

asphaleia training

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		18-21 March 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
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:

- It is very successful in moving learners on to further education, training and jobs through improving their personal, social and work related skills.
- The focus on employability is strong and very effective in helping learners to improve their job prospects.
- It provides excellent personalised learning for many learners through its highly effective partnerships.
- The specialist support and well-considered study programmes widen the opportunities of young people who then participate successfully in learning and in civic society.
- Leaders and managers have demonstrated a clear vision, determination and resourcefulness that are steadily improving the quality of teaching and learning, and the achievements of learners.
- The management of tutors' performance is very effective and leads to the continuing professional development of tutors.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Learners' attendance is not yet consistently high enough in all centres.
- Assessment of individual learners and written feedback to learners to help them improve are not consistently good. Not all tutors use assessment information about learners effectively enough when they are teaching lessons.
- The observation of teaching, learning and assessment of individual tutors does not identify accurately how tutors can improve their performance.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance by ensuring that tutors set clear expectations about punctuality and attendance at the start of the programmes. Introduce additional creative and effective strategies for encouraging individual attendance.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by training all tutors on how to:
 - set effective targets with learners and monitor their progress more closely in lessons
 - use assessment information about learners more constructively when teaching
 - ensure formal written feedback tells learners in clear detail how they can improve
 - integrate English and mathematics functional skills more effectively within all lessons
- Ensure the process for observing teaching, learning and assessment focuses more on learning and assessment and identifies more clearly what tutors need to do to improve their own teaching and ensure its impact on learners.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The outcomes for learners at asphaleia are good as most learners' progress into further education, training and employment from their study programme. asphaleia has an excellent record of helping learners to 'get back on track' as a large proportion of learners join them with no formal qualifications. Very many learners say they start learning with asphaleia because it provides the security and stability in their lives that they have not had.
- asphaleia has improved the achievement rates of its learners over the last two years, despite the barriers that the learners face. These include, for example, being out of education or training for long periods, and newly arrived, unaccompanied young people seeking asylum, or the large number of those who are looked after children and care leavers.
- The majority of learners develop their readiness for work by improving their skills in mathematics and English. They take their qualifications when they are ready, although for many their progress is slow. However, whilst attending their study programme, learners gain very useful broader skills in areas such as food hygiene and customer service enhancing their work related skills.
- Through the persistent support of skilled and dedicated project workers, many learners improve their self-esteem and develop greater confidence and social skills. They also start to appreciate the benefits that learning brings to them and their prospects for a better job.
- During the inspection week, attendance was low in a few classes. This is consistent with patterns of attendance at other times. In some cases learners arrived late and disrupted learning. This is in spite of the clear and strong message about the importance of punctuality and the development of good working and employment practices that asphaleia promotes through its in house 'five tick' approach to developing the employability of learners. These 'five ticks' are the key attributes that tutors expect learners to develop and maintain to make themselves employable.
- asphaleia has successfully and, with clear resolve, recruited many young people who are typically labelled as 'hard to reach' because it provides a programme that is flexible, accessible and built around their needs. These focused programmes have high success rates and give the learners their first steps into taking part in education or training again, helping them to overcome their own apprehensions caused by unsuccessful experiences.

