

Michael John Academy

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

26–29 March 2019

Overall effectiveness			Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate	16 to 19 study programmes	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate	Apprenticeships	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate		
Outcomes for learners	Inadequate		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Good

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate provider

- Governance is poor. Insufficient oversight by board members has resulted in a significant decline in the quality of provision.
- Management of apprenticeships is weak. Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that the principles and requirements of apprenticeship programmes are met.
- Leaders and managers have failed to identify and reverse the significant decline in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection.
- Arrangements for impartial careers information, advice and guidance are ineffective. As a result, apprentices and learners do not have sufficient information and guidance to enable them to consider their future options.
- Planning for learning is ineffective. Tutors and trainers do not use information about apprentices' and learners' prior knowledge, skills and experience well enough to plan learning.
- Vocational tutors and trainers do not develop apprentices' and learners' English and mathematical knowledge and skills well enough.
- The proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship successfully and by the planned end date is low and declining.
- The proportion of study programme learners who move into apprenticeships, further learning or employment is too low.
- Very few apprentices, on completing their apprenticeship at level 2, move on to programmes at higher levels or into employment.
- Apprentices and learners do not have a good enough understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe from the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Safeguarding is ineffective.

The provider has the following strengths

- Learners benefit from meaningful and relevant work experience placements. Consequently, most study programme learners develop effective skills in hairdressing and beauty therapy.
- Apprentices' and learners' behaviour is good. They demonstrate tolerance and respect for each other, their tutors, assessors, employers and clients.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Michael John Academy (MJA) is a privately owned, independent learning provider based in Liverpool and Wirral. MJA specialises in apprenticeships in hairdressing, barbering and beauty therapy. MJA works with salons across Liverpool, Wirral, Chester and south-west Lancashire. MJA also delivers study programmes in hairdressing and make-up at level 2. Two adult learners are funded through advanced learning loans. The provider has no subcontracted provision.
- Approximately 1,416,800 people live in Merseyside. Just under one third of the working-age population have qualifications at level 4 or above. This is lower than the regional and national averages. The proportion of learners in Merseyside who achieve five or more GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (formerly A* to C), including in English and mathematics, is lower than the regional and national averages. Levels of unemployment, at 3.8%, are lower than the regional and national averages.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Members of the board must improve governance urgently, by:
 - taking swift action to gain a secure oversight of the quality of provision for apprentices and learners
 - holding senior leaders to account for the quality of provision
 - arranging immediately suitable training for the designated safeguarding lead, deputy lead and all staff so that they have the knowledge, skills and qualifications to carry out their safeguarding roles and responsibilities effectively.
- Senior leaders must quickly improve the effectiveness of leadership and management and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - enabling apprentices and learners to make good progress and increasing significantly the proportion that achieve their study programme or their apprenticeship by the planned end date
 - ensuring that the learning environments in the training academy meet industry standards so that apprentices and learners are prepared well for working in the hairdressing and beauty therapy industry
 - ensuring that all tutors and trainers use the information on apprentices' and learners' starting points to plan learning more effectively so that apprentices and learners build systematically on their knowledge and skills so that they can make the progress of which they are capable
 - ensuring that vocational trainers and tutors develop effectively apprentices' and learners' English and mathematical knowledge and skills in classes
 - ensuring that apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training
 - developing the knowledge and skills of tutors and trainers so that they can improve

swiftly the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their subject areas.

- Provide impartial careers information, advice and guidance to prepare apprentices and learners for their next steps and future careers.
- Extend and reinforce apprentices' and learners' knowledge and understanding of the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism to themselves and others.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Directors, senior leaders and managers have not maintained the quality of education and training that apprentices and learners receive since the previous inspection. The quality of apprenticeships and 16 to 19 study programmes is inadequate.
- Directors and senior leaders have failed to ensure that the provision meets the principles and requirements of apprenticeship programmes. They do not have sufficient oversight of the management of the apprenticeship programmes. They fail to identify or take the necessary actions when apprentices do not receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training. Too many apprentices leave their programme early. Consequently, too few apprentices achieve their qualification by the planned end date.
- Senior leaders and managers do not have an accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They fail to identify key weaknesses that exist and are too positive about the strengths. The quality improvement plan does not logically link to the self-assessment report. As a result, senior leaders do not have clear targets against which to measure the impact of quality improvement actions.
- Quality assurance processes are ineffective. Senior leaders and managers do not use the information from learning walks or lesson observations to plan continuing professional development that improves tutors' and trainers' professional practice. Feedback from the observation of teaching, learning and assessment is too descriptive. It does not evaluate the impact of teaching on learning and assessment. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has declined significantly since the previous inspection.
- Performance management is weak. Senior leaders and managers do not have rigorous systems in place to monitor tutors' and trainers' performance in their job role. For example, tutors' and trainers' performance reviews are too infrequent. Tutors and trainers do not have clear performance targets. Consequently, tutors and trainers have insufficient knowledge of their strengths and what they need to do to improve their performance.
- MJA offers courses in the hairdressing and beauty therapy sector that are aligned appropriately to local and regional skills needs. Directors, senior leaders and managers have a good understanding of the current fashion trends in the sector and in the local areas in which they operate. In 2017/18, senior leaders and managers reviewed the 16 to 19 study programmes. They changed the curriculum and qualifications in hairdressing and make-up to meet the needs of learners more successfully. It is too early to judge the impact of this change.
- Senior leaders support tutors and trainers effectively in preparation for the introduction of standards-based apprenticeships.
- Senior leaders, managers and staff create a culture of tolerance and respect. Apprentices and learners work respectfully with each other, their tutors and trainers and with clients from diverse backgrounds in salons and in the academy.

