

# ACE Training and Consultancy Limited

## Independent learning provider

<b>Inspection dates</b>		11-14 December 2012
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Requires improvement-3</b>
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider requires improvement because:

- Too many learners on Foundation Learning programmes in carpentry and bricklaying leave early and do not achieve all their learning objectives or qualifications.
- The number of learners progressing into employment, further education or apprenticeship programmes requires improvement.
- Staff do not make enough use of initial assessment results to ensure the most appropriate support is available in all training sessions for learners who need it.
- Formal reviews of progress are not coordinated sufficiently well to ensure staff discuss and review all aspects of the learners' programmes so that learners achieve their objectives and are aware of progression opportunities.
- The management and recording of work experience arrangements are weak.
- Data are not analysed and used sufficiently well to monitor and manage the Foundation Learning programmes.

#### This provider has the following strengths:

- Learners who progress onto bricklaying or carpentry apprenticeships with ACE Training and Consultancy Limited (ACE Training) gain employment and almost all are successful in completing their apprenticeship programme.
- Learning takes place in a well-organised industrial unit which has well-equipped carpentry and bricklaying workshops and adequate classrooms with good computing resources.
- Enthusiastic tutors use their previous trade skills and experiences well to make sure lessons are interesting and reflect the standards expected in the workplace.
- Learners have a clear understanding of what they have achieved, how to improve and what they still need to do to complete their courses.
- Learners benefit from learning in small groups with good support and encouragement from tutors in workshop and classroom sessions.
- The training and development of staff are improving teaching, learning and assessment.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Analyse the data gathered on attendance and punctuality to help identify learners and groups of learners who may have problems, to monitor trends, and more closely manage learners' progress, achievement and progression.
- Use the information gained from initial assessment and induction to ensure more targeted support is available in all sessions for those with additional learning needs.
- Better coordinate the information available on learners during formal reviews in order to identify any potential barriers to learning that may impact on learners' ability to achieve their objectives and progress.
- Ensure staff have the right skills and knowledge to provide appropriate information, advice and guidance to learners on progression opportunities.
- Develop a more robust approach to managing work experience opportunities and ensure staff recognise the knowledge gained by learners during work experience and use this to enhance the learning in the training centre.
- Continue to develop the quality assurance arrangements and ensure observers clearly grade and record the areas for development identified during observations of teaching, learning, assessments and reviews. Ensure staff training and development are effective in addressing areas for improvement.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learners' achievement of qualifications requires improvement. An increased number of learners achieve their foundation level English qualification in 2011/12, but achievement rates for mathematics at this level remain low. A satisfactory number of learners achieved their carpentry and joinery diploma at foundation level in 2011/12, but too few learners achieved their brickwork Diploma level 1.</li> <li>▪ The number of learners progressing is increasing with half of leavers in the current year finding employment or going into further education or training. Those employed as bricklayers or carpenters remain with ACE Training on an apprenticeship programme. Almost all these apprentices have successfully completed their apprenticeship programme and a few have progressed onto advanced apprenticeships.</li> <li>▪ Too many learners stop attending the training centre and leave the programmes early. Managers are not always sure of the reasons why learners stop attending and leave.</li> <li>▪ Current learners are making good progress in developing social, personal and employability skills including awareness of the construction industry, communication, application of mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).</li> <li>▪ Staff record attendance and punctuality but do not collate the data to calculate attendance and punctuality rates for individuals or groups of learners. Data are not analysed to monitor trends over time or to check if ACE Training is achieving the targets it has set. Attendance and punctuality were satisfactory in the lessons observed.</li> </ul>	
<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teaching, learning and assessment are good. ACE Training has recently increased the number of construction trade training staff, all have recent and relevant trade experience and are working towards teaching qualifications. Tutors are enthusiastic about the construction industry as a</li> </ul>	

good place to work and build very positive relationships with the learners. However, too many learners do not attend or leave the course before they have an opportunity to gain their diploma or achieve their learning aims.