- The introduction of the study programme has helped asphaleia to promote and further develop its programme of enrichment, such as taking part in community events and visits to the Houses of Parliament. Learners gain a good understanding and wider perspective of social responsibilities. Managers have successfully introduced taster days and work experience placements with large local employers which are improving their learners' motivation and appreciation of what employers require of them in the workplace.
- asphaleia has created additional good progression routes to further learning and training since its last inspection and many learners progress on to appropriate courses that were not previously available. This is the result of working carefully with other organisations such as local colleges and employers to provide suitable opportunities. The latest data on its most recent cohort show that four in every five learners progress into appropriate further learning or training.
- The social, cultural, and ethnic make-up of the learners is very diverse and there are no significant differences in the success rates between the different groups of learners, young men and women or learners with a learning difficulty or disability and their peers.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Tutors provide calm, welcoming lessons that help learners to gain confidence in themselves and in learning. Many learners who are coming back into learning have no previous qualifications or only a few basic level qualifications and they thrive in the small groups with the personal attention and help that they receive. They steadily develop positive attitudes to learning that are reflected in the good outcomes and high rates at which they progress onto further learning or training.
- The positive environment and help from their peers raise their belief in what they can achieve. The learner of the month award and its practical rewards demonstrates the impact of positive thinking and motivational messages for raising learners' aspirations.
- The behaviour of the majority of learners is polite and they try hard in lessons and are not put off by a very few who have not understood the importance of self-control and taking responsibility for their behaviour and learning. Tutors manage behaviour and rare 'outbursts' of frustration sensibly, avoiding confrontation. A few tutors, however, do not challenge the learners' own low expectations or reinforce codes of behaviour and good habits such as listening to instructions and asking for help when needed, in line with the 'five-ticks' code that asphaleia operate.
- Tutors and support staff are well-qualified and use their specialist knowledge well in planning and being well-prepared with suitable resources to hand. However, they do not always take full account of the different starting points of their learners.
- On a one-to-one level in lessons, tutors effectively help and support learners. They give the attention when it is needed. When teaching to a group as a whole, a minority of tutors do not manage this with sufficient authority and effective management of the time. The result is that tutors do the work for learners or do not allow enough time for learners to consolidate learning. Recap of learning at the end of lessons becomes hurried or does not take place and learners leave not briefed or sufficiently prepared for their next lesson.
- Tutors have not yet fully integrated the teaching of English and mathematics functional skills across the study programme. In the more effective lessons in English, learners improve their written and language skills and apply them to new tasks and situations. For example, tutors use card games in pairs to improve memory and understanding of homophones. However, in the less successful lessons, learners do not make sufficient progress. Spelling is corrected in written work but not enough attention is paid to speaking or writing skills within classroom activities.
- In mathematics lessons, there are not enough planned opportunities to develop the language skills needed to successfully complete their mathematics assessments. However, one good example is where learners improve their mathematical ability to calculate and understand how

to work out getting the best value when faced with deliberately unclear advertising. In some lessons, learners do not see the relevance of tasks and find the worksheets dull.

- The provision for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is good. In lessons, learners develop good language skills and knowledge which are reinforced through good follow-up activities. Interesting and challenging activities stimulate them to want to do well. However, the targets for improving that the tutors negotiate with the learners focus too much on gaining the qualification. Although tutors frequently check learners' understanding in lessons, correction and assessment of written work is not always thorough and assessment tests do not sufficiently analyse learners' speaking and listening skills at pre-entry level.
- Learners studying media enjoy and benefit from inspiring use of equipment and excellent resources. They undertake with relish and great enthusiasm the opportunity and responsibility for producing a film with up-to-date production equipment and exploit the various everyday situations in the centre to produce high quality work.
- Lessons to develop employability skills are excellent. Learners demonstrate their knowledge and skills particularly well and know what to do when planning and setting up activities for nursery aged children for example. They work together productively, ensuring they complete tasks to a high standard. Tutorials focusing on employability skills are very effective and enable learners to clearly think through problems and challenges. Tutors are well prepared and learners enjoy their sessions.
- Assessment of learners' work and in-class verbal assessments give encouraging and motivating comments. The praise and confirmation of tasks done well build the confidence of learners; this is exemplified by the positive response of a small group of learners to the feedback given by the tutor on how they had planned and organised their practical assignment. The feedback on written work, however, does not always explain or detail the small steps learners need to improve.
- Support staff at the different centres accurately assess the needs of learners at the start of their study programme and quickly identify ways of tackling the barriers and difficulties faced. The new electronic individual learning plan is in the process of being fully implemented. It is comprehensive and produces visual diagrams to show the progress of learners. The project workers provide wide ranging support that continues until learners are more confident and independent. The care and support is excellent and explains why so many vulnerable learners are able to complete their courses.
- Learners receive good information and guidance before they start at asphaleia. During their study programme, advice and guidance from the support team is very helpful and forthcoming. However, a few learners at inspection were not clear about their next steps or different choices for progression.
- The very many learners who have experienced difficulties and progress into further learning demonstrate the purpose of asphaleia and the impact of providing equality of opportunity. They study in an environment that is respectful and orderly where they can improve their opportunities to succeed in life. However, not enough tutors develop this further by teaching about diversity and tackling learners' prejudices in their lessons, even when the opportunities arise naturally.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have a clear vision, high aspirations and a strong commitment to provide high quality, easily accessible learning opportunities that are responsive to the needs of the diverse range of young people. They communicate this ambition well to staff who have a good understanding of asphaleia's vision and values and demonstrate this in their everyday work with learners.
- Senior managers successfully promote a culture of continuous improvement. They have implemented a wide range of improvements that are having a positive impact on improving

