

Archway Academy Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		05–08 May 2015
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:

- the large majority of learners make very good progress, achieve their vocational and employability qualifications, move on to higher level courses and gain employment
- a very high number of learners develop good vocational skills such as bricklaying and hairdressing, produce work of a high standard and increase their self-confidence
- almost all learners make good progress with developing their mathematics skills in vocational lessons
- staff provide highly effective, personal support which motivates learners, helps them to overcome difficulties and ensures they develop a good range of relevant employability skills
- most staff provide highly effective verbal feedback to learners and make sure they know exactly what to do to improve the standard of their work
- staff use high-quality information, careers advice and guidance very effectively to ensure learners make informed choices about the next step in their learning and career
- excellent partnerships with employers provide a very good range of work placements and ensure that courses are highly relevant and meet local and national skills shortages, particularly in construction
- leaders and managers are ambitious for the success of all learners, understand their provision well and have taken positive action to make improvements since the last inspection.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- tutors do not make good enough use of initial assessment results to make sure the teaching of English and mathematics meets consistently well the needs of all learners
- the marking of learners' written work and target-setting at reviews are not always thorough enough to ensure all learners can make the progress of which they are capable
- the application of health and safety procedures is not always careful enough to ensure the thorough management of all risks
- tutors do not do enough to promote learners' understanding of equality and diversity in lessons.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure staff make full and effective use of progress reviews and initial assessment results to set clear targets and plan lessons thoroughly to meet the individual needs and interests of all learners, particularly in English and mathematics lessons.
- Identify and share excellent practice to provide outstanding teaching, learning and assessment for all learners and ensure consistent, high-quality written feedback, including the correction of written English in vocational sessions, so that learners understand fully what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure all staff and learners follow carefully all health and safety procedures, particularly keeping fire escape routes clear of obstacles and correct use of personal protective equipment in vocational sessions, so that all risks are managed effectively and learners remain safe.
- Improve staff appraisal arrangements by increasing the effectiveness of the links between observations of teaching, learning and assessment and actions for staff development, so that all staff fully understand exactly what they need to do to deliver outstanding lessons.
- Ensure all staff receive good training and guidance to enable them to use effective activities to promote equality and diversity in lessons, so that learners gain an increased understanding of the importance and value of fairness and inclusion in their local communities and the wider world.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Archway Academy Limited has 53 learners on study programmes and one learner on a pre-employment traineeship. The vast majority of learners are aged 16 to 18, and are studying at introductory level. Vocational training, work experience and qualifications are available in a broad range of subjects including construction, painting and decorating, art, carpentry, hospitality and hairdressing.
- Qualification success rates are good with an increasing number of learners gaining their qualifications. The proportion of learners who complete their course is exceptionally high. Learners enjoy learning and value the very good support they receive from the staff. Progression between levels of study is good and increasing steadily.
- All learners make good progress over time compared with their starting points and develop increased self-confidence and good personal and social skills; for example, better time-management so they are not late for appointments and good personal organisation so that they arrive for interviews well prepared and motivated. This ensures that learners become better prepared for employment and are more successful in further education and training.
- Almost all learners make very good progress as they take on new and exciting challenges such as outward-bound activities. They learn to go beyond their usual boundaries and discover new ways of experiencing personal achievement through sustained effort and hard work. Opportunities to experience leadership roles and team-work provide many learners with the motivation and encouragement they need to push themselves further.
- Learners produce work of a good standard. They receive good advice on the benefits of continuing with further training and developing their skills, qualifications and experience. There are currently no significant gaps in the achievement of different groups of learners.

