

# Achievement Training Limited

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 50322

**Name of lead inspector:** Jan Lloyd HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 8 July 2011

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** Norwich Union House  
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## Information about the provider

1. Achievement Training Limited (AT) is a private training organisation. It was established in July 1996 and was acquired by City College Plymouth (the college) in October 2009. It is based at three sites in the centre of Plymouth and currently employs 112 members of staff.
2. AT offers a wide range of educational and vocational training courses to young people and adults, many of whom have significant personal and/or educational barriers to learning. AT has a contract with the Skills Funding Agency for apprenticeships and Train to Gain. At present, there are 409 apprentices and 218 Train to Gain learners. AT delivers training across a range of subject areas, but this inspection focused on health and social care, early years and playwork, education and training, and business, administration and law. AT also acts as a subcontractor to provide training for other organisations. The scope of this inspection is for the apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes.
3. The Plymouth area includes some of the country's areas of highest deprivation with a high percentage of individuals with low levels of basic skills. In 2008/09, 49.1% of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics. Unemployment is 5.8% compared with the national average of 5.3% and the regional average of 3.8%. At 1.6%, Plymouth has a smaller proportion of people from minority ethnic groups than the region as a whole at 2.3%.
4. AT provides training on behalf of the following providers:

Provider	Type of provision
Tamar Valley Consortium (TVC)	14 to 19 work focused training
City College Plymouth	Jumpstart Foundation Learning and other learner responsive provision
Westwood Training	Skills Support for the Unemployed Skills Support for Redundancy

5. The following organisations provide training on behalf of AT:
  - Individual Training Solutions (health, public services and care)
  - Direct Training 2 care (health, public services and care).

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10</b>
<b>Provision for young learners:</b>	
14 to 16	3 learners
Further education (16 to 18)	308 part-time learners
TVC learners	251 part-time learners
Foundation Learning	41 full-time learners
<b>Provision for adult learners:</b>	
Further education (19+)	1,345 part-time learners
<b>Employer provision:</b>	
Train to Gain	993 learners
Apprenticeships	169 apprentices

## Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision		Grade 2
Capacity to improve		Grade 2
		Grade
Outcomes for learners		2
Quality of provision		2
Leadership and management		2
Safeguarding		3
Equality and diversity		3
Subject Areas		
Health and social care		2
Early years and playwork		2
Education and training		2
Business, administration and law		2

## Overall effectiveness

6. AT has made a number of significant improvements since its last inspection in 2005 and especially since it was acquired by City College Plymouth in October 2009. The achievement of qualifications on both apprenticeships and Train to Gain is now good and improving. Learners make good progress and are able to work towards the next qualification level. The standard of learners' work is good and learners develop good workplace and employability skills. The programmes of learning are well planned and resources are good. However, not all learners attend the training centre and, although they receive excellent support in the workplace, they do miss out on additional opportunities such as the enrichment courses. AT works very well with its partners to provide a wide range of training opportunities for young people and adults. Learners feel very safe at AT and receive good care, guidance and support.
7. Very good planning ensured a smooth transition during the acquisition of AT by the college. New and effective management structures are in place and there

has been a considerable investment in information technology and in refurbishing the premises. Both safeguarding and equality and diversity are satisfactory, but there is insufficient promotion to learners to broaden their knowledge and understanding. Quality assurance and quality improvement are good, but the observation of teaching and learning often focuses too much on teaching.

