Inspection of Armonia Limited

Inspection dates:	27 to 30 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Apprenticeships	**Good**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Armonia Limited is an independent learning provider that delivers apprenticeships for the hotel, spa resort and salon beauty and well-being sector. It began delivering levy-funded apprenticeships in February 2019. At the time of the inspection, there were 28 apprentices on the level 2 beauty therapy apprenticeship, 17 apprentices on the level 3 well-being and holistic therapist apprenticeship and fewer than five apprentices on the level 2 leisure team member apprenticeship. There were 13 apprentices working towards functional skills English and mathematics qualifications. All apprentices are aged 16 or over and are employed nationally.

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

Apprentices are very positive about their training. They are very respectful and punctual and attend well. Apprentices thoroughly enjoy working at prestigious salons, hotels and spas, which instils a sense of pride. They enthusiastically participate in a wide range of activities, including those which have social and positive emotional impacts on their clients. For example, apprentices learn how to provide therapeutic treatments for people living with and beyond cancer. They know how to behave respectfully and empathically throughout these activities.

Apprentices highly value the employment opportunities that they gain in prestigious spa and therapy facilities which have a strong corporate image and professional ethos. Educators and employers are excellent role models who set clear standards of behaviour and professional etiquette in both learning environments and in treatment rooms, which are calm and well ordered. As a result, apprentices demonstrate the expected levels of professionalism required in the industry from the beginning of their training.

Apprentices are provided with extremely helpful careers advice and guidance. They participate fully in rich experiences that go beyond the requirements of the apprenticeship standards. They attend conferences, where they hear from specialist guest speakers and attend product brand masterclasses. Apprentices access a range of additional specialist training and short courses delivered by luxury beauty product suppliers and manufacturers. These opportunities complement their apprenticeship training very well and help apprentices to extend further their industry knowledge and skills and apply these in their work settings.

Apprentices feel safe when attending off-the-job training and when they are at work. Leaders and managers specifically plan and implement the teaching of key topics that could affect apprentices in their workplaces, such as modern slavery. As a result, apprentices know well the potential risks that they and their peers could face in the beauty and well-being sector and understand how to keep themselves and others safe from these.

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

Leaders have a clear rationale for their apprenticeship programme to provide high-quality beauty, well-being and holistic therapy training. They collaborate well with employers to incorporate their specific treatments and therapies into the curriculum. As a result, they provide an effective curriculum that is tailored to meet the needs of high-end employers in the hotel, spa and salon sectors. For example, the level 2 beauty therapy and level 3 well-being and holistic therapist apprenticeships target and address the growing demand for employment-ready, skilful employees who can provide high-quality services and treatments such as electro-facial technology.

Apprentices benefit from ambitious and well-planned programmes. Educators plan and sequence off-the-job training effectively and carefully consider what apprentices

need to learn first, depending on their workplace roles. For example, level 3 well-being and holistic therapist apprentices initially learn the underlying human anatomical and physiological systems. They then use their learning to plan therapeutic treatments based on a good understanding of their clients' specific needs.

Educators are well qualified to teach and are industry specialists. They deliver apprentices' off-the-job practical training skilfully using lively activities, including demonstration and instruction. Apprentices become well prepared, following their practical training, to offer treatments and services immediately to clients in their workplaces. However, educators have not received adequate training in delivering remote teaching. As a result, they do not deliver consistently high-quality online sessions.

Staff use information from apprentices' starting points well to carefully plan and individualise training. Apprentices maintain a continuous professional development log from the start of their training programmes to help them monitor their progress and identify and work towards their long-term goals. This contributes to ensuring that most apprentices make rapid progress from their starting points.

Educators use assessment well to identify apprentices' understanding of key concepts. For example, on level 3 well-being and holistic therapist apprenticeships, they set assessment work that tasks apprentices with identifying and explaining the impact of body systems on the efficacy of treatments. Apprentices submit their work to educators who, in turn, provide them with useful feedback that identifies any misconceptions so that these can be rectified.

Educators use the information that they receive about apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities to support them well in sessions. They promote an inclusive environment where individual needs are assessed at the point of entry to programmes. They provide good support for apprentices with learning difficulties such as dyslexia and refer apprentices to external services when necessary.

Educators contextualise English and mathematics well into apprentices' on- and off-the-job training. Most apprentices demonstrate fluency in their recall of English and mathematics in their job roles and assignments. In level 2 beauty therapy, educators teach apprentices a simple method of how to determine eyebrow length using a ruler to measure between the inner and outer edge of the eyelid and the client's mouth. Apprentices use this method to successfully calculate the length and position of an ideal brow on clients.

Skills assessors and educators set high expectations of apprentices to achieve well in both their practical and theoretical assessments, including end-point assessment. When undertaking massage assessments, skills assessors clearly explain what apprentices need to demonstrate to meet the pass grade. They then explain what apprentices need to do to achieve a high grade. Most apprentices complete their programmes successfully, achieve the qualifications and gain the experience that they need to progress in their employment and further training.

Leaders and managers have been too slow to ensure that there is a well-planned and implemented functional skills curriculum for those apprentices needing to gain qualifications in English and mathematics. They have recently identified and implemented appropriate actions to ensure suitable and effective training is provided to apprentices.

The very few apprentices on the level 2 leisure team member apprenticeship have made slow progress. Leaders recognise this and have put in place additional staff and financial resources to ensure that apprentices gain the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need. As a result, these apprentices are now making swifter progress towards their end-point assessment.

Those responsible for governance have a clear understanding of apprenticeship performance and the progress of apprentices. They take an active role in board meetings to consider apprenticeship provision and monitor improvement actions taken by leaders and managers. As a result, governance is effective, and leaders and managers value the opportunities provided through impartial challenge to assess the impact of the improvement actions that they take.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have in place comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures that help keep apprentices safe. The designated safeguarding lead and safeguarding officer are appropriately qualified and conduct rigorous recruitment checks to assure themselves that staff are safe to work with and teach apprentices. All staff are trained in safeguarding and understand their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. Apprentices are aware of how to protect themselves, their clients and their organisations from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Leaders have in place very effective mechanisms for apprentices to report concerns or issues relating to safeguarding. Apprentices are aware of safeguarding processes and how to report concerns about their own welfare or that of peers, clients or others. Leaders respond proactively to concerns raised and are quick to ensure that apprentices are directed to the support that they need or guidance regarding access to other services.

Leaders promote an effective zero-tolerance culture against bullying and harassment. They provide apprentices with useful information about what constitutes sexual consent, peer-on-peer abuse and wider local risks. For example, apprentices are made aware of how to protect themselves from drink spiking and the spiking of vapes.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that all apprentices who need to achieve functional skills qualifications

benefit from well-planned and consistently high-quality teaching.

- Ensure that the very few apprentices on the level 2 leisure team member apprenticeship who are behind their planned end dates continue to make swift progress towards end-point assessment.
- Ensure that the remote training that apprentices receive is well planned and implemented and enables apprentices to consolidate and extend their knowledge.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2578445
Address	Armonia Health and Beauty 10 Park Street Selby North Yorkshire YO8 4PW
Contact number	01757 212130
Website	www.armonia.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Diane Hey
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive officer, 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

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Martin Bennett	Ofsted Inspector

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