

# Archway Academy Limited

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 50442

**Name of lead inspector:** Maria Navarro HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 16 December 2011

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** 86 Watery Lane Middleway  
Bordesley  
Birmingham  
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**Telephone number:** 0121 7727772

## Information about the provider

1. Archway Academy Limited (Archway) is a private education and training organisation established in 2004, in Bordesley, east Birmingham. Its training provision is funded through the Birmingham Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and it recruits its learners from the local community. The managing director is supported by the head of department and the quality improvement officer. There are 13 staff in total, six of whom are directly involved in training and assessment.
2. Archway delivers a Foundation Learning programme for young learners aged 16 to 19. Most learners join the programme through self-referral or through Connexions. Learners can work towards qualifications in information and communication technology (ICT), functional skills in English and maths up to level 2, bricklaying, carpentry, business administration, art and hospitality. They can also obtain employability skills and citizenship qualifications. The provider also offers a vocational training programme aimed at young learners aged 14 to 16, as well as a programme of educational and emotional support for disaffected young learners on behalf of Worcestershire County Council. Archway subcontracts with Inspire Training to deliver the citizenship programme. Government funded training represents 45% of the total training provided by Archway.
3. At the time of the inspection, there were 41 learners on the Foundation Learning programme, of which 27 were male and 14 female. These learners include young offenders and young people with a wide range of emotional, behavioural and social needs. The number of learners with recognised learning difficulties and/or disabilities such as dyslexia, Asperger's, autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has substantially increased since the last inspection and it now represents 30% of the learners.
4. The 2001 census indicated that Birmingham's minority ethnic groups represented approximately 30% of the total population, compared with 20% in the West Midlands and 9% nationally. At Archway, 70% of the current learners have a minority ethnic background. In 2010, the unemployment rate in Birmingham was 13% compared with 8% nationally. The majority of learners live in the Nechells ward within the Ladywood constituency. This is an area of high deprivation where the average weekly income is 40% lower than the average in the West Midlands region.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
<b>Provision for young learners:</b> Further education (age 16 to 18 years)	123 part-time learners

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Preparation for life and work	2

## Overall effectiveness

- Learners enjoy attending their lessons at Archway. Many of the learners achieve all their learning objectives. They achieve many qualifications at levels 1 and 2 in a short period of time. Learners make good progress with their courses and many progress to college or obtain employment. They develop good personal skills, such as communication skills, and increase their confidence levels. They feel safe at Archway and in the work placements they attend every week.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory overall. Many of the practical lessons are good and they provide varied activities which keep learners interested. However, not all teachers ensure that the quieter learners and the more able learners are participating well in lessons. Learners receive a satisfactory initial assessment of their needs. Archway offers a good selection of foundation courses and it delivers them in a very flexible way to meet the needs of each individual learner. The many good partnerships with other agencies and colleges benefit learners. Learners have good work placements and they receive very good support from Archway. Managers and staff understand learners' needs well and provide them with good advice on how to progress.
- Managers work hard to raise the aspirations of every learner and they focus well on keeping them safe. Archway has made many changes to improve the learning experience. Archway promotes and celebrates diversity well. It has increased the number of female learners in the academy and it ensures all

learners realise their full potential. The academy asks staff, learners, parents and carers, and employers for feedback and it acts quickly to improve the provision. However, there is a need to further develop the observations of teaching and learning to ensure that areas where tutors can improve the way they teach are identified.

## Main findings

- Learners achieve and progress well. The majority achieve their learning aims and many gain a high number of qualifications, including levels 1 and 2. Also, they enjoy attending their lessons, their attendance is high and they feel safe. They make good progress, particularly, into further education and employment.
- Learners' personal skills and confidence develop significantly. Very shy learners become able to speak out in class voluntarily or talk to unfamiliar people. Others are able to take on domestic tasks at home. Some have the confidence to get a Saturday job without additional help. All become more ambitious for themselves.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning in many lessons are good. However, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Teachers do not all possess the same levels of skill or experience and they do not receive enough guidance on how to improve. Assessment is satisfactory.
- Archway offers a good range of flexibly delivered foundation programmes in small groups to suit learners' abilities and needs. Contracted organisations provide skilled specialist courses. Learners have well-managed and monitored work experience placements with local employers sympathetic to the mission of the academy.
- Archway has developed strong partnerships that benefit learners. Many external agencies provide information and support for learners on health issues and the provider has good relationships with colleges in the community and works well with the youth offending teams.
- Advice and guidance for learners are good. Support from all staff is very good. Staff understand learners' needs well and have highly effective strategies to maximise their learning. Shared action plans for staff on specific aspects of individual learners' behaviour improve learning. Senior staff are very accessible to learners. Guidance on progression is good.
- The leadership at Archway displays a particularly strong vision and mission to raise learners' aspirations and achievement. There is good prioritisation of actions and objectives which have a direct and beneficial impact on the learners' experiences. There is a strong culture of respect in the organisation.
- Archway places a very effective focus on safeguarding learners. It applies its comprehensive safeguarding procedures to all its learners. All staff are vigilant with regard to safeguarding matters and communicate well any identified issues. Learners have a very good involvement in reviewing their own safeguarding. They further benefit from accredited training on safeguarding matters.