## **Main findings**

- Learners make good progress throughout their training and then into employment and further training. The proportion of learners who complete their courses successfully is increasing and most figures are above national averages.
- Learners' work is generally of a high standard. Learners develop a good range of skills that help them to improve their effectiveness at work. While they make good progress with their written and numeracy skills, these are satisfactory overall.
- Tutors and assessors support learners well. They have high expectations of their learners and work well with them to ensure they succeed. Learning is more effective when staff work with individual learners rather than when they work with groups, but no observed sessions were less than satisfactory. Staff assess learners fairly and give them detailed feedback on how to improve their work.
- A good range of provision helps potential learners from schools, employers and the unemployed progress into apprenticeships and further training. The timing and content of programmes provide a flexible curriculum for learners and employers. The virtual learning environment contains some good resources, but the range is not extensive.
- Partnership working is outstanding. AT has strong links with a wide range of employers, schools and other agencies in and around Plymouth. It is seen as a very strong partner and makes a very effective contribution to the wider education and training community across the city and Devon and Cornwall.
- Learners highly value the good care, guidance and support. The enrichment programme is good. It is accessible to those learners who attend the centre, but could be made available more widely. Good additional support helps learners who need to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in raising expectations and promoting ambition is outstanding. The good planning to ensure a smooth transition during the acquisition of AT helped staff to feel confident in the new management. The new structure of meetings, improved data analysis, investment in new technology and resources have all had a positive impact on staff and learners.
- Safeguarding is satisfactory and is introduced in the learners' induction period but, except in some subject areas, little additional reinforcement is provided to broaden learners' awareness and understanding. Learners talk with their

assessors and have access to the personal development coordinator, but posters and information about safeguarding are not sufficiently eye catching.

- Equality and diversity are satisfactory. The equality and diversity working group has started to incorporate equality and diversity into learners' vocational programmes and is currently piloting new approaches in its first subject area. Equality and diversity are part of the learners' induction, but there is insufficient reinforcement during reviews, although it is included in some subject areas.
- Engagement with users is good. AT encourages both formal and informal feedback from its users, carries out surveys and holds learners' forum meetings. It then uses the results to make improvements. AT uses external partnerships very effectively to meet the needs of learners and extend opportunities for them to progress.
- Self-assessment and quality improvement are good. The comprehensive quality calendar and list of tasks enable AT to monitor and quality assure provision effectively. Monthly departmental team meetings include a review of the department's quality improvement plan. The observation of teaching and learning often focuses insufficiently on how much learning is taking place.
- The self-assessment report is comprehensive, well organised and self-critical. AT provided an update for the inspection and inspectors agree with the majority of findings and grades.

### **What does Achievement Training Limited need to do to improve further?**

- Provide support to help tutors and assessors improve their skills in teaching groups of learners so that this aspect becomes as effective as the one-to-one teaching.
- Develop the use of the virtual learning environment to enable more effective use and access for learners.
- Improve the promotion of safeguarding and equality and diversity to all learners to broaden their awareness and understanding.
- Systematically review the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that the focus is clearly on how much learning is taking place.

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

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

- staff who are friendly, helpful and supportive
- the friendly organisation and the staff know what they are doing
- the brilliant assessors and training
- not being worried about asking stupid questions because staff sit and explain to them until they understand
- the training that makes them think and helps them in the workplace.

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

- the time it takes for certificates to arrive
- more flexible times for the workshops as they cannot always get the time off work
- better support for using the e-portfolio.

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

**What employers like:**

- AT works hard to meet individual needs
- the assessors who are approachable and professional
- the training which adds greatly to the expertise in their organisations.

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

- better communication.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

8. Success rates have improved over the last three years, although not consistently across the whole provision. Learners' progress through their programmes and their progression to further study or employment has improved. AT successfully raises learners' aspirations and ambitions. Partnership working was strong at the last inspection and is now judged to be outstanding. There have been substantial improvements to the accommodation and facilities, including the access to, and the quality of, information technology for both staff and learners. The range of provision has increased and now offers many more opportunities to learners. Approaches to quality improvement have improved and are now good, although aspects of the assessment of the quality of teaching and learning need to be strengthened.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

9. Success rates on apprenticeship programmes are now well above national averages for both overall success rates and for those completing within their planned timescale. Improvements in these rates over the last year have been good, but they have not been consistent over the last three years. Overall success rates on Train to Gain provision are now around the national average. Success rates for learners completing within their planned timescale have improved well over the last year. AT's data for the latest reporting period show that improvements continue to be made. There are no consistent differences between the performances of different groups of learners.
10. Learners make good progress, both in their training sessions and throughout their programmes. Internal progression from qualifications at level 2 to level 3 for Train to Gain learners and apprentices has been good. This percentage has almost doubled since 2007/08, and has consistently improved over the last four years.
11. High standards of work are the norm in learners' portfolios. Their workplace and employability skills are developed well during their programmes. Learners are generally confident and have good oral skills. Many learners make very good progress in improving their literacy and numeracy. Learners feel safe and adopt safe working practices.

