

Apprenticeships and Training Services Consortium Ltd. (ATSCL)

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		29 October – 1 November 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Apprentices develop high levels of practical skill, competence and confidence in their respective vocational areas.
- Apprentices' progression into employment and further education is very good.
- Teaching and learning are good. Highly motivated and well-qualified staff use their expertise and experience effectively to meet learners' needs and extend their learning.
- Learners are very well supported by their assessors, tutors and workplace supervisors in the development of their skills.
- Excellent resources, in the training centres and workplaces, support learning and promote a very professional learning environment.
- The provision is very well matched to the needs of learners and employers.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Although the proportion of learners who successfully complete their qualifications is above average, this rate has declined since the merger of the two participating organisations.
- Staff do not provide sufficiently informative assessment feedback to learners to enable them to develop their skills progressively and attain their full potential.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is limited. Staff miss opportunities during discussions in progress reviews and in some lessons to check and reinforce apprentices' understanding of these themes.
- Managers need to make better use of data throughout the organisation to ensure the identification and addressing of areas of underperformance.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the root causes of learners leaving early are identified and tackled at an early stage, in order to ensure outcomes which are consistently well above national averages.
- Make more imaginative use of a broader range of sources of evidence within learners' portfolios so that they are more representative of the excellent practical skills the apprentices develop.
- Improve written assessment feedback to learners to provide more detailed information so that they can progressively develop their skills, attain their full potential and build a detailed aide-memoire for future reference.
- Ensure that learners' understanding of equality and diversity is promoted well during discussions with learners. Further develop the skills of assessors and tutors to enhance learners' understanding and to capitalise fully on the existing resources and opportunities as they occur.
- Make better use of the data throughout the organisation. Building on recent initiatives, ensure that managers at all levels routinely and regularly use data and information to identify areas of underperformance and groups at risk of poor achievement, and plan appropriate early intervention.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. A high proportion of learners in Apprenticeships and Training Services Consortium Ltd (ATSCL) achieve their apprenticeships, so that success rates are above the national averages; however, since the merger of the two organisations in 2012, success rates have declined. Most learners achieve their qualifications within the planned time, with few differences between the subject areas. Some differences in achievement exist between particular ethnic groups, although numbers in underachieving groups are low. The majority of learners are with one consortium partner, Tempdent, following either dental nursing or business administration programmes. The remainder are following motor vehicle apprenticeships with the other partner, North London Garages Group Training Association (NLGGTA).
- Tempdent provides a functional skills English programme for learners with English as a second language as part of a foundation programme for those wishing to become dental nurses. Success rates are very high with most learners progressing to employment and apprenticeships.
- Standards of apprentices' work are high, and in dental nursing very high; learners work with high levels of practical skill and competence. However, the written evidence in their portfolios often fails to reflect these skills fully, focusing on compliance with awarding requirements rather than reflecting the learners' skill level.
- Apprentices develop good employability skills in the workplace. They gain in confidence and self-esteem and take pride in their achievements. Employers speak highly of the skills and maturity of the learners and the value they add to their workplaces.
- Health, safety and welfare have a very high priority and apprentices understand the potential hazards of working in their respective industries. Dental nursing apprentices are very conscious of the health hazards to patients, dental surgeons and themselves, and make good use of appropriate preventative precautions, and use personal protective equipment well. Apprentices working with hazardous substances demonstrate a good understanding of the associated legislation on the control of these substances.
- Apprentices' progression into sustained employment and further education is excellent. Most learners on intermediate apprenticeships in motor vehicle progress onto an advanced level

