

Halls of Ivy Beauty Academy Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Chris Bealey, Ofsted Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 191 South Street
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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.

Halls of Ivy Beauty Academy Limited (Halls of Ivy) was founded in 2010. They began teaching apprentices in 2018 under contract with the Education and Skills Funding Agency. At the time of the monitoring visit, Halls of Ivy had 45 apprentices following standards-based apprenticeships in hair and beauty at levels 2 and 3. Eighteen apprentices study the hair professional standard and a further thirteen apprentices study the advanced creative hair professional standard. Twelve apprentices study the beauty therapist standard, and 2 apprentices study the advanced beauty therapist standard. Thirty-one apprentices are under nineteen years old. Apprentices work for employers across Greater London and the East. They study their courses at Halls of Ivy training centres in Romford and Chelmsford. Halls of Ivy does not use subcontractors.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders have used their experience and knowledge of the hair and beauty sector to develop a curriculum that responds directly to employers' needs. They have chosen apprenticeship standards that provide progression to an advanced level in hairdressing, barbering and beauty therapy. The curriculum is ambitious for all apprentices. Two thirds of apprentices have previously not been in employment or training.

Leaders work closely with employers to ensure apprentices develop knowledge and skills that are highly relevant to their work. Employer ambassadors work with staff to provide specialist off-the-job training for apprentices. As a result, apprentices have free access to training of the highest industry standard, usually only available as a commercial fee-paying service.

Leaders ensure that the requirements of an apprenticeship are met. Apprentices receive ample opportunity to attend training within work hours. Staff work closely with employers to ensure that apprentices practise their new skills in the workplace.

For example, hairdressing apprentices confidently use cutting techniques such as chopping, layered cuts and point cutting. As a result, most advanced apprentices have their own clients as valued professionals in their salons.

Leaders have a good understanding of the quality of their training and know the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship provision. Leaders ensure that they focus on improvements that directly target their quality of training. They have rightly recognised that they need to develop further apprentices' English skills.

Leaders have not put in place sufficiently robust external governance arrangements. Leaders receive support from an external agency for specific management issues. However, leaders are not adequately challenged or supported to continually improve their strategy or operational effectiveness.

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

Leaders have recruited highly experienced practitioners who are well qualified for their teaching roles. Teachers update and improve their skills through training in new and emerging treatments, such as keratin hair straightening. Teachers continue to develop their teaching skills through targeted training sessions. As a result, teachers provide rich and memorable learning sessions for apprentices.

Staff teach apprentices the specialist techniques they need in order to work to highly professional standards in the workplace. For example, they teach beauty therapy apprentices how to apply finely layered lash extensions, and hairdressing apprentices how to undertake complex graduated hair colouring. As a result, apprentices quickly develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours, and become valued employees.

Teachers review apprentices' progress frequently with employers and plan training carefully to meet apprentices' individual needs. As a result, apprentices receive the support they need to make the progress expected of them.

Staff give apprentices useful feedback on their work. Apprentices correct their mistakes promptly and quickly improve their skills. Apprentices studying beauty therapy improve their application of nail polish by correcting smudging and cleaning skin to ensure a precise application. As a result, apprentices provide manicures in a salon at an early stage of their training.

Teachers prepare apprentices effectively for their final assessments. They frequently set apprentices presentations, written assessments and practical tasks to practice their skills. Teachers provide apprentices with constructive feedback on how to improve. As a result, apprentices undertake their end-point assessments with confidence.

Teachers do not enable all apprentices to develop their knowledge of English. Apprentices do not have sufficient time in taught functional skills sessions to get help with areas they find hard. Teachers set apprentices practice tasks on an online learning platform. However, most apprentices do not engage with their online learning sufficiently well. As a result, too few apprentices pass their functional skills exams at the first attempt.

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

Leaders have developed and maintain a strong culture of safeguarding. A suitable safeguarding structure is in place with designated leads. All staff are trained and qualified for their roles. Staff also undertake frequent update training, for example in child protection. Apprentices know how to report their concerns and are rightly confident that staff will deal promptly and effectively with any problems they may have.

Apprentices have a good understanding of health and safety in their workplaces. They use protective clothing and keep their workstations clear and free from trip hazards. They understand how to carefully use, store and dispose of the chemicals needed for treatments. Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe online. They make effective use of personal profile settings and understand the risks of sharing personal data and images online.

Hairdressing and barbering apprentices understand how to recognise the risks and signs of radicalisation and how to report these. Most apprentices are aware of the local risks they face. For example, apprentices studying barbering are aware of threats such as knife crime. However, too few apprentices studying beauty therapy associate the risks of radicalisation with their personal and working lives

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