### The quality of provision

**Grade 2**

12. Programmes of learning are very well planned. Relationships between assessors and tutors and their learners are uniformly good. They work together well to produce effective learning. In general, the learning is more effective where tutors and assessors work with individual learners. Learners generally make good progress throughout their programmes and develop good work skills.



Learners' progress is monitored very well, both through discussions with their tutors and through careful checking of their work in portfolios. Some good resources are available on the virtual learning environment but the range is not sufficiently wide.

13. Assessment is thorough. Staff use a good range of approaches to check that learners are reaching the required standards. These are very flexible and well suited to the needs of the learners and their employers. Learners receive detailed feedback to help them improve their work. Some employers are not sufficiently involved in the review process.
14. As well as the provision on employers' premises, AT has three premises centrally located in Plymouth and these provide flexibility to offer training in a variety of ways. They are well maintained and make good use of displays of learners' work and posters to provide a bright and attractive place to work and learn.
15. AT provides flexible and accessible provision, which is well regarded by learners and employers. Feedback from both groups is very positive, although a small number of employers feel that some aspects of communication could be improved. AT runs its own computer repair company, which helps information and communication technology learners to have real work experience during their training and provides employment for some of them when they have completed their programme.
16. Partnership working is outstanding. AT is a major provider of training for local schools through its work with the local 14 to 19 consortium. Learners undertake a mixed programme of qualifications, employer-based experience and study at school. Of the cohort of 251 learners in 2009/10, around 60% progressed onto apprenticeship programmes at AT, very high proportion for such provision. AT has good links with a wide range of employers. Marketing is effective and provides professional support to employers to help them to identify and meet their staffing and training needs. Good links with a number of local voluntary agencies and the health service provide training programmes for disadvantaged people or those with health problems. AT makes a major contribution to the regional network of training providers, especially in supporting collaborative events and sharing their own good practice with other providers.
17. Feedback from learners is very positive about the care, guidance and support they receive. Potential recruits receive good advice and guidance. The enrichment programme for learners who attend AT's city centre site is good and some of this is taken out to learners who are unable to attend the centre. Very good provision is made for learners who are identified as needing additional support to improve their literacy and numeracy, including an open access centre.

## Leadership and management

## Grade 2

18. Very good planning ensured a smooth transition during the acquisition of AT by the college in October 2009. The new management structure and support from the college enable leaders and managers to raise the quality of provision by developing a supportive culture, a commitment to providing high-quality learner-centred provision, a system to work within and targets to work towards. Senior managers promote very high standards that motivate staff to continually improve the learning experience for learners. A good and effective structure of meetings ensures effective communication, monitoring and review of provision. Improved data collection, analysis and reporting contribute to ensuring that programmes meet individuals' and employers' needs and are used to identify and monitor areas for improvement. AT has invested heavily in a new information technology system, information technology facilities to support learning and has carried out a major refurbishment of its premises.
19. The college works effectively with AT to provide help and support when required. It sets targets and these are monitored at regular meetings. The college deputy principal is the link with AT and provides bi-annual reports to the college governors.
20. AT fully meets government requirements for safeguarding. It has a comprehensive policy and procedures and a safeguarding working group, which meets termly. The three-yearly cycle of training for staff includes updates when necessary. Safeguarding is included in learners' induction and incorporated in several qualifications. However, AT does not sufficiently promote safeguarding to broaden learners' understanding. Learners talk with their assessors and have access to the personal development coordinator, but posters and information on this are not very eye-catching. Where abuse has been reported, AT has taken appropriate action with the relevant agencies. Effective arrangements ensure the health and safety of both staff and learners.
21. AT works hard to promote equality and diversity. It has a comprehensive and easy-to-understand equality and diversity policy and procedures and a working group that meets termly. AT makes good use of its equality and diversity impact measures data and these discussed in each department with actions taken to make improvements where required. The working party has started to incorporate equality and diversity in learners' vocational programmes and is currently piloting this in its first subject area. A three-year cycle of training for staff is in place with updates where necessary. Equality and diversity are included in induction and learners receive a copy of the learners' policy, but it uses complex language. An innovative awareness workshop is held for learners but not all choose to, or are able to, attend. Equality and diversity are insufficiently reinforced at reviews.
22. AT encourages both formal and informal feedback from its users. It carries out surveys with both learners and employers, but responses from employers are low. It uses the results to make improvements. AT uses external partnerships

very effectively to meet the needs of learners and extend opportunities for them to progress to further study or employment.