teaching and learning. For example, the number of learners staying on programme has improved significantly through the work of the retention sub group. However, not all improvements have resulted in consistently good teaching, learning and assessment across all subjects.

- Priorities for organisational development correctly focus on improving performance management, with stretching and measurable targets for improving teaching and learning, learners' achievements and progression. The observation of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection, but it still focuses heavily on assessing teaching activities and does not always adequately evaluate the impact on learners' progress.
- Performance management of tutors is good. Those who are identified as underperforming receive good support from managers to improve. High-performing staff share good practice at 'excellence surgeries'. Where improvement has not been achieved, performance management procedures have been effective in tackling poor performance. Continuous professional development is effective.
- The self-assessment report accurately identifies strengths and the key areas for improvement, although not enough focus is given to teaching, learning and assessment. Well-planned, newly-introduced arrangements use the views of learners' thoughtfully in evaluating teaching and learning and how well their various needs are being appropriately met.
- Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have successfully introduced study programmes. These meet the needs of the local community and learners very well, many of whom have challenging needs and barriers to learning. Strong partnerships with, for example, schools, colleges, local authorities and employers have resulted in community and social projects and programmes that meet the complex needs of a diverse group of learners, which change their attitudes to education and which raise their aspirations.
- Effective partnerships with voluntary organisations and charities are also having an excellent impact on giving learners good opportunities to develop the skills they will need. As a result, they are well equipped to progress to further learning and employment. Providing equality of opportunity and good prospects to improve their chances in life demonstrates asphaleia's vision in practice.
- Learners who come from a wide range of backgrounds treat one another with respect. Training in equality and diversity has been well planned and major topics covered well so that tutors and support staff know and understand how to work with learners from different backgrounds. Managers analyse learners' performance carefully and take decisive steps to ensure that the different groups of learners do equally well.
- asphaleia meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Learners feel safe and secure in their learning. Safe recruitment practices are highly effective. Managers and staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding. Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out for all activities involving learners and good use is made of a risk register to manage and learn from incidents. Health and safety are well managed and monitored.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)**asphaleia training**

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
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
Employability training	2

Type of provider	Independent learning provider								
Age range of learners	16-18								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: N/A								
	Part-time: 496								
Principal/CEO	David Cottrell								
Date of previous inspection	October 2011								
Website address	www.asphaleia.co.uk								
Provider information at the time of the inspection									
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above		
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
Full-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Part-time	123	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	-		-		-				
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+			
	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Number of learners aged 14-16									
Full-time	N/A								
Part-time	N/A								
Number of community learners	N/A								
Number of employability learners	N/A								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Not applicable								

Contextual information

asphaleia is a registered charity and a limited company. Its head office is in Worthing. It has learning centres in three locations across Sussex and one in West London, which specialises in ESOL. These centres are open 52 weeks of the year and provide learning to meet the needs of young people such as young refugees in Uxbridge and other vulnerable young people or those who have not been in education and training. asphaleia works with local authorities, colleges, the Prince's Trust, other voluntary organisations and schools. It provides apprenticeships as a subcontractor of a local college. It offers qualifications at pre-entry through to level 2, as well as other recognised certificates of achievement and aims to enable young people to make a positive transition into further learning or work. asphaleia's study programmes includes six subject areas and comprises work related learning and personal development courses focusing on developing confidence, self-awareness and self-management.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Peter Green HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the managing 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, 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 relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject area 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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