The governance of the provider

- Governance is poor. The board consists of the chief executive officer and two company directors. There is no external oversight that challenges or scrutinises the quality of the teaching and assessment that MJA provides.
- Board members have failed to set clear targets with senior leaders against which to monitor the progress of apprentices and learners. Consequently, there has been a significant decline in the quality of teaching and assessment that apprentices and learners receive.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding is ineffective.
- Directors, senior leaders and board members have failed to ensure that the designated safeguarding lead and deputy lead have sufficient training to carry out their roles effectively. Procedures for recording concerns raised and actions taken are not followed rigorously.
- Staff have received training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. However, there are no established links with the local safeguarding board or local police. Staff do not receive update training or information on local safeguarding risks to help them keep learners and apprentices safe. Board members do not receive information about safeguarding concerns.
- Apprentices and learners feel safe. However, leaders and managers have failed to develop a culture in which tutors and trainers follow appropriate procedures for recognising and reporting concerns about the safety and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults.
- Apprentices and learners do not have a good enough understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. As a result, they are not aware of the potential risks and vulnerabilities they face in their personal and working lives. Apprentices and learners know how to keep themselves safe online and when using social media.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Managers place too little emphasis on developing tutors' skills in teaching, learning and assessment. Managers do not focus sufficiently on the impact that teaching has on learning and assessment, or the progress that apprentices and learners make. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has declined significantly since the previous inspection.
- Staff do not make effective use of learners' prior knowledge, skills and experience when planning learning programmes. Too often, all learners learn the same topic at the same pace, regardless of whether they have already covered the topic before. This slows the progress of those who are capable of moving on at a faster pace. Apprentices who transfer to MJA from other providers or who have prior experience, such as weekend and evening work in hairdressing and beauty therapy salons, often complete work that is too easy for them.
- Tutors do not have high enough expectations of study programme learners, who do not develop good study habits. For example, learners do not come to lessons prepared to

take notes. They rely on their tutors to provide them with pens and worksheets.

- Feedback to apprentices and learners following assessment does not help them to improve their written communication. For example, tutors oversee the completion of treatment record cards for beauty therapy but do not correct any of the errors in technical terminology or spelling. Consequently, learners repeat their mistakes.
- Learning environments in the training academy do not reflect current hairdressing and beauty therapy industry standards. The cleanliness of the beauty therapy facilities is below industry requirements. For example, cupboards, trolleys and treatment couches are stained and work station cleaning at the end of lessons is not appropriately checked by tutors and assessors. This means that learners do not develop the high hygiene standards expected in the hairdressing and beauty industry.
- Apprentices' and learners' progress reviews do not include effective target setting. Too often, targets are narrowly focused on the completion of tasks. Tutors and assessors do not use reviews or targets to deepen knowledge and understanding of the topics apprentices and learners study.
- Staff do not use their considerable experience and qualifications sufficiently to plan good-quality learning sessions. The examples they use in teaching and in demonstrating new concepts do not reflect the most relevant and up-to-date hairdressing and beauty therapy practices. Consequently, apprentices and learners do not receive good preparation to work in the industry.
- Managers' expectations of the quality of learners' written work are too low. Clients' treatment plans, which record the hairdressing and beauty treatments they receive, lack basic information. As a result, learners do not fully record the practical skills they have acquired. The quality of their written work is basic and does not reflect what they can do in practice.
- Support for apprentices and learners who have additional learning needs is weak. The planning of support is not systematic; nor is it reviewed appropriately. As a result, apprentices and learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Apprentices and learners develop appropriate new knowledge and skills that meet the requirements of the qualifications they take. For example, learners complete eyebrow tinting with confidence. Apprentices carry out 'curly blow' hairstyles according to industry standards. During a practical 'hair-up' learning session, the tutor questioned apprentices on a range of subjects, covering topics such as ethics, respect and tolerance. Apprentices gave good examples of how treatments can be adapted to meet clients' cultural and religious needs.
- Staff who provide specialised teaching in English and mathematics ensure that learners are placed on the correct English and/or mathematics course. As a result, learners make good progress in preparing for their functional skills examinations, particularly in mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

