

# Wow Hair Academy Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 2674167

**Name of lead inspector:** Victor Reid, Her Majesty's Inspector

**Inspection date(s):** 7 to 8 July 2022

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** 140 Cannock Road  
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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.

Wow Hair Academy Limited is an independent learning provider based in Wolverhampton. The company provides apprenticeships in hairdressing at levels 2 and 3. The majority of apprentices are working toward the level 2 hair professional standard, with a few specialising in barbering. The remaining apprentices are training towards the level 3 standard in advanced and creative hair professional.

In December 2019, the company was admitted to the register of apprenticeship training providers, and its first apprentices commenced shortly afterwards. At the time of the monitoring visit, the company had 49 apprentices in learning, the majority being aged 16 to 19 with the rest being adults. Apprentices are employed by local hairdressing and barbering salons in Wolverhampton and the surrounding area.

Apprentices either attend the training academy on a day-release basis or receive their training in the workplace.

### Themes

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

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and staff share a clear vision and have high aspirations for their apprenticeship programme. Managers have developed good relationships with employers to establish their employees' training needs and work flexibly to meet them. As a result, they have developed a curriculum that contributes to local priorities in the upskilling of new entrants into the hairdressing sector.

Since gaining a directly funded contract, leaders have ensured that they have an appropriate management structure in place to both oversee and support the delivery

of the apprenticeship programmes. For example, leaders have invested in appropriate learning accommodation and resources.

Leaders and managers recruit suitably qualified and experienced staff, who benefit from access to a range of professional development that equip them with the skills to support apprentices with their learning. As a result, apprentices develop valuable knowledge and skills that enhance their effectiveness in the workplace and improve their self-confidence. Leaders ensure that apprentices benefit from access to a positive learning culture and an ethos of inclusion, tolerance, and respect, both while at the academy and at the workplace.

Leaders ensure that they recruit apprentices appropriately and with integrity. They use a range of initial assessment and diagnostic tools mapped to the apprenticeship standards to ensure that apprentices are placed on the correct apprenticeship level for the appropriate length of time. Academy staff make sure that apprentices understand the requirements of their end-point assessments and prepare them well from the start of their programmes.

Leaders' and managers' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship programme requires improvement. For example, managers' use of data does not always enable them to identify all aspects of apprentices' progress. In addition, currently no governance arrangements exist to challenge or hold senior leaders to account for improving the quality of provision. However, directors have identified the lack of governance as an area for development and they are currently reviewing governance arrangements.

**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 develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours and make good progress because employers and assessors work closely together to ensure programmes are well matched to apprentices' needs.

Trainers use their industry knowledge and expertise well to sequence learning, enabling apprentices to develop their hairdressing knowledge and practise their vocational skills confidently. For example, level 2 apprentices in hairdressing receive close guidance and support from trainers in developing their dexterity and coordination skills in basic sectioning and when flat-brush blow drying. Apprentices in barbering hone their cutting techniques, such as 'disconnected cuts' to add texture and shape.

Apprentices benefit from well-planned training that is jointly delivered with employers. As a result, they quickly develop confidence in their hairdressing skills and they successfully apply these in the workplace. For example, level 3 apprentices

quickly become skilled in creative 'balayage' and colour-correction techniques, ensuring tonal depth when lightening a client's hair.

Apprentices work effectively in the workplace by responding to customers' needs in a professional manner. Employers value and recognise apprentices' contributions to the salon operations. As a result, they swiftly move into working on paying clients in the workplace. Apprentices take pride in their work, and a significant majority display their work on social media.

Apprentices benefit from the early introduction to and strong emphasis most tutors place on challenging them to develop their confidence in English and mathematics, because most achieve their functional skills qualifications early in their training. However, a few vocational tutors do not routinely correct spelling and grammar errors in apprentices' written work.

Trainers' use of data does not always enable them to identify all aspects of apprentices' progress. Internal reports used to track apprentices' vocational progress overly focus on the submission of assignments linked to the occupational standards.

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

Leaders and managers promote an effective safeguarding culture that supports the safety and welfare of apprentices. Apprentices report feeling safe and have an appropriate understanding of how to access help and support at times of need.

Designated safeguarding staff are suitably trained and benefit from ongoing professional development that informs their insight and understanding of current safeguarding practices. Staff respond appropriately to any welfare and/or safeguarding concerns raised by apprentices.

Apprentices routinely adopt safe working practices – such as the application of personal protective equipment, including the use of barrier creams to protect skin from dermatitis when handling chemicals. In addition, apprentices have a secure understanding of how to protect themselves online and when using social media, and the steps to take to assure the security of their personal data. Apprentices know what actions to take if they feel at risk from extremism or radicalisation.

Younger apprentices have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy sexual relationships, including matters such as consent, companionship, intimacy, and friendship, that has been extended as a result of the guidance and support provided by training staff.

The academy's safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty policy is not fully reflective of current legislative guidance. In addition, leaders do not have a secure understanding of local

risk and vulnerabilities, as they have yet to establish effective relationships with local or regional safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty coordinators.

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