

# Shears Academy Limited

Monitoring visit report

---

<b>Unique reference number:</b>	2626863
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Lynda Brown, Her Majesty's Inspector
<b>Inspection dates:</b>	24–25 May 2021
<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Address:</b>	2 Eros House Shops Brownhill Road London SE6 2EF

# 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.

Shears Academy Limited (Shears) is a private training provider based in the London borough of Lewisham. In January 2020 they received direct funding for apprenticeship provision. Currently, Shears has 23 apprentices in learning. Most apprentices are on level 2 hair professional standard. A small number of apprentices are on level 3 hairdressing framework. At the time of the visit a very small number of apprentices were on a break in learning. Approximately half of apprentices are studying functional skills qualifications in English and/or mathematics at level 1 and level 2.

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?

### Insufficient progress

Shears Academy Limited have developed training that meets the needs of the employers that they work with. They have high aspirations for their apprentices to gain new knowledge and skills and to be successful in the salons that they work. Leaders build up strong relationships with employers to recruit apprentices who will benefit from the training they offer. Employers value the skills and knowledge that apprentices gain through their training.

In developing their training programmes, leaders have not paid sufficient attention to meeting all the requirements of apprenticeships. They focus well on making sure apprentices develop the hairdressing skills that they and their employers need. However, they have not ensured that all mandatory components of apprenticeships are included, beyond the training which apprentices receive. When new apprentices start, managers do not adequately ensure that the commitment statements are

agreed by the employer and apprentice so that the training for each apprentice is understood by all parties.

While apprentices do receive off-the-job training, staff and employers do not maintain good enough oversight to ensure it is sufficient. Their records of apprentices' off-the-job training are not accurate. Staff do not give apprentices studying English and mathematics adequate time off from work to learn these subjects.

Assessors are well qualified and experienced to carry out their roles. All assessors are practising hairdressers who completed the required professional development for their occupation. During the pandemic, assessors have continued with online professional development to keep their skills up to date.

Leaders frequently review the quality of the apprenticeship programmes, and consequentially they understand the main strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They have put in place action plans to improve areas of weakness. Leaders monitor the actions that they take to rectify weaknesses but do not routinely record the impact of those actions.

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

Most apprentices swiftly learn new skills and knowledge. Assessors work closely with employers to plan learning and to make sure that apprentices' off-the-job training is aligned to the work they do in the salon. As a result, apprentices benefit from being able to practise the skills they learn at Shears in the workplace.

On level 2 programmes, assessors sequence learning well so that apprentices rapidly gain basic skills that they need in the salon. For example, they learn how to shampoo and condition hair and then they progress onto blow drying and cutting. Apprentices at level 3 learn complex skills such as wedding hair and colour correction. Assessors on level 3 make sure that apprentices gain additional skills, such as cutting men's hair, that they did not gain at level 2.

Apprentices enjoy their courses and are motivated to continue their training and make progress in their careers. Apprentices often gain promotions to higher-graded stylists. Assessors provide apprentices with advice on additional training in areas such as hair extensions and trichology.

During the pandemic, assessors taught theory topics online and provided apprentices with online demonstrations and videos. For example, they demonstrated plaiting and twisting for apprentices to practise. Apprentices practised their skills on training heads and sent photographs to assessors for feedback.

As apprentices have returned to working in salons and attending the academy, assessors have discussed with apprentices any gaps in their knowledge. Assessors have put relevant activities in place to revise and consolidate apprentices' skills. As a result, apprentices feel confident to complete their apprenticeships.

Apprentices benefit from frequent reviews with their assessors. Most employers attend reviews. Where employers are not able to attend, assessors make sure that they contact them frequently so that they understand the progress the apprentice is making and any support that they may need.

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

Leaders and managers have established a positive culture of safeguarding. They have put in place relevant policies and procedures to keep apprentices safe.

The designated safeguarding lead is appropriately trained for their role. Leaders make sure that staff who work with young people are safe to do so. Managers provide frequent, detailed update training for staff, through bi-monthly meetings. For example, managers have made sure that staff understand how to support apprentices who have been affected emotionally by the pandemic.

Apprentices understand how to keep themselves safe. Managers provide apprentices with an informative safeguarding workbook at the start of their course. Apprentices gain a good understanding of health and safety associated with the workplace. Apprentices feel safe and know who to report any concerns to. Assessors do not routinely check on apprentices' detailed knowledge of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty, for example, through taught sessions or through reviews.

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2021