

Philips Hair Salons Limited

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

Unique reference number: 53879

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 7 Providence Street
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Philips Hair Salons Limited was inspected in July 2022. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Philips Hair Salons Limited is an independent learning provider. It has a training academy at one of its commercial salons in Wakefield and three other commercial salons in Sandal, Ossett and Morley. As well as training its own apprentices, Philips Hair Salons Limited also trains apprentices who are employed in other hair salons across West Yorkshire. At the time of this visit, there were 60 apprentices, of whom 38 were enrolled on the level 2 hair professional apprenticeship standard and 22 on the level 3 advanced and creative hair professional standard. Over half of the apprentices were aged 16 to 18.

Themes

What progress have leaders made to ensure that staff effectively use apprentices' starting points to plan and teach an ambitious curriculum which fully meets the needs of apprentices and employers? Insufficient progress

Leaders and staff do not make effective enough use of the information that they have about apprentices' starting points to plan a curriculum that is ambitious. Leaders gather information about apprentices' starting points and progress from a range of different sources including individual learning plans, reviews and training logs. However, staff do not use this information to identify or record how thoroughly apprentices develop their skills and knowledge.

Staff do not encourage apprentices well enough to reflect on or recognise the progress that they have made from their starting points. They use initial and diagnostic assessments and interviews to check that apprentices are on the most appropriate course and level for their needs. However, reviews of the progress of level 2 apprentices focus primarily on achievement of units, without reference to progress from starting points. Tutors set targets for apprentices that are about completion of units, rather than the development of specific hairdressing skills. As a result, apprentices lack clear guidance on how to develop their skills.

Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is sufficiently ambitious for Level 2 apprentices. Staff do not adapt learning to meet individual needs. Where apprentices make more rapid progress than their peers, too often they have to wait for others to

catch up, which slows their progress. However, staff do provide appropriate support for apprentices who fall behind, to enable them to catch up with missed learning.

While tutors assess apprentices' practical work frequently, they tend to acknowledge or praise what has been completed rather than provide constructive feedback on what apprentices could do better. This means that apprentices struggle to understand what they have done well and what they need to improve further.

Leaders and tutors work well with employers to ensure that employers have a secure understanding of the apprenticeship standards. For example, leaders meet with employers and their apprentices to select optional units at level 2 which meet the needs of their salon.

What progress have staff made in ensuring that the curriculum supports apprentices to effectively develop their wider personal skills, including access to high-quality and impartial careers advice and guidance? Reasonable progress

Since the last inspection, leaders have introduced an appropriate curriculum to develop apprentices' wider skills. Tutors cover topics such as sexual health and how to recognise and manage anxiety symptoms and causes. Apprentices learn about pregnancy and miscarriage, and the effects that these life-changing events could have on one's mental health. They learn about catfishing, cyber-bullying and how social media images play a role in young people's decision to have plastic surgery. Apprentices design useful and creative 'life choices magazines' to demonstrate what they have learned, and share these with their peers.

Tutors frequently assess the personal development work that apprentices create. They provide useful feedback that helps apprentices to consider and improve their own personal development further. Apprentices successfully complete four courses leading to qualifications that help them understand how to stay safe online, who they can trust, and how to recognise and protect themselves against radicalisation and extremism.

Leaders have taken effective action to improve the careers information, advice and guidance that they provide to apprentices. Tutors provide appropriate initial careers advice and guidance. Staff have links with local schools and attend careers events to raise awareness of apprenticeships. They use assessments and interviews to check individuals' suitability for joining an apprenticeship. Tutors provide careers information and guidance at induction and throughout the apprenticeships, which apprentices find helpful. Level 3 apprentices learn how to handle money and how to manage accounts, which prepares them well for self-employment. Apprentices understand the broader career options open to them, and staff support them very well to plan for different careers paths, such as becoming a trichologist or progressing to a level 3 hairdressing apprenticeship. A few level 3 apprentices have progressed to a teaching role at the academy.

What progress have leaders made to ensure that they have in place effective quality improvement activities to address the areas that require improvement? Insufficient progress

Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have implemented a range of quality improvement activities, which help to inform their understanding about the quality of their apprenticeships. This includes a suitable quality improvement plan that they frequently monitor and update, monthly standardisation meetings and internal quality assurance activities, including lesson observations. However, these processes have not yet had a positive impact on improving how staff design and teach a sufficiently ambitious and challenging level 2 curriculum that meets apprentices' needs. Leaders and managers have not been successful in ensuring that tutors are challenging apprentices at level 2 to practise and gain the full range of knowledge and skills specified in the standards.

Leaders and managers self-assess accurately and recognise the areas in which they need to improve. They have in place processes to monitor and track apprentices' progress from their starting points. However, they have not ensured that tutors track apprentices' progress beyond unit completion. Level 2 apprentices do not receive precise guidance in order to improve specific hairdressing skills that build on their learning from their starting points. As a result, these apprentices do not know what they need to focus on to become skilled hairdressers.

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