- Staff are unable to keep apprentices and learners safe because they do not follow appropriate procedures for recognising and reporting concerns about the safety and welfare of apprentices and learners.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are weak. Apprentices and learners do not benefit from independent information, advice and guidance that inspire and motivate them to fulfil their potential. As a result, apprentices and learners do not give full consideration to the full range of options that are open to them in the future.
- Apprentices and learners have too narrow an understanding of British values. They are unable to relate to how matters such as democracy and personal liberty relate to them both personally and professionally.
- Apprentices and learners do not have a good enough understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe from the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Apprentices develop and improve their oral communication skills because employers set high expectations and coach apprentices to improve their oral communication. For example, apprentices in hairdressing and beauty therapy salons greet clients with high levels of professionalism.
- Apprentices and learners are proud of the skills they develop. For example, they post examples of the work they are particularly proud of on MJA's social media account.
- Apprentices and learners show high levels of respect for each other, their tutors, assessors and visitors. Most apprentices and learners take pride in their personal appearance and are suitably presented for the workplace.
- Apprentices and learners develop their knowledge, skills and confidence because of their on-the-job training and work experience. Learners on study programmes benefit from meaningful external work experience placements from which a minority of learners gain apprenticeships. Apprentices benefit from additional on-the-job training such as in tanning, microblading and product knowledge, which supports the development of their practical skills.

Outcomes for learners

Inadequate

- The proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship successfully, and by the planned end date, is low and declining. For those apprentices who remain on programme, a significant majority make slow progress.
- Leaders and managers have taken insufficient action to ensure that all apprentices and learners achieve their qualifications. Too many apprentices leave their programmes early and do not complete their programme. Apprentices on programmes at level 2 do not achieve as well those on programmes at level 3. There are significant differences in achievement rates between apprenticeship pathways. For example, while achievement on hairdressing programmes is high, in barbering it is particularly low. Learners' in-year achievement in make-up is very high, while in hairdressing it is low.
- The proportion of learners who move into apprenticeships, further learning or employment is low. A very small minority of apprentices on completion of their apprenticeship move on to programmes at a higher level.

- The proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications is low. This is because too many learners leave their programmes early. Although learner retention has improved significantly on study programmes, it is still too low.
- Learners' functional skills achievements have improved. All learners who take functional skills mathematics examinations at level 2 achieve their qualification. The majority of learners pass their functional skills qualifications at the first attempt.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Inadequate

- Thirty-seven learners are enrolled on study programmes. This is approximately one third of the provision. All learners are enrolled on programmes at level 2 in hairdressing or make-up.
- Too many teachers fail to inspire and enthuse learners. Consequently, learners, especially the most able, make slow progress and do not achieve as well as they could. Learners on make-up programmes do not develop industry-standard practices. A small minority of learners create low-level disruption in tutorials, which results in slow progress for most learners. Learners submit poor-quality work, including poor-quality client treatment plans and record cards.
- Tutors do not check or correct learners' work or help learners develop a deeper understanding of the subject content. Tutors fail to provide feedback on learners' work. They do not identify what learners need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Tutors fail to develop learners' written and oral English in vocational lessons. Too many learners make errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar that are not checked and corrected routinely. Consequently, they continue to make the same mistakes. Learners also make errors in the use of technical or specialist terms, such as 'Caucasian' or 'sebaceous'.
- Learners with additional learning needs do not receive effective support. Tutors identify swiftly learners' additional needs in English and/or mathematics, but they do not provide appropriate support in lessons.
- Leaders, managers and tutors do not ensure that learners receive adequate careers information, advice and guidance. As a consequence, learners are not sufficiently prepared for their next steps and too few move into apprenticeships, higher level programmes or employment.
- Learners' understanding of British values is limited to how the values of respect and cultural diversity apply to them at work. They are unaware of how values such as the rule of law apply in hairdressing and beauty therapy and in their wider lives.
- Learners have a rudimentary knowledge and understanding of issues such as equality and diversity and health and safety. They can apply their knowledge to skin and hair types when working with clients of different ethnic backgrounds. Tutors do not broaden or deepen learners' understanding of the wider issues beyond salon requirements.
- Learners' attendance remains too low and does not meet the standard expected by the provider. Too many learners attend less than 75% of lessons. As a result, too many

learners do not develop the knowledge and skills they need for employment. Tutors do not routinely challenge poor punctuality.

