

Inspection of Cedars Training Academy Limited

Inspection dates:

5 to 7 March 2024

Overall effectiveness**Good**

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Cedars Training Academy Limited (Cedars) was previously known as Cedars Health and Beauty Centres Limited at the time of the monitoring visit in September 2022. In March 2022 it became part of a wider group of providers called High Ridge Training. The group shares many services, such as finance, human resources, staff training and quality. Cedars has been offering training since 2015 and joined the register of apprenticeship providers in June 2022. It offers apprenticeship standards in the beauty sector and enrolled its first apprentices in September 2023.

At the time of the inspection there were 23 apprentices. Around half were studying level 3 wellbeing and holistic therapy, just under a half were studying level 2 beauty therapy, and the remaining apprentices were studying level 3 advanced beauty therapy. Around half of the apprentices were aged 16 to 18.

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

Apprentices enjoy the training they receive from well-qualified and experienced tutors in high-quality, industry-standard facilities. Tutors use their knowledge well to ensure that apprentices are trained in a range of techniques and products to carry out treatments to high standards. As a result, apprentices develop the confidence to treat clients in their workplaces from the early stages of their apprenticeship and quickly become highly valued by their employers.

Apprentices demonstrate a high level of commitment to their learning. They attend well and are motivated to complete their studies. Tutors teach apprentices in small groups and provide useful one-to-one support. This enables apprentices and tutors to get to know each other well. Tutors foster a positive and supportive learning environment. They encourage apprentices to be curious and to share their experiences. As a result, apprentices often ask interesting questions, such as how to adapt treatments for clients with specific medical conditions, to further their understanding.

Apprentices feel safe and well supported. Employers put appropriate measures in place for those aged 16 to 18, such as not working alone, to keep them safe. Tutors teach apprentices about local risks in a way that relates well to their lives and their work. For example, tutors teach apprentices about animal welfare and animal rights activists in relation to the Cheltenham races. They then discuss the ethical considerations of the products they use at work.

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

Leaders and managers design curriculums that meet the needs of local businesses and apprentices well. They work collaboratively with employers of salons and spas to design bespoke programmes. They carefully ensure that apprentices learn different ways to perform treatments, such as massage, to include the specific requirements of their employers. This ensures apprentices develop wider knowledge and skills that prepare them well for their futures.

Leaders and managers ensure that employers are committed to their apprentices' training. They agree a logically sequenced training plan to ensure apprentices practise their new learning at work. For example, level 2 beauty tutors teach apprentices facial massage techniques and the standards needed. Apprentices then practise these at work, with the support of their workplace mentors. As a result, apprentices quickly become fluent in these skills.

Employers, tutors and apprentices provide feedback on the progress that apprentices make in learning the curriculum. However, discussions do not take place at the same time between all the people involved in the training. This means that the coordination of on- and off-the-job training is not as effective as it could be, particularly if there are later changes to the planned training schedule. A small minority of apprentices feel frustrated when plans change, and they become unsure

how their training will link together. This is most often because the tutors communicate directly with the employer, rather than the apprentice's workplace mentor. The mentor therefore does not always have the information they need to best support the apprentice in their training.

Tutors plan training to enable apprentices to build their knowledge and skills over time. For example, level 3 wellbeing and holistic therapy tutors build their teaching of anatomy and physiology incrementally as apprentices learn about different massage techniques. They relate the theory to the practical applications well. Tutors then teach a range of ways to adapt the techniques learned for specific groups of clients, such as those with cancer. Tutors maintain high expectations of apprentices throughout their training. They reinforce the fundamental principles of client care, hygienic practices and health and safety, including maintaining good posture, throughout the apprenticeship.

Tutors model high standards well, through well-paced practical demonstrations and activities. They give detailed explanations and ask meaningful questions to deepen apprentices' understanding. For example, tutors demonstrate and explain how to perform foot massages using a range of mediums and hand techniques. They pose challenging questions to identify contraindications and how to resolve them. As a result, apprentices learn industry standards effectively.

