

# Inspection of Achievement Training and Skills Ltd

Inspection dates: 17 to 20 July 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Achievement Training and Skills (ATS) Limited is a national independent learning provider. The head office is in Norwich, with academy centres across England. ATS gained its own contract to provide apprenticeships in August 2020.

At the time of the inspection, there were 201 apprentices on apprenticeship standards from level 2 to level 3. Of these, 144 apprentices were studying the level 2 hair professional standard, and 22 apprentices were studying the level 3 advanced creative hairdressing standard. The remaining apprentices were studying level 2 beauty therapist. At level 3, apprenticeships include advanced beauty therapist, content creator and business administrator.

There were 85 apprentices studying functional skills qualifications. In English, four apprentices were studying at level 1 and 34 studying at level 2. In mathematics, there were 22 apprentices studying at level 1 and 61 studying at level 2. There were 76 apprentices with additional needs.

ATS works with two subcontractors to provide barbering and hairdressing apprenticeships in the southeast of England. At the time of inspection, there were two apprentices on programme with one of the subcontractors.

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

Apprentices highly value the care and support from the staff at ATS. Staff create a positive, inclusive and respectful environment. Apprentices learn the value of respecting the beliefs of individuals. Apprentices develop the skills required to meet the needs of clients from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Apprentices enjoy their learning and look forward to attending training. Apprentices work and learn in well-organised professional environments. Apprentice attendance to training is good. Apprentices are motivated to achieve highly in their assessments. Most apprentices achieve their final assessments first time. An increasing proportion of apprentices achieve high grades.

Employers and assessors have high expectations. They support apprentices to develop professional standards of behaviour in the salon environment. Employers ensure that apprentices have the time to practise their skills. As a result, apprentices swiftly develop the confidence to work with clients from an early stage in their apprenticeship. Following training, a high proportion of apprentices progress into full-time employment or progress on to higher-level qualifications.

Apprentices feel safe in training and at work. They know to whom to report any concerns. They are confident about reporting any issues they may have. Apprentices quickly develop safe working practices. Hair and beauty apprentices understand the importance of patch-testing their clients' skin and hair before applying treatments. Content creator apprentices develop a detailed understanding of the importance of appropriate professional behaviours when developing online content.

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

Leaders have expertly designed and planned highly relevant apprenticeship curriculums to meet the skills needs of employers in the hair and beauty sectors. Leaders are responsive to the challenges and changing needs of the industries they work in. Leaders introduced the level 3 content creator standard to take advantage of increased social media opportunities in the hairdressing sector to create an online presence for their businesses. As a result, employers can better promote, track and develop new clients in the digital world.

Assessors work proactively with employers to tailor the curriculum so that it meets their individual training requirements. Assessors focus on developing apprentices' skills for salons that specialise in 'hair-ups' for one-off occasions. Where the main service of the salons is cutting, they ensure that apprentices are highly skilled to provide this service. As a result, apprentices swiftly develop their knowledge and skills to be able to offer treatments to paying clients. Apprentices make a valuable contribution to the businesses in which they work.

Leaders structure the curriculum logically. Assessors use their knowledge and experience to skilfully break down tasks. Apprentices learn more basic skills at the start of their programme and progress logically to more advanced tasks confidently. Hair level 2 apprentices develop neat hair sectioning skills before progressing on to effective perm winding, such as brickwork techniques. Content creator apprentices learn how to set up editing software. They develop their skills to create content for social media platforms. Apprentices studying mathematics functional skills learn the fundamentals of drawing graphs and the relationships between two sets of data. They apply this to examination questions that require them to create a scattergram and interpret the results. As a result, apprentices incrementally build their knowledge effectively over time.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices are on track to complete their functional skills qualifications within the planned time scale. Leaders have a strong focus on apprentices developing their skills and being prepared for the examinations. However, managers and assessors do not routinely monitor apprentices' progress, and apprentices' attendance in functional skills lessons is too low.

Assessors provide good support to apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Assessors identify apprentices' learning needs early in their course. As a result, apprentices with SEND make the same strong progress as their peers. Assessors enable apprentices to practise and develop their mathematical skills effectively. Apprentices in beauty therapy, for example, work out the costs of purchasing salon products and equipment. As a result, apprentices understand the importance of mathematics skills in their future careers.

Apprentices benefit from their assessors' expertise and specialist qualifications. Leaders actively ensure that assessors maintain their professional skills. Assessors provide apprentices with high-quality demonstrations of the technical aspects of their work. In hairdressing courses, assessors demonstrate skills such as point cutting and using appropriate tension when sectioning and cutting hair. Level 2 hair apprentices understand that if they hold and cut hair at a 90-degree angle, it creates a long-layered effect. Level 3 content creator apprentices understand and can successfully apply the aspects of design that influence the appeal of their media posts. Consequently, apprentices swiftly increase their commercial viability and usefulness in their salons.