- Leaders and managers ensure that learners are quickly put onto the correct level of functional skills programmes. Many learners achieve functional skills qualifications quickly. Learners' results in mathematics are better than their results in English. In mathematics lessons, learners develop their knowledge and skills effectively. As a result, they develop confidence and are able to apply their learning when using mathematics in the salon.
- Learners benefit from appropriate enrichment activities that complement their programmes. For example, learners act as brand ambassadors for MJA. Additionally, a range of guest speakers provide good additional learning. For example, specialist external speakers discuss topics such as domestic violence and sexual health with learners, which raises their awareness of how to keep themselves healthy.
- Learners develop their knowledge and skills in the academy salons and on work experience placements. For example, hairdressing learners have improved their dexterity, braiding and 'hair-up' skills. Learners on make-up courses work confidently when tinting eyebrows and applying make-up. They develop knowledge, skills and confidence when using electrical equipment on the hair and specialist products on the skin. A few learners gain apprenticeships directly from their work placements.
- Learners take pride in their practical work. They upload pictures of hairstyles and beauty treatments on MJA's social media account to show their practical work.
- Learners know how to stay safe online, for example when using email and social media. They have a very basic understanding of radicalisation and extremism and how these apply to working in the hairdressing and beauty therapy industries.

Apprenticeships

Inadequate

- Around two thirds of the provider's learners are apprentices. There are 88 apprentices on apprenticeship frameworks at levels 2 and 3 in hairdressing, barbering and beauty therapy.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprenticeship principles are met. They do not plan off-the-job training effectively. Apprentices do not receive sufficient off-the-job training. Off-the-job training is frequently interrupted by apprentices' usual work duties.
- Identification of apprentices' starting points is poor. Trainers fail to consider apprentices' knowledge, skills and prior experience when planning programmes. Apprentices who transfer to MJA from other providers re-start the programme. They do not build on relevant prior knowledge, skills and experience.
- Trainers do not plan programmes to meet the needs of individual apprentices. As a result, too many apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable. Too few apprentices demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding at the appropriate level.
- Apprentices develop their practical skills at a faster pace than their theoretical knowledge. This means that they do not always understand how and why they carry out particular procedures.
- Trainers do not have the necessary knowledge, skills and qualifications to support the development of apprentices' English and mathematical skills. As a result, apprentices do

not develop the English and mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding they need to develop their English and mathematics to higher levels.

- Trainers do not provide feedback routinely to apprentices to help them to improve their written English. As a result, apprentices continue to make the same mistakes. For example, they frequently misspell words such as 'clients', 'mousse' and 'petrissage'.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices benefit from impartial careers information, advice and guidance to help prepare them for their next steps. Apprentices on programmes at level 3 do not know how to progress to higher levels. Very few apprentices, on completing their apprenticeship at level 2, move on to programmes at higher levels or into employment.
- Too few apprentices have sufficient understanding of the 'Prevent' duty, risks in their local community and their responsibilities under the duty. They do not have an adequate awareness of the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Apprentices' knowledge of British values is limited to respecting clients. They are not aware of the breadth of the values and their importance in society and the workplace.
- Trainers work closely with employers. They help employers select optional units with apprentices that meet apprentices' and employers' specific business needs. For example, on hairdressing frameworks, employers select units in promoting additional products, perming and neutralising hair, or plaiting and twisting hair to suit customers' trends and requirements.
- Trainers promote equality and diversity effectively in their one-to-one training sessions with apprentices. For example, apprentices develop a good understanding of different clients' needs and adapt treatments to meet the requirements of ethnically diverse clients. They know the potential contraindications of, and problems with, different treatments on different skin types, and advise clients accordingly.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50166
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	162
Chief Executive Officer	Shaun McNamara
Telephone number	0151 708 7703/0151 708 8558
Website	www.michaeljohnacademy.com

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	0	0	37	0	0	2	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	44	11	26	7	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the strategic operations manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

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Elaine Price	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alison Gray	Ofsted Inspector
Jackie Moores	Ofsted Inspector
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