23. The comprehensive quality calendar and list of tasks enable staff to monitor and assure the quality of provision effectively. The quality coordinator closely monitors the activities and reports to senior managers. Monthly departmental team meetings include a review of the department's quality improvement plan and this is sent to the quality coordinator termly. The senior management team regularly reviews the reports on activities. The self-assessment report is detailed and self-critical. Inspectors agree with the majority of findings and grades.
24. AT has in place a well-planned system of observing teaching and learning, but currently the records of observations are of a mixed quality. Some of them focus well on how much learning is happening but others focus too much on the teaching processes. Development plans also vary in quality and are sometimes absent.
25. AT is creative in using its budget for resources. It is committed to recycling by using online sites, following up sales from companies that are closing and using their in-house computer company to refurbish computers.

## Subject areas

### Health and social care

### Grade 2

#### Context

26. AT offers apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes in health and social care. Currently, there are 198 apprentices and 34 Train to Gain learners. Most of the Train to Gain learners are with subcontractors. Over 90% of learners are aged 19 or over. Most learners attend off-the-job training for key skills either in their workplace or at the main office in Plymouth. The rest of the training takes place at work through one-to-one contact with assessors.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good and success rates are improving on all programmes. The overall success rates for apprentices are good. Although the rate for those completing within their planned timescale is just below the national average, it has improved significantly since last year. The overall success rate for Train to Gain is good. Although the rate for those completing within their planned timescale is below the national average, it is improving.
- Learners enjoy their learning, grow in confidence and develop good care skills. They gain skills in infection control and person-centred care. Learners often gain promotion to senior posts as they advance through the qualification levels. The standard of learners' work in portfolios is good. Currently, few learners use the e-portfolio route. They take pride in their written work and develop good skills in reflective practice.
- Learners feel safe. They have a good awareness of health and safety procedures and an increasing understanding of their importance. For example, they appreciate the significance of keeping detailed records on those for whom they provide care. Learners have access to information and support on health and personal issues but AT does not always fully promote this provision.
- Teaching, training and assessment delivered through one-to-one contact are good. Constructive feedback is regularly given to learners who appreciate the guidance on how to improve. Some group teaching is slow to engage all learners, but they contribute well to the sessions and achieve their learning goals.
- Initial assessment is satisfactory and ensures learners are on a suitable programme. AT effectively uses the initial assessment results to plan individualised learning and assessment. Learners have a good awareness of the requirements of the apprenticeship framework. Internal verification is effective and closely links to assessment planning.
- Assessors use laptop computers and dictaphones effectively to promote learning and learners have access to good resources. Staff have suitable occupational qualifications, vocational skills and expertise that they use well to develop

learners. AT effectively introduces key skills and makes them an integral part of the technical certificates early in the programme. Assessment is timely and consistently carried out. Action points are recorded clearly and learners know what task to undertake next.

- AT provides good support to develop learners' literacy, numeracy and key skills. Where a need is identified, learners work with the tutors in the access centre. Additional diagnostic tests are used to design individualised programmes to meet their needs.
- The programmes meet the learners' and employers' needs well. Assessors offer flexible training and assessment at times and venues which suit the learners' and employers' needs. When learners are interested in higher qualifications that AT does not currently deliver, they are directed to other providers. Enrichment activities include a wide range of workshops on subjects such as safeguarding, sexual health, numeracy and communication.
- Communication with employers is mostly good and AT has strong relationships with the subcontractors. Employers value the personal contact they have with staff. They feel part of the training team and are supported well. AT provides regular email updates which employers appreciate. It has also delivered workshops on the new qualification framework, but attendance by employers was poor.
- Care, guidance and support are very effective in helping learners progress through their programmes. Learners appreciate the availability of a daily duty assessor to help with their queries and mark assignments. Learners value, and are inspired by, the individual support including frequent visits from assessors.
- The operational management is good. The manager creates a culture of continuous improvement and encourages staff to develop an attitude that aspires to excellence. AT thoroughly checks learners' safety at the workplaces before training commences. Safe working practices are in place for staff who often work unsociable hours.
- Equality and diversity are satisfactory, but assessors do not always effectively use opportunities to promote a deeper understanding amongst learners. Although AT is keen to work with a wide range of learners, the training courses in health and social care are insufficiently promoted to under-represented groups.
- Staff play a key role in reviewing the quality improvement plan. Employers' and learners' views are regularly sought and acted upon promptly. Self-assessment is mostly accurate, but employers and the subcontractors are not systematically involved in the self-assessment process.

