

Inspection of Evolve Academy Ltd

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Evolve Academy Limited (Evolve Academy) received its first publicly funded contract for apprenticeship training in February 2020. Prior to this, it delivered apprenticeships as a subcontractor. Evolve Academy started to deliver traineeships to learners in January 2022. It is an independent learning provider that provides education and training in the hairdressing and barbering sectors.

At the time of the inspection, Evolve Academy had 79 apprentices and eight traineeship learners aged 16 to 19. Around three quarters of apprentices are aged 16 to 18. The provider offers two standards-based apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3. Most apprentices study the level 2 hair professional and the rest follow the level 3 advanced and creative hair professional apprenticeship. Learners study the level 1 introduction to hairdressing. The provider works with employers in Greater Manchester in the north west of England.

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

Apprentices and learners enjoy their programmes and are proud to be part of the Evolve Academy family. They are motivated to succeed on their courses. Apprentices and learners come into the academy on their days off to learn new techniques, such as hair braiding. They feel well supported and are comfortable to ask staff for help.

Apprentices and learners develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours on their programmes. Level 3 apprentices carry out colour correction and precision cutting techniques, such as razor cutting. Learners blow dry and style hair confidently to meet their clients' expectations. Apprentices and learners become trusted and skilled team members at work.

Apprentices and learners take part in charitable fundraising and volunteering activities. They develop wider interests, and a greater understanding of others' needs. Apprentices raise money for local hospices, breast cancer and mental health charities. They also volunteer in care homes.

Apprentices and learners know how to report safeguarding concerns. They follow safe working practices when using equipment such as razors and scissors. Apprentices and learners keep their clients safe while in the salon. Not all apprentices and learners know how to keep themselves safe online.

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

Leaders have established a friendly, happy and nurturing environment. Apprentices and learners study in a high-quality, well-equipped salon environment at the academy. They develop their confidence and have positive attitudes to their learning. Apprentices are highly professional when advising clients about colours or cuts. Learners feel a sense of pride and self-belief when recommending products to clients.

Leaders have a carefully considered curriculum that meets the needs of apprentices, learners and employers. They work with local employers to train young people and adults to work in the hairdressing and barbering sector. Employers routinely teach masterclasses to apprentices, including hair extensions and type 4 hair, which better prepares them for their next steps. Apprentices develop the skills they need to be successful at work. Most learners progress on to apprenticeships. Most apprentices remain in employment after completing their programmes.

Apprentices and learners benefit from a high-quality of education. Trainers are experienced and suitably qualified hairdressing professionals. They take part in frequent professional development, such as attending cutting and colouring courses. Trainers undertake regular updating of their teaching practice, including questioning techniques and learning theories.

Most trainers use a variety of effective teaching strategies to ensure that apprentices know more and can remember more over time. They use assessment, such as skills tests and quizzes, to identify gaps in apprentices' and learners' knowledge and to inform their teaching. Level 3 apprentices recall with ease the cutting theory they have previously learned in relation to over direction and disconnection. Most apprentices and learners retain information in their long-term memories. However, leaders do not always use the information about apprentices' and learners' starting points to tailor the curriculum to meet their individual needs. Trainers do not target apprentices to achieve high grades. They do not challenge apprentices and learners to achieve their full potential.

Leaders order the curriculum in a way that learners and apprentices build their knowledge, skills and behaviours over time in a meaningful way. Level 2 hair professional apprentices begin by learning about the science of setting and dressing hair. They move on to a uniform layer and short graduation cut. Finally, apprentices learn more complex techniques, such as perming. Leaders acknowledge that they do not always plan or coordinate on- and off-the-job training so that apprentices and learners can practise and grasp what they have learned. This means that they do not always make as rapid progress on their programme as they could.

Apprentices and learners develop their English and mathematical skills. Level 3 apprentices speak confidently in a business-like, yet friendly, manner to their clients. They calculate accurate ratios when mixing colours.

Trainers deliver a personal development curriculum to apprentices that includes fundamental British values, safeguarding, online safety, and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Leaders, however, do not design this curriculum to reflect the context of the hairdressing industry or where apprentices live and work. Trainers do not systematically revisit the personal development topics, which means that apprentices do not always remember what they have learned.

Apprentices and learners benefit from sound initial advice and guidance. Staff support them to produce suitable applications to secure an employer or work experience placement. Learners on traineeship programmes explore career progression as part of their employability and interview modules. Leaders do not ensure that all apprentices benefit from high-quality, independent careers guidance.

Governors provide appropriate scrutiny and challenge to leaders, including changes to the curriculum and staff performance. They question leaders on the arrangements in place to ensure that apprentices who have fallen behind catch up.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff follow appropriate procedures when reporting safeguarding concerns. Staff report concerns promptly to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The DSL has established useful links with external partners, such as the local area

designated officer. They ensure that safeguarding records are kept up to date and are sequenced chronologically.

Apprentices and learners have access to a range of resources on topics such as drug and alcohol misuse and bullying. Staff hold meetings regularly with apprentices and learners who have any well-being concerns.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that apprentices and learners achieve their full potential by using information on their starting points to tailor the curriculum to meet their individual needs, plan learning that coordinates on- and off-the-job training effectively, and target apprentices to achieve high grades.
- Leaders should design the personal development curriculum so that apprentices remember what they have learned and understand the context of their learning in relation to where they live and work and the hairdressing and barbering professions.
- Leaders should provide high-quality, independent careers guidance so that apprentices understand the range of career opportunities available to them.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2626842
Address	2 New George Street Manchester M4 4AE
Contact number	0161 820 2015
Website	https://evolveacademy.org/
Chief executive	Martin Harkness
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 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

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