

Inspection of Escala Training Academy

Inspection dates:

23 to 25 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Adult learning programmes	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Information about this provider

Escala Training Academy (Escala) is based in Essex. Escala is owned and operated by the chief executive. Escala started in 2004 as a nail and beauty salon. Escala has been offering adult learning programmes in beauty therapy since 2015.

At the time of the inspection, Escala had two adult learners on the diploma in beauty therapy general at level 3. A further two learners are training for the diploma in advanced beauty therapy at level 4. The courses are of 12 weeks' duration and start at different points throughout the academic year. Escala also offers a broad range of full-cost commercial beauty and aesthetics courses. Escala has no learners in receipt of high-needs funding and no subcontracted provision.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Learners are very positive about their learning experience and state that staff treat them equally. Learners enjoy building new friendships with other learners as they train together. Learners demonstrate mutual respect and tolerance. Learners appreciate the individual support and training they receive from tutors. Tutors provide clear explanations and help learners to understand. Learners have developed their confidence and skills in providing treatments for their clients. Learners explain how their nail technique has improved because of the tutors' feedback and tips.

Staff have very clear expectations of learners that they share at induction to form a contract for behaviour. As a result, attendance is high. Staff are flexible in meeting the needs of learners. Staff enable learners to attend at additional times during the week so that they do not fall behind. As a result, learners make good progress and achieve.

Learners feel listened to and looked after by their tutors. Learners enjoy their learning, including in cases where they may have had negative experiences of education before. Learners value the aftercare that tutors provide. Tutors provide learners with continued support after their course when they have progressed into employment.

Learners are safe and feel safe at the academy. Learners are confident that staff will help them with any concerns and issues that may arise.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are ambitious for the learners and passionate about the beauty industry. Leaders aim to provide educational opportunities to adults from disadvantaged groups and communities. Leaders and tutors support learners very effectively with extra tuition and practice time to help them to gain their qualifications. Leaders are ambitious for their learners to become successfully employed in the beauty sector. Leaders work with a broad range of learners with different education backgrounds. However, leaders do not screen learners for any learning difficulties and/or disabilities at the start of their programme. Leaders have not trained staff to be able to identify additional needs or to provide the specialist help that learners may need.

Leaders take pride in the learners' achievements. The curriculum enables adult learners to become economically active around their family responsibilities. Leaders provide qualifications that enable learners to progress successfully into employment or self-employment in the beauty industry. Leaders and tutors ensure that learners have the work-ready skills to be successful in gaining employment. Tutors provide additional training for learners to gain complementary skills to secure employment, for example by providing learners with a nail qualification that was an essential requirement for a job role. As a result, most learners are successful in securing employment.

Leaders and tutors support learners' progress to higher level learning. Leaders support learners qualified at level 3 to complete short courses in skin-peeling. As a result, learners develop their confidence and skills in using a range of more advanced and complex ingredients. This in turn develops the learner's confidence in preparation for more advanced work at level 4.

Leaders and tutors have planned and sequenced the learning programmes logically. Tutors make effective links between the theory and practical treatments. Tutors set homework activities for learners prior to the lessons, such as pre-reading or research. Tutors then use in-person teaching time effectively to reinforce and apply the theory to the treatment. Tutors ensure that they prioritise lesson time for practical skills development. Consequently, learners develop significant new skills and knowledge required by the beauty industry.

Learners benefit from good-quality resources that they can easily access online. Leaders and tutors have created a safe and supportive learning space for learners through the online platform. Tutors take learners step by step through the skills and knowledge they need to be work-ready beauty therapists. Tutors ensure that communication on the platform is friendly and supportive. Tutors use assessments of learning effectively. They ensure that learners know, retain and apply their new knowledge competently. As a result, learners are confident in describing complex treatments to clients. Learners encourage clients to adopt good aftercare to enhance the benefits of the service they receive.

Tutors have the appropriate skills and knowledge for beauty therapy. Tutors who have skills beyond those required by the qualification ensure that they pass on their specialisms to learners. For example, tutors introduce learners to reiki and crystal facial treatments. Tutors encourage learners to look more broadly at the sector, to explore areas of personal interest and to move on into new treatment areas.

Learners understand the importance of excellent client care in developing a good business model. Tutors model the behaviours necessary to be successful in the beauty industry. As a result, learners understand and model the attributes of good citizens. Learners adhere to expected codes of conduct and legislation. However, tutors do not ensure that learners have a good understanding of other aspects of fundamental British values, such as democracy and individual liberty.

Learners are producing work of a good standard. Tutors provide effective learning checks on the standard of English required in assignment work. For example, on a physiology of ageing research task, tutors remind learners to include the research source for reference. Tutors encourage learners to check their spelling, punctuation and grammar before submitting the work.

Tutors use questioning and formative assessment effectively. Tutors ensure that learners have understood the theory work and how it links to their practical treatments. Tutors listen to learners' discussions with clients and challenge inaccuracies fairly and helpfully. As a result, learners are confident to use advanced skin rejuvenation equipment on paying clients.

Tutors provide learners with a helpful range of feedback, both written and spoken. Learners understand how they have performed at each step of their practical treatments. They use the feedback well to finesse their work on clients. Learners listen to their clients' feedback and analyse the results from previous treatments. Learners use this information effectively to improve their practice. For example, learners adjust their treatment timings and intensity settings to maximise the effects of hair-removal procedures.

Tutors prepare learners effectively for the workplace and their future careers. Tutors provide training opportunities beyond the academic and vocational curriculum. For example, learners attend beauty and aesthetics exhibitions. A few learners take part in work experience or shadowing, where possible. Learners enjoy bespoke product training, such as airbrushing, that is provided by beauty companies. This meets learners' interests and future plans very effectively.

Tutors ensure that learners are well prepared to apply for employment. Tutors develop learners' understanding of job applications. Tutors help learners to develop their curriculum vitae, to know where to search for jobs and to use social media effectively. Tutors prepare learners thoroughly for job interviews and prepare them to conduct trade tests. As a result, most learners who are seeking employment are successful in securing a job in the sector.

Governance arrangements are informal and lack robust challenge to improve the quality of provision further. Leaders use a consultant to provide an external view of the quality of provision. The consultant is suitably qualified and experienced in the sector to support leaders. The consultant has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. However, the arrangement is a supportive relationship and prioritises compliance with awarding organisation requirements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have implemented appropriate safeguarding policies and training for staff. Learners have a basic understanding of issues affecting their safety. For example, most learners understand how to stay safe when online. Learners have a good understanding of workplace legislation to keep themselves safe. They understand the importance of wearing personal protective equipment. However, leaders have not planned an effective curriculum to deepen learners' understanding of risks. For example, learners have a limited understanding of the broader aspects of local and national issues that may impact on them at work and at home. They have a limited awareness of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must provide appropriate training for staff to ensure that they develop the awareness and skills to identify and support learners who may have a learning difficulty and/or disability.
- Leaders must ensure that there is a planned personal development curriculum to ensure that learners develop a good understanding of the wider curriculum, such as fundamental British values and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders must ensure that governance arrangements are strengthened to provide effective challenge in order to improve the quality of provision further.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1237116
Address	18 Benfleet Road Benfleet Essex SS7 1QB
Contact number	01702 826789
Website	www.nailandbeautytrainingacademy.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Samantha Warren
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	28 to 30 November 2018
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Penny Fawcus, lead inspector
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His Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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