Tutors plan practical assessments well to ensure apprentices have time to embed their new learning into long-term memory. Tutors check what apprentices know and can do before moving on to new topics. They provide additional one-to-one support for apprentices who need additional help on specific topics. Tutors provide useful verbal feedback to apprentices throughout practical activities. This helps apprentices know what they need to do to improve.

Tutors plan written assessments for apprentices, but they do not ensure that apprentices complete these promptly. Therefore, apprentices do not get the timely feedback they need from tutors on their learning of theoretical content. This means that apprentices are under pressure to revisit and complete theory work as they approach the end of their apprenticeship.

In addition, tutors do not challenge apprentices sufficiently to produce higher-quality written work. Tutors do not give apprentices enough feedback to help them to improve the quality of their spelling, grammar and sentence construction.

Leaders and managers ensure that the small number of apprentices who need qualifications in English and mathematics are taught these subjects by an experienced and well-qualified tutor. Apprentices attend lessons in small groups or on an individual basis. They find the lessons and the feedback they receive useful in helping them develop the knowledge and skills they need to sit their assessments.

Tutors prepare apprentices well for the assessments at the end of the apprenticeship. Apprentices know what is expected of them. Tutors ensure apprentices practise and develop mastery of their skills before taking their final

assessments. As a result, all of the small cohort of level 2 beauty apprentices who have completed their apprenticeship so far have passed first time, and around half have achieved distinction grades. Almost all apprentices have remained on their programmes and are on target to complete their apprenticeships.

Leaders and managers work effectively with employers to ensure that apprentices become skilled and valuable employees. Most apprentices aim to stay with their employers. Of those who have completed their apprenticeship, all have secured permanent roles, and a few have progressed from a level 2 to level 3 apprenticeship. Apprentices understand the options available to them in their current employment and for further training. However, leaders and managers have not ensured that apprentices know all the options available to them for future careers. The guidance apprentices receive from tutors does not provide a broad enough view.

Tutors carefully plan and teach a wide range of topics that broaden apprentices' understanding of life in modern Britain, such as knife crime, food banks, domestic violence and gambling. Apprentices enjoy discussing these topics and listening respectfully to each other's views. However, tutors do not teach apprentices aged 16 to 18 additional age-appropriate topics relevant to them, such as sexual health and consent.

Leaders and managers have a close oversight of the quality of their provision. They ensure that their provision meets the principals and requirements of apprenticeships. They identify accurately their main strengths and areas for improvement. They put in place suitable actions to make improvements and review the impact of their actions monthly. As a result, leaders and managers make continual improvements that benefit apprentices. For example, leaders introduced a digital platform for apprentices to store their work and record their achievements and feedback. This enables employers and tutors to monitor the progress apprentices make more efficiently and to intervene more rapidly if required.

Leaders are highly considerate of staff and actively seek ways to encourage and improve well-being. They listen to staff views and act on their suggestions, such as introducing monthly wellness sessions. They motivate staff effectively, including through the use of incentives and recognition.

Managers at Cedars produce detailed and useful reports that they share with leaders of High Ridge, who provide effective scrutiny and oversight. However, leaders rightly recognise the further advantages that external scrutiny would provide for their organisation.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Improve the communication between workplace mentors, tutors and apprentices to ensure that on- and off-the-job training is aligned well, at all stages of the apprenticeship.
- Improve the quality and timeliness of the feedback tutors provide to apprentices on their theoretical and written work.
- Broaden the careers advice and guidance that apprentices receive so they are fully aware of the range of options available to them at the end of their apprenticeship.

Provider details

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Unique reference number | 2674141 |
| Address | 26 Station Road Gloucester GL1 1EW |
| Contact number | 01452 688698 |
| Website | https://www.cedarstrainingacademy.co.uk |
| Principal, CEO or equivalent | Charlotte White |
| Provider type | Independent learning provider |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Main subcontractors | None |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, 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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| Lowenna Bradley, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Ruth Harrison | Ofsted Inspector |
| Gemma Burgess | Ofsted Inspector |

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