Assessors teach their lessons skilfully. They frequently use questioning, role play and demonstrations to check apprentices' understanding. Assessors of level 2 hair ask apprentices to explain the reasons for the cutting angles and techniques they use. Apprentices explain their strategies, including how they will lead to the desired outcome, confidently. Assessors introduce industry timings into the tasks hair and beauty apprentices complete. Apprentices learn the importance of completing appointments to a high standard and within the allocated time. Functional skills assessors ensure that apprentices have a good examination technique. Apprentices understand the attention to detail needed when labelling the axes on a graph, and

they ensure that it has a title, to avoid losing marks. As a result, apprentices are prepared appropriately for their final assessments.

Most assessors provide helpful feedback to apprentices. Assessors take time to correct misconceptions. Apprentices reflect thoroughly on their assessments and take time to consider how they might improve their treatments and services. As a result, apprentices know what they do well and what they need to do to improve. However, assessors on the newly established level 3 content creator programme provide apprentices with minimal feedback. As a result, apprentices miss opportunities for reflection and improvement at an early stage in their course.

Apprentices produce high standards of written work and communicate effectively in the salon environment. In hairdressing and beauty courses, assessors routinely correct apprentices' spelling and punctuation when completing reflections and learning logs. Assessors develop apprentices' understanding of how to use technical terms accurately. Level 2 hair apprentices understand and use appropriate terms, such as scalp braids and twists. As a result, they become more confident in completing client consultation forms.

Assessors communicate effectively with employers. Assessors ensure that apprentices' training at the academies aligns closely with what apprentices do at work. Where there are gaps in apprentices' knowledge, employers provide opportunities for apprentices to remedy this in their salons. However, apprentices are not always clear about the aspects of their knowledge and skills they need to improve as a result of their learning reviews. Too few assessors provide sufficient detail on the skills and knowledge apprentices have developed or those that they need to improve.

Leaders have not ensured that the arrangements for assessing the quality of teaching and learning are effective. Managers frequently observe assessors' teaching and provide feedback. However, feedback focuses too much on compliance with the qualification requirements and not enough on the development of assessors' teaching skills. As a result, assessors do not know the areas of their teaching they need to improve.

Leaders do not ensure that apprentices have a thorough knowledge of the range of careers options available to them. Apprentices attend additional activities such as high-profile competitions and trade shows. These activities help to develop apprentices' wider awareness of hairdressing and beauty careers. However, assessors do not develop apprentices' awareness of the transferable skills for work they gain and how these may also apply to different industries and job roles.

Apprentices become respectful citizens. They consider the views of others and show respect to their peers and members of the public with whom they interact daily. Apprentices have a good understanding of fundamental British values. Apprentices apply these values in their work. Hair and beauty apprentices can explain the importance of meeting the needs of clients who use a wheelchair to access their

services. Content creator apprentices understand the importance of observing copyright law when posting media to online platforms.

Assessors provide effective training to apprentices about adopting a healthy lifestyle at work and in their personal lives. Hair and beauty apprentices know that they must distribute their weight evenly during long client sessions to reduce aches, pains and tiredness. Beauty apprentices know the importance of having a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. However, too few apprentices have a developed understanding of the features of healthy personal relationships.

Leaders have been too slow to implement effective governance arrangements. Leaders have recently recruited governors with extensive experience in education and the hair and beauty sectors. However, governors have only met once since these arrangements have been established. As a result, it is too early to assess the impact of governance on improving the quality and enhancing the effectiveness of the provision.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices feel safe when they attend training and at work. Leaders and managers have established an effective culture of safeguarding. Designated safeguarding officers (DSOs) are appropriately trained for their roles. They keep detailed records of the safeguarding referrals they receive. As a result, DSOs swiftly refer apprentices to external agencies to provide the targeted support apprentices need.

Leaders access and use local crime and risk data to produce useful, site-specific risk assessments for each of the academy centres where learning takes place. Apprentices understand the risks associated with radicalisation and the impact of extremist behaviours. They know how to keep themselves and others safe at work and in their everyday lives. Apprentices know that, when they work late, they are to walk home in pairs to safeguard each other.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders must ensure that apprentices' reviews are effective in enabling apprentices to assess their progress in all aspects of the apprenticeship curriculum.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices receive planned, ongoing, high-quality impartial careers advice and guidance so that apprentices know the wide range of career options available to them.
- Leaders and managers must develop effective arrangements to evaluate assessors' teaching skills so that they can action any training required.

- Leaders need to ensure that the newly established governance arrangements challenge them effectively to continually improve the quality and effectiveness of education and training at ATS.

## Provider details

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<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Stuart Stott
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent Learning Provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	HAHA Training Ltd Mike Taylor

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief operations 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

Robert Bamford, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ruth Harrison	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Marshall-Slater	Ofsted Inspector
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