training, with most being retained by their sponsoring employer. The only apprenticeship framework for dental nursing available nationally is for advanced apprentices. Tempdent prepares learners well for this programme and most make very good progress throughout their studies into higher education and positions of responsibility. Many graduates of Tempdent and NLGGTA have progressed into senior management positions in local dental surgeries and garages, providing excellent role models for the apprentices.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, resulting in good outcomes for apprentices. Tutors and assessors are enthusiastic and use their extensive experience and knowledge well to motivate apprentices to develop excellent vocational skills, and successfully establish a culture in which learners aspire to reach the highest standards.
- Many lessons are well planned. Instructors carefully check learning through open and directed questions, and often use group work to promote peer learning. For example, in an English lesson, small group discussion activities were used well to increase learners' confidence in informal discussion.
- Tutors and assessors are extremely well qualified and highly experienced. They use their knowledge and experience well to ensure learners make rapid progress in lessons and acquire the skills in the workplace that employers value. All learners enjoy learning and are highly positive about their learning experience.
- Resources supporting learning are very good. Dental nursing apprentices benefit from working in modern and well-equipped surgeries, developing high levels of practical skill. Similarly, motor vehicle apprentices benefit from working in well-equipped workplaces, often in high-profile main dealerships, supported by newly refurbished and re-equipped workshops at the training centre.
- Assessment in the workplace is frequent and regular and is mostly conducted through direct observation. Assessors work well with learners and use their vocational experience very effectively to confirm learners' understanding. However, rather than providing opportunities for learners to demonstrate their full potential, assessors seek merely to demonstrate compliance with assessment criteria prescribed by the awarding bodies. They make insufficient use of alternative evidence sources, such as photographs, audio recordings and videos.
- Reviews in the workplace are frequent and timely. Staff ensure that apprentices complete within their agreed timescales, through good target setting for learning and effective tracking of learners' progress. Some employers take an active role in the review, setting work patterns and ensuring effective implementation of learning and assessment opportunities.
- Assessors provide very useful verbal feedback to learners which helps them to improve the quality of their work. Written feedback to dental nursing learners is often detailed and helpful. For motor vehicle learners, however, assessors' feedback is less detailed and provides less guidance on how work could be improved. Oral feedback is often good, but not recorded, and consequently learners have few memory aids to improve their work further. In business administration, assessment practice meets awarding body requirements; however, assessors do not involve apprentices sufficiently in setting their own learning goals and recording their progress.
- Apprentices value both the formal and informal support provided. Employers give good support to apprentices. Very highly skilled and experienced practitioners in the workplace act as mentors, providing frequent and invaluable training and advice. Staff at ATSCl also provide good support, advice and guidance to apprentices, supporting them through times of personal difficulty and explaining career opportunities.
- Learners and staff treat each other with respect. Staff instigate discussions about equality and diversity during their reviews of learners' progress in the workplace; these discussions are

relevant, but are often cursory and do not extend the learners' understanding of these themes sufficiently. During learning activities, learners, teachers and trainers introduce opportunities to discuss diversity; however, frequently these discussions do not capitalise fully on these opportunities.

Dental nursing

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in learners' success rates which are above the national rate. Learners are well motivated, acquire very good employability and practical vocational skills, and gain employment in their workplace. The apprentices develop into very competent dental nurses and are valued members of their respective teams.
- The majority of the dental nurse apprentices gain access to their learning through online workshops known as 'webinars', and maintain their records through electronic portfolios. These learners are based all around the country and have local assessors who carry out their observations in the workplace. A small group of online learners, which transferred from another provider having previously made slow progress, was well supported to complete the qualification. However, a number of these learners left the programme early, reducing success rates in the most recent year.
- Learners are very well supported by their assessors, tutors and workplace supervisors. Highly motivated and well-qualified staff use their expertise and experience to meet learners' individual needs and extend their learning. The standard of learners' written work is high and their portfolios of evidence are well organised. Learners make good progress towards achieving their qualifications and, where appropriate, they are encouraged and supported to succeed before their planned end date.
- Learners value the support they receive and the frequent visits made by assessors to the workplace. Employers are active in the training of apprentices; they communicate effectively with the assessors and give feedback on apprentices' progress. Learners also benefit from the opportunity to undertake in-house training which enhances understanding of their job roles and responsibilities.
- Assessors are very flexible and will make more frequent visits if necessary, or change observation dates to meet the needs of the learners and employers. For example, one learner needed to complete an observation which involved the learner assisting the dentist to carry out a tooth extraction. This treatment is performed infrequently and the assessor changed her visit date to coincide with the procedure.
- Observations and reviews of learners' progress are thorough. Assessors give encouraging oral feedback which guides the learners on how to improve. However, although the observation reports are written up in detail, they do not record the oral feedback given to the learner following the observation. Learners are set written work regularly. This is assessed frequently and helps the learners to progress.
- Information from initial assessment is used effectively to identify the requirements for functional skills and any additional learning needs. The development of English and mathematics is integrated within the curriculum. For example, during one learner's review, the assessor took time to discuss spelling and grammatical errors in written assignments with the learner. Learners receive very good advice and guidance from both employers and assessors to help them plan progression to further study and explore career opportunities.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good, enabling learners to understand the varied needs of different groups of patients who attend the dental surgeries for treatment. Assessors