### **What does Achievement Training Limited need to do to improve further?**

- Develop the effectiveness of teaching and learning within workshops so that learners are enlivened by the activities and learners and employers develop a more positive understanding of their value.

- Incorporate the promotion of equality and diversity within programmes to deepen learners' and assessors' understanding.
- Develop effective strategies to widen participation of under-represented groups including men.
- Ensure greater involvement of staff, employers and subcontractors in the self-assessment process.

## Early years and playwork

## Grade 2

### Context

27. AT offers apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes in early years and playwork. Currently, there are 33 apprentices with 8 working towards qualifications at level 2 and 25 at level 3. There are 30 Train to Gain learners with 19 working towards qualifications at level 2 and 11 at level 3.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Overall success rates on Train to Gain programmes are high, but success rates for learners who complete within their planned timescale have declined to below the national average. Overall success rates for apprentices are below the national average, but success rates for those completing within their planned timescale are good. Current learners are making very good progress.
- Learners develop good vocational skills. They make good and clear links between theory and practice, increasing their range of communication skills and improving their childcare practice. Learners develop increased confidence in the workplace and often gain increased responsibility at work. Progression from AT programmes to higher level learning opportunities within the sector is good.
- Learners feel safe in their workplace settings. Issues of health and safety are integral to their programmes and their vocational practice. They understand their rights and responsibilities in this area. They have good relationships with their assessors and are able to discuss personal issues with them. However, little discussion of safeguarding takes place during learners' reviews.
- Teaching, training and learning are good. AT effectively uses a wide range of interactive teaching and learning activities that support the qualification requirements and the individual needs of learners. The high quality displays of learners' work provide a very stimulating learning environment. Displays present positive images of many marginalised groups. However, assessors do not effectively discuss equality and diversity in learners' reviews.
- Assessment practice is good. Assessors effectively use a wide range of well-chosen assessment methods to confirm learners' knowledge and skills. Assessors provide clear and affirming feedback with clear guidance for improvement. Learners understand the progress they are making. In lessons, tutors do not always thoroughly check individuals' learning and understanding.
- AT uses very imaginative and effective strategies to integrate the development of numeracy, literacy and information technology skills into the vocational delivery and assessment of the programme. For example, tutors use play dough as a vehicle to teach and assess multiplication, proportions and division and children's weight to develop skills in interpreting and presenting information using graphs.

- AT uses technology effectively to promote and support learning. Learners and assessors confidently use e-technology as a research tool, for swift communication, support and for the presentation of work. Learners find the immediate recording of achievement and tracking of progress motivating. Paper-based portfolios and alternative methods of communication are in place for learners as appropriate.
- The programmes offered directly deal with areas of well-documented skill shortage in the early years' sector, meeting the statutory requirements of the sector and the professional needs of learners. However, AT has recruited some learners to programmes before it is confirmed that their job role is appropriate or that they have a commitment to this area of work.
- Assessors and tutors provide good support for learners. They are flexible in arranging visits to fit in with learners' work and personal commitments, and respond swiftly and helpfully to learners' queries and concerns. However, timetabled lessons take place during the normal working hours of the early years' settings and some learners are unable to attend.
- Leadership and management are good. Regular staff meetings are held, minutes are appropriately detailed and action is agreed and monitored. AT has managed changes in the curriculum well, including the successful introduction of the new apprenticeship scheme and electronic portfolios. Internal verification is strong and supports continuous improvement.
- Staff at all levels are involved in the evaluation of provision and, at staff meetings, carefully monitor progress against the quality improvement plan. However, data are not always shared and used to monitor the quality of provision and the progress of different groups of learners.

