They have recently appointed a governing body with expert members to provide external critical oversight of the organisation.

Employers value highly the quality of apprenticeship training and the contribution that apprentices make to their business. Leaders have structured the curriculum to meet employers' needs effectively. For example, due to high demand for massage treatments in resorts, apprentices learn about massage at the start of their programme to prepare them quickly for this part of their role.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? **Significant progress**

Apprentices develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours during their apprenticeship. When learning about facial massage treatments, they explore human anatomy, develop their knowledge of the musculature of the face, and learn about potential contraindications of treatment. They learn about the importance of identifying clients' needs and medical conditions prior to starting treatments. Consequently, apprentices become confident beauty therapists who carry out informed consultations with clients and complete treatments skilfully.

Tutors use teaching methods that support apprentices to learn effectively. They teach theory in manageable blocks, and they check understanding thoroughly, ensuring that apprentices can apply what they have learned in the workplace. Apprentices remember and can apply their new knowledge and skills. They are well prepared for their end-point assessments as they have thoroughly practised and embedded their skills throughout their training.

Tutors thoroughly monitor apprentices' progress. They provide constructive feedback on apprentices' written and practical work that motivates apprentices to improve and make rapid progress. As a result, apprentices produce well-written assignments and carry out treatments to a high standard.

Tutors take care to ensure apprentices' well-being. They contact apprentices on a weekly basis to discuss and monitor their well-being. They maintained this contact during periods of COVID-19 restrictions when apprentices were not in their workplaces.

Tutors support apprentices very well to develop their English and mathematics skills. Apprentices learn how to measure waxing strips accurately to avoid wastage and how to use ratio to mix products for treatments. Apprentices improve their written English skills and complete assignments to a high standard. They improve and develop the verbal communication skills that they need when talking to clients, such as when carrying out

treatment consultations.

Apprentices receive impartial guidance for their next steps in their careers. They develop their knowledge of the beauty industry through participating in extra-curricular activities such as visits to industry-specific and careers events.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? **Significant progress**

Leaders rigorously promote safeguarding across the organisation. Staff carefully risk-assess training for those apprentices under the age of 18. They have procedures for reporting and dealing with safeguarding incidents and act on cases in a timely and appropriate manner. Leaders meet the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty and have a thorough awareness of local risks, including county lines.

Leaders and managers have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with apprentices. The designated safeguarding lead and deputy have relevant qualifications and have carried out appropriate training for their roles. All staff are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Apprentices feel safe. They benefit from effective safeguarding training and are confident about their safety in the workplace, including when working online. They receive valuable training on how to identify signs of mental health issues and domestic abuse in others, including clients in the workplace.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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