- Archway has taken effective actions to improve and develop the provision. It has invested in the building, enhanced its facilities and increased the number of classrooms. The extended curriculum, the development of specialist support and the increase in the number of tutors have all had a positive impact on the learning experience.
- The academy promotes equality of opportunity and diversity well. It has focused on offering access to the provision for all learners including the most disadvantaged and disengaged. Good monitoring of progress and achievement by different groups takes place and the provider has been successful in narrowing gaps in participation and achievement rates.
- Archway undertakes many activities to identify quality improvements in the provision. However, the teaching and learning observation system is insufficiently rigorous. Archway does not yet observe the teaching of its main contractor and it does not moderate its own observation grades.
- The self-assessment process is satisfactory. It now includes staff appropriately, utilises user feedback well and it makes good use of data to analyse the provision. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and the development plan reflects the identified strengths and areas for improvement.

### **What does Archway need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by developing staff teaching skills and identifying and sharing good practice in teaching and assessment.
- Further increase the rigour of the teaching and learning observation system by evaluating contractors' teaching, moderating the completed observations and by identifying areas for improvement that will have a substantial impact on the quality of learning.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- the friendly and welcoming staff at Archway
- the bricklaying programme
- the respect and patience teachers demonstrate with their learners
- the help Archway gives them by finding them work placements and jobs
- the fewer number of learners in the classrooms
- the way they choose their own lessons
- gaining new and useful skills in life.

#### **What learners would like to see improved:**

- some of the accommodation facilities
- the length of their breaks.

## **Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

### **What employers like:**

- the excellent communications with Archway
- the way the work placements prepare young learners for life and work.

### **What employers would like to see improved:**

- none reported.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

8. The provider has demonstrated that it has good capacity to make further improvements. Outcomes for learners are good. The number of learners in the foundation programme has doubled and, notably, the number of those with recognised learning difficulties and/or disabilities has substantially increased since the last inspection. Archway guides and supports learners well into a positive destination, particularly further education and employment, even in the current economic recession.
9. Archway has made good progress to address issues identified at the last inspection. It has extended the curriculum, increased the learning accommodation and resources and it now offers specialist support to learners. It has developed many quality improvement arrangements and it acts promptly on the feedback it gathers from its users. However, the teaching and learning observation system needs to be further developed. The self-assessment report is now fully inclusive of staff and largely accurate.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

10. Learners achieve and progress well. In 2010/11, over 85% of the learners achieved their learning aims. In the context of the current economic downturn, Archway prepares the learners well for employment by ensuring they achieve a good range of qualifications. Learners make good progress with their programmes, obtaining an average of six qualifications, and the majority achieve them at levels 1 and 2. The successful completion of English and maths, functional and information technology skills is good at 87%.
11. Learners enjoy attending their lessons at Archway and the time that it takes them to complete their learning programmes has become shorter. Their rate of progression to a positive destination has increased in the last two years and is now good. In particular, since 2008, the number of learners who progress into further education or employment has been considerably higher than the national average for other independent providers.
12. Learners develop their personal skills and confidence significantly. Very shy learners are able to speak out in class voluntarily or talk to unfamiliar people. Others can take on domestic tasks at home. Learners with an extreme fear of maths are happy to undertake the required calculations for practical tasks. For some, their increased confidence levels allow them to find a Saturday job without additional help.
13. Learners' behaviour and social skills quickly improve once they start their course and their attendance is good. Learners feel safe both at the academy and at the many work placements they are based in throughout the city. The standard of

their work is satisfactory. There are now no significant variations in the progress and achievement made by the different groups of learners.