use a list of questions to test learners' understanding of these topics during their reviews. However, these are not always used to best effect to promote further discussion and deepen learners' understanding.

- Learners have an excellent understanding of safeguarding, which covers their own safety and that of their colleagues and the dental patients in their care. Assessors and employers place a very strong emphasis on safeguarding in learner reviews, coaching sessions and day-to-day supervision in the workplace. All learners adopt safe working practices and strictly adhere to health and safety policies and procedures in the dental practices.

Transport operations and maintenance

Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Highly enthusiastic, well-qualified staff provide lessons and assessments which motivate apprentices to achieve good success rates which are above national averages. The apprentices make good progress from their starting points; most progress from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships and then to employment.
- Theory lessons are good. Apprentices demonstrate high levels of confidence and communication skills which allow them to work as part of a team or independently. For example, in one observed session, learners worked in groups to produce and present power-point presentations which explain tyre markings and their meanings. In the workplace, apprentices demonstrate good skills which link their classroom learning to practice. For example, they carry out pre-service checks accurately measuring fluids, oils and tyre pressures and use these effectively in related calculations.
- Apprentices communicate confidently with their supervisors and work colleagues, using job cards, electronic and verbal methods to ensure customers are appropriately advised of any repair needs. Many are able to estimate the cost of work, using information from suppliers and also to requisition appropriate parts. All apprentices demonstrate high levels of awareness for personal protective equipment, protecting themselves, their peers or colleagues.
- Assessment is good in the classroom sessions and at the apprentices' workplaces. Tutors and assessors use visual observation, coupled with good directed questions, to probe apprentices' knowledge, practical skills and understanding of their professional fields. Employers comment positively on the inclusive process that keeps them informed of their employees' progress, and allows them to organise further training in readiness for the well-planned and frequent assessments. However, apprentices are only expected to meet a minimum competency pass mark in written questions, which does not fully enhance their individual learning.
- Assessors provide good feedback which enables apprentices to enhance their practical skills further. Staff at ATSCl provide clear verbal feedback for apprentices, which precisely informs them what they have achieved. In addition, assessors, progress reviewers and tutors accurately identify how learners can improve further through the use of ambitious, detailed targets. However, staff do not record short-term, specific targets well enough to prompt learners to remember the detail.
- Apprentices benefit from a thorough initial assessment to ascertain their prior attainment and, where necessary, they receive additional learning support quickly. Tutors, assessors and employers communicate well to make sure any additional support is comprehensive and carefully planned, resulting in good progress by learners.
- Tutors and assessors develop apprentices' mathematical skills particularly well in teaching sessions and the workplace. Apprentices learn and apply complex mathematics to their

professions and trades. However, the development of English in lessons, progress reviews and assessments is insufficient to improve apprentices' spelling, punctuation and grammar.