**What does Achievement Training Limited need to do to improve further?**

- Liaise with employers and learners to ensure that off-the-job training is delivered at times suited to their needs.
- Develop strategies to check that individual learning takes place during group sessions.
- Ensure that the promotion of safeguarding and equality and diversity is part of learners' reviews and that it deepens learners' understanding.
- Use data more effectively to monitor the quality of provision and the progress of different groups of learners.



## Education and training

## Grade 2

### Context

28. AT offers apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes in education and training. Currently, there are 37 apprentices working towards a level 3 qualification. The majority of these are over 25 and all are in full-time employment. There are 83 learners working towards a level 2 qualification on Train to Gain. These learners work in schools as volunteers.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates for the learners on the Train to Gain programme are high, as is the number of Train to Gain learners achieving their qualification within their planned timescale. Current learners, including apprentices, are making satisfactory progress. The standard of learners' portfolio work is high and uses an appropriate range of workplace evidence.
- Progression between levels 2 and 3 is good. AT staff work with learners to identify appropriate progression opportunities. Some Train to Gain learners progress to full-time employment. The majority of current apprentices aged 25 or over and working towards a level 3 qualification, have progressed from level 2 provision.
- Learners develop good personal and employment skills. They gain confidence, improve self-esteem and work more effectively as part of a team. They enjoy the opportunity to acquire wider knowledge of the teaching profession and to reflect on their roles as teaching assistants. Training has led to an improvement in communication skills and in dealing with adults and children.
- Learners confirm that they feel safe in the workplace. Safeguarding is a key part of this curriculum area and AT reinforces knowledge and understanding well as part of off-the-job training. Some learners have attended safeguarding training offered by their school. Learners have a sound practical understanding of risk factors and know who to report safeguarding concerns to in their schools.
- AT plans off-the-job training well and resources are good. Sessions include challenging activities which focus on work-related topics. Learners attend these sessions for one half-day each month. They enjoy the opportunity to meet with training staff and other learners to share experiences and issues related to their programme. The sessions include the setting and monitoring of targets.
- Assessment practice is good. Staff use an appropriate range of methods including observation and professional discussion. They carefully plan assessment opportunities and feedback clearly and quickly to learners. This identifies ways that learners can improve.
- Provision meets the needs and interests of users very effectively. Many learners, especially those on Train to Gain programmes at level 2, are planning to make a career in education. The provision offers the opportunity to gain appropriate knowledge and skills to support this aspiration and provides coherent

progression routes. However, schools are not sufficiently involved in the choice of optional units in the qualifications.

- AT provides good support and guidance to enable learners to meet their learning goals. AT staff are flexible and respond well to learners' timetables and individual needs. Employers are supportive of training and enable learners to attend off-the-job training. Workplaces offer a wide range of opportunities to gather evidence and, in some schools, designated staff undertake a mentoring role with learners.
- AT makes good use of technology to support learning. Tutors use computers and interactive whiteboards effectively during off-the-job training sessions. The majority of learners welcome and enjoy the use of e-portfolios, which enable learners and trainers to be in regular contact and to monitor progress.
- AT has very good partnerships with local schools. Staff welcome visitors and headteachers confirm that AT is their first choice provider when training is required. Schools comment favourably on the flexibility of AT staff in accommodating school priorities when arranging visits. Training staff ensure that schools are aware of learners' progress and any concerns.
- Leadership and management are good. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and feel well supported through staff development opportunities. They appreciate the recent refurbishment of accommodation and updating of information technology facilities. Regular team meetings ensure that staff are aware of organisational priorities.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. All staff have completed training, which is updated within a three-year cycle. Opportunities are offered within the curriculum area for learners to develop knowledge and awareness of equality and diversity. However, the promotion of equality and diversity during learners' progress reviews is very superficial.

### **What does Achievement Training Limited need to do to improve further?**

- Encourage schools to be involved in the selection of optional units in the qualifications so that they closely match the learners' work roles.
- Develop scenarios and questions which test learner' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity issues for discussion during the review process.