## The quality of provision

## Grade 2

14. Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory overall. In the many good practical lessons learners are interested, involved and proudly take responsibility for their work. Activities meet their individual learning needs and extend their skills. Teachers integrate literacy and numeracy well into activities and pay good attention to health and safety. However, not all plan a stimulating variety of activities or make good use of ICT. Schemes of work often consist solely of the qualification specifications. Some lessons do not involve the quieter and the more able learners sufficiently. Assessment is satisfactory. Initial assessment is appropriate to the learners. Learners receive dyslexia screening and more detailed assessment as needed. Teachers give very positive and encouraging verbal feedback to learners throughout lessons. However, some progress reviews are not always fully recorded.
15. Archway offers a good range of flexibly delivered foundation courses in small groups to suit learners' abilities and needs. Contracted organisations provide skilled specialist additional courses. Most learners have well-managed and monitored weekly work experience placements with local, reputable employers sympathetic to the mission of the academy. Learners choose well their monthly outdoor enrichment activities with the guidance of their tutors in order to support the further development of their personal and social skills.
16. The provider has developed good partnerships in the community that benefit learners. Good links with several external agencies increase the learners' awareness of the implications of drug and alcohol misuse. Archway works closely with local colleges to ensure they can support their learners' specific needs when they progress onto their courses. Lecturers from Aston University visited learners recently to hold a history debate which contributed to the development of their analytical skills while stimulating their interest in progressing to university. Senior managers at Archway maintain good relationships with parents and carers, visiting regularly to update them on the progress their children are making.
17. Advice and guidance for learners are good. Support is very good. Provision is well planned to accommodate the large number of learners whose support or medical needs fluctuate throughout the day. Staff understand learners' needs well and have highly effective strategies to help them maximise their learning. The head of foundation is a learning disability specialist and designs action plans for staff on specific aspects of individual learners' behaviour. Learners needing time out are able to take it immediately. Leaders and managers are approachable and accessible at all times in ways that learners value greatly. Archway provides good guidance and encouragement to all learners to progress further.



## Leadership and management

## Grade 2

18. Archway has a particularly strong mission and vision to raise learners' aspirations and achievement. Leaders and tutors successfully encourage learners to take ownership of their learning and their future careers. Their strategy is closely aligned to local and regional needs and reflects a good understanding of the area's economic circumstances and knowledge of future job opportunities. During their appraisals, tutors agree appropriate but challenging targets for learners in relation to their progress and achievement, which they review frequently. Managers and staff utilise meetings well to ascertain the actions they need to take to continue supporting learners to fulfil their potential.
19. In the last two years, Archway has implemented many successful changes and taken initiatives to continue improving the provision. It has made a considerable investment in the building and its facilities, creating additional classrooms and providing computers for learners. It has extended the curriculum both in the vocational areas and in basic skills and it has increased the number of tutors that teach each learner, allowing for an easier transition for those learners who will progress to college. Learners can now choose their subjects of interest, becoming more responsible for their learning and they access specialist support for their learning needs.
20. The provider has placed a very effective focus on safeguarding all learners. Learners aged 16 and over greatly benefit from the comprehensive safeguarding procedures that Archway applies to its learners aged under 16. Their physical and emotional well-being has a high profile in its strategy, meetings and programme reviews. Learners are particularly well involved in reviewing their own safeguarding through learner forums that discuss safeguarding topics and risks. The older learners attend externally accredited training on safeguarding matters along with staff members.
21. Archway promotes equality of opportunity and diversity well by providing access for learners with a wide range of ability levels, emotional issues or health difficulties. Staff have a particularly good understanding of the diverse cultures attending the academy and they celebrate religious diversity well. Archway analyses the different patterns of attendance and achievement according to the different groups of learners in order to identify areas for improvement. It has made the curriculum sufficiently interesting to attract more female learners and to readdress the gender balance. Similarly, it has successfully increased the rate of achievement and progression for learners with disabilities.
22. The academy embeds the monitoring of equality and diversity in most aspects of the learning experience by reinforcing learners' knowledge throughout progress reviews. Some tutors skilfully apply different teaching techniques to meet the diverse needs of learners. Many lesson plans contain helpful notes on how to avoid assumptions concerning the social knowledge and life experiences of learners, thereby promoting inclusivity in all learning activities. Policies and

procedures are up to date. Archway's managers and staff effectively promote a culture of mutual respect amongst themselves and learners where everyone values being treated as an individual.

23. The provider has developed a comprehensive quality improvement system. Effective course and curriculum reviews take place regularly and Archway gathers extensive user feedback. Learners, parents and carers, and employers regularly offer feedback to managers allowing them to make changes to the provision very quickly. However, they do not always receive information about the changes which have been implemented. The teaching and learning observation system has recently been re-launched and it needs further development to ensure it is sufficiently rigorous. Contractors are not yet observed, some of the grades awarded in the observations are over generous and the observations do not always highlight meaningful actions that will lead to improvement in the quality of teaching.
24. The self-assessment process is sufficiently inclusive and it is appropriately informed by the views of staff and all users. The self-assessment report identifies the majority of the provider's strengths and areas for improvement and these are adequately reflected in the improvement plan. The self-assessment report uses data well to analyse the provision and it accurately evaluates most aspects of the learning programme.
25. Archway provides good value for money. Learner outcomes are high and it has made a substantial investment to improve the provision. Archway prioritises its business objectives well to deliver a positive impact on the learners' experience.

## **Information about the inspection**

26. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's quality improvement officer, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection and monitoring visit reports and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
27. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from the Foundation Learning programme.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)****Archway Academy Limited**

**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>		
Full-time learners	0	0
Part-time learners	41	41
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	2	
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	n/a	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a	
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	n/a	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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