- Staff provide good initial advice and guidance which ensure that apprentices are placed on the correct course at the right levels. Monitoring of attendance is particularly good and employers, assessors and administration staff are fully involved in following up absences.
- Good use is made of progress tracking systems which effectively bring together information from staff, employers, and assessors to help learners plan their future. As a result, apprentices receive timely information and good guidance in planning their next steps into education or employment.
- Apprentices share a culture of mutual respect between their teachers, employers or peers and have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. They are aware of equality and diversity themes; for example, discrimination, bullying and harassment. However, tutors, assessors and progress reviewers miss opportunities in lessons and the workplace to emphasise naturally-occurring wider themes to further develop apprentices understanding.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- ATSCl provides good leadership and management which have improved standards of teaching, learning and assessment and maintained good outcomes for learners. Senior leaders of two separate organisations, Tempdent and NLGGTA, took the strategic decision to form a close partnership in order to secure sustainable government-funded apprenticeships for their respective companies. They share a strong ambition for the success of learners, and work closely with wider networks for the benefit of learners and to improve the quality and range of learning opportunities.
- Quality assurance arrangements are comprehensive and used well to monitor all aspects of the planning and implementation of apprenticeship programmes. Joint working between the companies is helping to standardise teaching and assessment practice and make operational management more efficient. Observations of teaching and learning are thorough, but they mostly describe activity rather than evaluate its effectiveness or impact on learning.
- The management of staff's performance is very effective in raising standards. Managers communicate high expectations of staff and monitor their performance rigorously through weekly meetings, at which each individual's activity is evaluated. Mentors provide tutors and assessors with good support which helps them improve their professional practice. New staff undergo a thorough induction programme which includes shadowing teachers; probation is used effectively to remove unsuitable staff.
- Self-assessment processes are satisfactory. Staff at all levels across the organisations review their own performance and contribute to self-assessment. The views of service users are collected routinely by survey and most show high levels of satisfaction; however, too little use is made of these findings to make or promote improvements. Self-assessment judgements accurately reflect the quality of provision.
- ATSCl provides a comprehensive programme of professional development which ensures staff keep updated with best practice. Tutors and assessors have recent and relevant industry experience and hold appropriate teaching qualifications. In many cases, both they and workplace supervisors have undertaken the apprenticeship themselves and act as positive role models of career progression to current apprentices.
- Curriculum and learning programmes meet the needs of learners and employers very well. ATSCl has responded to local and national demand by increasing the range and content of programmes. In dental nursing, programmes are now accessible through an online platform which allows nationwide access and has led to increased take up by learners. Tempdent is recognised as a market leader in dental nurse training and exploits its reputation with employers

well to secure suitable placements for its trainees. NLGGTA successfully targets and recruits learners from vulnerable groups, for example young people who have offended, onto motor vehicle programmes.

- Learning resources are good and used very effectively to support learners. The new electronic portfolio is well designed and facilitates learning, which tutors complement with regular 'webinars' that are timed to suit learners' needs. NLGGTA has invested in motor vehicle software packages which promote learning, and dental practices provide good learning environments which are well resourced with up-to-date equipment. Classroom and workshop accommodation is fit for purpose and has recently been refurbished at NLGGTA.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Learning plans and documentation include references to equality matters; however, managers make insufficient routine use of data to identify any gaps in achievement between different groups, and to inform challenging targets which further promote equality and diversity. Dental learners of Black African and Caribbean heritage have achieved less well than other groups; the causes for this have been recently identified and are being tackled.
- ATSC's arrangements for keeping learners safe fulfil legal requirements. The vetting policy at Tempdent does not include full checks on staff. This is in keeping with the law relating to employed young people who are provided with training by their employers. However, Tempdent is introducing further checks to bring its policy into line with that of its partner NLGGTA, which does carry out full checks. Teachers and managers demonstrate good awareness of safeguarding issues and undertake appropriate training to keep themselves updated. The designated safeguarding and welfare officer keeps appropriate records of incidents and provides effective support to those affected.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Apprenticeships and Training Services Consortium Ltd. (ATSCCL)

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Nursing and dental health	2
Transportation operations and maintenance	2

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Additional socio-economic information

Apprenticeship and Training Services Consortium Ltd (ATSCL) is a private limited company set up in December 2010 by two existing independent training providers, North London Garages GTA Ltd (NLGGTA) and Tempdent Dental Agency Ltd, to maintain training within the minimum contract value thresholds introduced by the Skills Funding Agency. ATSCL was awarded a Skills Funding Agency contract in August 2011 to provide mainly dental nursing and motor vehicle apprenticeships. Both NLGGTA and Tempdent have had recent Ofsted inspections for their other, separate, provision (Tempdent in November 2010 and NLGGTA in February 2011), with both organisations achieving a grade 2. Residents of minority ethnic heritage account for approximately 29% of the North London population compared with the national average of 9%. ATSCL represent these figures appropriately.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Barry Barrett-Mold

Four additional inspectors, assisted by the CEOs of both Tempdent and NLGGTA as nominees, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the 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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