## Business, administration and law

## Grade 2

### Context

29. AT offers apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes in business, administration and law. Currently, there are 81 apprentices working towards qualifications in administration, customer service and management. There are 34 learners on Train to Gain working towards qualifications at levels 2 and 3.

### Key findings

- Success rates are now good and improving. In 2009/10, overall success rates for apprentices fell and were low at 68% compared to the national average of 77%. The rate for learners completing within their planned timescale matched the national average. Data for the current year indicate that all apprentices will achieve their qualification within their planned timescale. No significant variations in the outcomes for different groups of learners are recorded.
- Success rates on Train to Gain are good, above national averages and improving. In 2009/10, the overall success rates were 93% at level 2 and 80% at level 3. The majority of Train to Gain learners achieve before their planned end date.
- Learners make good progress and meet challenging targets. They are highly motivated, enjoy their learning and work to a high standard. Learners show significant improvement in skills, confidence and knowledge often as a result of progression to more senior positions or added responsibility.
- Learners feel secure in their working environment and adopt safe working practices. Assessors react swiftly to resolve any issues with health and safety. Safeguarding incidents are referred promptly to the nominated officer. Safeguarding is a standard agenda item for monthly team meetings but infrequently discussed. The team continues to support learners who have completed their programme, especially where they have personal issues.
- Assessment practice is good. Assessors visit workplaces frequently to meet individual learners' needs. Assessment planning is good and includes the use of digital recording of observations and discussions to promote progress. E-portfolios give learners the opportunity to track their own progress. However, in a few cases, assessments lack focus and constructive feedback, and the work added to e-portfolios is not assessed often enough to give learners clear direction.
- On-the-job coaching is highly effective. Learners are fully engaged and left with clearly identified areas for additional practice. Assessors use skilled questioning to confirm background knowledge. Targets set are challenging and learners are directed to appropriate sources of evidence.
- The provision meets the needs and interest of learners well. Those learners who have transferred from other programmes to AT compare their experience favourably. Feedback from learners is very positive. AT works well with employers to meet their needs. Learners take advantage of clear progression

routes. However, a few learners already in possession of level 3 qualifications are currently working towards a lower level qualification.

- Learners are well supported by their assessors and employers. The curriculum area has a specialist, well-resourced drop-in centre, open one day a week for additional support. Employers work well with assessors to support learners by arranging additional tasks and responsibilities to allow learners to gain experience and collect evidence.
- Support for learners with identified barriers to learning is satisfactory. A four-week programme of off-the-job training is available for learners who need additional numeracy support. Assessors offer support to learners whose work conditions prevent them from attending formal sessions.
- Induction is satisfactory. Learners have either a one-to-one induction in the workplace or a group induction. The one-to-one inductions prepare learners well for their programme. However, topics covered during group inductions are not sufficiently reinforced to ensure that learners fully understand the commitment they have made.
- Some reviews are insufficiently rigorous. Learners are not always aware of what they need to do in order to achieve. Employers are not routinely involved in the review process. AT promotes equality and diversity well at induction, but very little discussion takes place to develop and broaden learners' understanding during the review process.
- Management of the programmes is outstanding. They are very well planned to prevent duplication of learners' work. Learners' progress from first enquiry to completion is rigorously monitored. The team works well together and has developed very good strategies to review and improve success rates. Additional feedback is collected from learners to identify and resolve any issues.
- Staff use their experience to provide relevant and contemporary examples for learners. Good professional development opportunities are available. Support for staff is outstanding with weekly one-to-one meetings with the manager. The self-assessment report is inclusive and accurately reflects the provision.

### **What does Achievement Training Limited need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that all learners have the same high-quality experience of assessment by better monitoring of the process.
- Following induction, ensure that all learners understand what is involved in making their commitment to the programme by using subsequent visits to discuss the requirements further.
- Develop the review process to ensure that it gives learners a better understanding of their progress and better promotes equality and diversity.

## **Information about the inspection**

30. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's deputy managing director, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
31. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

### Record of Main Findings (RMF)

#### Achievement Training 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	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>		
Full-time learners	409	409
Part-time learners	218	218
<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>	3	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2	
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
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?	1	
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?	1	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
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?	2	
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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