- The support that learners receive in making the transition from school to a working environment is good. Taster days and a recent short summer course provide valuable insights into the rigours of the construction industry. Tutors show patience and skill in supporting learners as they adjust their behaviour to the demands of the workplace. Learners enjoy their learning, behave well and appreciate the more adult expectations that staff have of them.
- Initial assessment is effective in determining learners' starting points, but tutors do not always use this information sufficiently well in planning for learning to meet individual needs. Learners benefit from learning in small groups and often two tutors support learners in lessons. Learners who have identified additional needs receive more individual support but this does not always address their specific learning needs.
- Careful planning of lessons ensures learners are clear about what they need to achieve in each session. Tutors' written comments on the work completed in learners' portfolios provide encouragement and clear indications on how learners can continue to improve their skills.
- Resources for learning are good in the workshops and training rooms, although not all tutors are confident in using the interactive whiteboards and other technologies. Learners make good use of ICT in classroom sessions and, in particular, the computer-aided design software in carpentry and brickwork classes.
- Learners make good progress in developing their English skills. They are able to describe in detail the processes followed to complete a practical task using grammar and spelling that is correct and accurate. Learners' development of number skills is slower with some still showing confusion between using millimetres, centimetres and metres when working from scale plans.
- More learners are starting to benefit from good work experience placements lasting two to three weeks. This is effective in ensuring they have a good understanding of the demands that accompany working in the construction industry. However, learners do not record the skills and knowledge developed whilst on placements and tutors do not always draw on learners' experiences to enhance learning in the classroom.
- Tutors carefully and comprehensively monitor the progress learners make in their carpentry and brickwork skills and provide learners with a clear picture of how well they are doing and what they still need to achieve to complete their qualifications. In the regular formal reviews of progress, insufficient emphasis is placed on potential barriers to learning and how learners might develop their personal and social skills.
- Success in preparing learners for the next step in their education and training is improving, but still requires development. One in ten young people progress from the foundation level diploma to an apprenticeship programme and a quarter progress into full-time employment. However, most learners are not clear about the range of opportunities that achievement of their Foundation Learning programme would present.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is good. Learners are able to discuss relevant issues relating to their industry with insight and maturity. In a discussion on ageism in the building trade learners displayed a good understanding of the issues faced by employers as well as employees when interviewing new staff.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. The senior management team demonstrated strong leadership in taking over the organisation in August 2011 and re-structuring its provision in response to contractual changes. Staff have a clear understanding of the organisation's vision. However, some of the management systems are not sufficiently robust and have yet to impact on outcomes for learners.

- Investment in the workshops and classrooms provides learners with a safe practical environment conducive to learning. Training rooms are well equipped with up-to-date ICT and are located close to the workshops. Learners have been involved in designing and building their own outdoor rest area and make proposals for further improvement through a regular learner forum. Managers place a strong emphasis on using building materials in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner, recycling and reusing wherever possible.
- Tutors act as good role models for the learners, instilling a strong work ethic and demonstrating good trade knowledge and skills. All tutors are working towards their first or a higher level teaching qualification. The training director effectively mentors new tutors. Training and development of staff are a high priority and performance management is satisfactory.
- Managers and staff have a good understanding of the actions needed to improve outcomes for learners. However, managers do not use data sufficiently well to measure success in achieving targets set. Analysis of attendance, punctuality, retention and achievement rates for different groups of learners is not sufficiently thorough. Managers do not use data to monitor trends in performance over time or to identify shortfalls in participation and achievement rates.
- Managers and tutors are developing increasingly stronger links with schools, local communities, employers and tradesmen. They are finding work placements and other opportunities to provide learners with real work experiences, some of which benefit the local community. Using their emerging skills in brickwork, learners rebuilt the wall of a local village hall damaged in a road traffic accident.
- The management and recording of work experience are weak. Managers do not maintain central records about work placements and relevant risk assessments. No aims and objectives are set for learners to achieve whilst on work placements. Learners' files do not have records of their attendance and achievements.
- Internal observations of teaching and learning are well planned and very regular. Verbal feedback to staff is satisfactory, but written feedback is not always clear about the grade awarded and what tutors can do to develop further. Observations do not include reviews of learners' progress.
- Managers and staff regularly review the quality improvement plans to ensure a strong focus on improving the quality of provision. Managers place a greater emphasis on improving the apprenticeship programme, delivered under a separate contract, than on the Foundation Learning programme. Staff have not adopted some of the new improved processes and procedures.
- Recent improvements to the design and structure of the Foundation Learning programmes, such as a short introductory course in the summer, improved lesson plans and closer monitoring of learners' progress, have yet to impact on outcomes for learners.
- ACE Training is aware of the under representation of females in the construction industry and is actively linking with a range of local schools to promote construction as a worthwhile career for all learners. However, so far no females have joined the programme.
- The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners and health and safety have a high priority in the training centres. Learners feel safe and behave well. Learners who do not show the levels of respect expected are suspended and appropriate procedures are in place to allow them to return to training when they are ready.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### ACE Training and Consultancy Limited

<p><b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b></p> <p>1: Outstanding                  2: Good                  3: Requires improvement                  4: Inadequate</p>	<b>Overall</b>	Foundation Learning
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	3
Outcomes for learners	<b>3</b>	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>2</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>3</b>	3

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Foundation learning</b>	<b>2</b>

## Provider details

<b>Provider name</b>	
<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	Full-time: 42
	Part-time: 0
<b>Managing Director</b>	Mr Adam Marsh
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Website address</b>	www.a-c-e-training.com

<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Full-time</b>	17	-	9	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Part-time</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ None</li> </ul>							

## Additional socio-economic information

ACE Training is a not for profit company, limited by guarantee and incorporated in August 2011. The construction training centre is on an industrial estate in Kidlington near Oxford. In addition to the Foundation Learning construction programmes, the training centre provides construction apprenticeships that were not included in this inspection as they are under a separate contract with another training provider. Three directors manage the provision, supported by nine staff. All learners are male, 16% are from minority ethnic groups and two have specific additional learning needs. People from minority ethnic groups comprise around 9% of the population. The proportion of young people achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C grades including mathematics and English was 57.4% in 2011, just below the national average of 58.9%. The majority of the employment locally is in service industries, with 4% in construction compared to 4.8% nationally.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Joy Montgomery HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the Operations Director as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews to gather the views of learners; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the Foundation Learning provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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