

The Hair Academy Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Carolyn Brownsea, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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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.

The Hair Academy Limited is a private training provider based in Brighton. The provider has had a contract to run apprenticeships since 2020. At the time of the visit there were 36 apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships. Of these, 32 were studying hairdressing professional at level 2. The remainder were studying hairdressing professional at level 3 or barbering at level 2. Twenty apprentices are aged 16 to 18 years.

Apprentices were supported to continue their learning throughout the pandemic through online teaching sessions. Leaders have extended all apprentices' programmes by three months.

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

Leaders have not ensured that the programme meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Commitment statements are not signed by apprentices and employers. Leaders do not ensure apprentices' records of off-the-job training contain appropriate activities. Consequently, too many apprentices do not know what they need to do to improve their knowledge, skills and behaviours to the required level.

Leaders and tutors do not communicate effectively with employers. They do not involve them in reviews or provide them with details of the apprenticeship curriculum and how it will be sequenced. Consequently, employers are not able to provide the support apprentices need to succeed.

Leaders do not monitor the quality of learning effectively. They have recently introduced observations of teaching. However, there are no records of these or minutes of meetings with staff or employers. Leaders do not coordinate the findings of these activities to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. As a result, leaders do not intervene swiftly enough to rectify concerns and improve the quality of teaching.

Leaders do not know if apprentices are participating in appropriate on- and off-the-job training, completing planned assessments on time, or their progress in preparing for their functional skills qualifications. Leaders are currently working to develop more effective tracking systems. However, it is too early to judge any impact.

Leaders do not currently have any external governance arrangements and, therefore, do not benefit from additional support or challenge in relation to their strategy and operational effectiveness.

Leaders have recently appointed a new team of tutors and support staff. Tutors have worked in a range of professional salons and barbers and bring a wealth of recent experience and skills, which is starting to benefit apprentices. For example, tutors share their experience of working at shows such as British Fashion Week. Leaders plan for tutors to work towards teaching and assessment qualifications.

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

Leaders assess apprentices' knowledge and skills through a range of activities at the start of their apprenticeship. They do not use the results of these activities sufficiently well to plan the duration of the apprenticeship or the teaching based on what apprentices already know, and what they need to know.

Leaders do not plan the delivery of the functional skills curriculum well enough to support apprentices to develop their English and mathematical skills. Tutors do not use the results of initial assessment to identify the specific aspects of English and mathematics that apprentices need to improve. An apprentice reported struggling with percentages. This was not reflected in their targets and they received no tutor support to develop their knowledge and understanding.

Apprentices do not benefit from constructive feedback and guidance that enables them to understand what they have done well, why, and how to improve. Tutor assessment of apprentices' progress focuses on the completion of tasks. Tutors' feedback to apprentices is not focused on their learning or end-point assessment. Apprentices and employers are unaware of the potential to achieve a high grade. Consequently, they do not know what they need to do next to improve and achieve as well as they could.

Apprentices enjoy attending weekly sessions at the training centre. They learn through a mix of theory-based and practical sessions. Leaders and tutors do not ensure employers have appropriate and timely information to further develop their apprentices' skills.

Apprentices receive useful feedback from trainers that enables them to make improvements in their practical skills, such as safe colouring techniques and the required tests for porosity and elasticity. Tutors assess apprentices' knowledge, but do not use questions effectively to encourage deeper learning.

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

Leaders have not ensured that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place. They have not prioritised training for staff to keep apprentices safe or developed links with the local safeguarding board. There is no trained lead for safeguarding, consequently, leaders do not deal with disclosures appropriately. Tutors promote safe working practices within the hairdressing and barbering industry, such as apprentices using the right personal protective equipment. However, they do not have an understanding of their wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Leaders do not follow safer recruitment practices. They do not obtain references or complete disclosure checks prior to staff working with apprentices.

Leaders have not made appropriate support arrangements for apprentices with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Leaders and tutors do not use the learning objectives in EHCPs to support apprentices to develop the behaviours required to enable them to progress in their personal, social and working lives.

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