- Learners' achievement of qualifications in mathematics and English is improving significantly; they develop a very good awareness of how to use mathematics in their vocational sessions, such as measuring volume and area to calculate the materials required in construction projects. However, in other lessons, learners are less successful in their progress with English and mathematics because not all tutors do enough to make sure that they meet learners' individual learning needs.
- Attendance rates have improved steadily since the previous inspection and are now good. Tutors place strong emphasis on developing learners' employability skills such as reliability and using their initiative effectively. Learners' behaviour is good; they have positive attitudes to learning and a 'can-do' approach to work.
- Learners make very good progress in developing their skills and self-confidence to overcome personal challenges. They learn how to manage their personal finances, show good levels of respect for other people and make appropriate use of the correct sources for accurate information and good advice when they need help.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved steadily since the previous inspection and is now good. This is reflected in the high proportion of learners who gain qualifications and make good progress in the development of their vocational skills, and in their improved chances of finding employment.
- Tutors use their good levels of skills and experience very effectively to ensure that an increasing proportion of learners are successful. However, recent changes to the arrangements for teaching English and mathematics have resulted in too many learners not making the level of progress expected of them.
- Tutors ensure that learners perform practical, vocational tasks to a high standard. For example, learners in hospitality are setting tables correctly for different dining experiences and can fold napkins into quite intricate and attractive shapes. Learners are not always able to identify what they have learnt in lessons and what they need to do to improve further because written feedback is not always detailed enough.
- Staff provide well-crafted, highly effective individual support that significantly improves learners' personal and social skills, such as in debt management and relationship and health problems. Tutors work effectively in partnership with a wide range of organisations to develop learners' understanding of critical issues such as knife crime, sexual exploitation and health issues. The training centre provides an inclusive learning environment where learners demonstrate mutual respect and learn to listen to each other and consider alternative views and opinions. However, staff do not always promote learners' understanding of equality and diversity well enough within lessons.
- A large proportion of learners undertake high-quality work placements provided by dedicated employers. Learners work hard, developing their confidence and social skills and broadening their experience. The provider has very well established relationships with local business networks, and there are good examples of learners gaining employment directly as a result of their work placement.
- Arrangements for initial assessment and advice and guidance are good. Learners are placed on the appropriate level of qualification and a few make sufficient progress to move up to higher levels. Staff track the progress made by learners very effectively, and this provides a clear picture of what learners have achieved. However, tutors do not use this information effectively enough to ensure that all learners are challenged to achieve their full potential. Target-setting at reviews is sometimes weak and in a few cases unrealistic.

- Learning resources are of good quality, particularly in the vocational teaching areas, and accurately reflect those used in the work placements. This helps learners to become familiar with materials such as mortar used in construction, and equipment such as styling-brushes used in hairdressing. However, a small proportion of the study materials contain text that is too complex for many of the learners to understand fully. Information technology is available to learners and is used appropriately to enhance learning.
- Tutors very effectively reinforce and check on learning in lessons. They use praise appropriately to motivate learners and when giving individual feedback. Most tutors continually assess learners' work and provide good feedback to help learners improve. In a few lessons tutors' questioning is ineffective, as learners are either not able to answer or find the subject too easy.
- Staff do not always plan for the development of mathematics skills well enough to meet the wide range of levels, needs and abilities of all learners. Consequently, not all learners make sufficient progress and too many become bored. Tutors do not ensure that the more able learners receive sufficient challenge. However, learners make good progress developing their mathematics skills during their vocational lessons. For example, construction learners confidently draw to scale, calculate volume and work out proportions when mixing mortar.
- Arrangements for ensuring all learners develop good skills in English are not rigorous enough. Tutors do not ensure that material is adapted well enough to match the different levels and abilities of all learners. Learning activities sometimes lack variety and consequently, a few learners lose concentration. Tutors do not do enough to challenge the more able learners so they often lose interest. While learners are confident using technical language, the development of written English in vocational work is less well developed.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and managers provide good strategic direction for the organisation. They have high ambition for all learners through their vision to do whatever they can to ensure all learners receive the correct support and training they need to be successful. All staff receive good support and training which enables them to provide highly effective learning and progression opportunities for learners.
- Since the previous inspection, managers have set and met demanding targets for improvements in learners' attendance and achievement of qualifications. Despite a high turnover in training staff, the provider has successfully improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in most areas, although English and mathematics teaching requires further improvement.
- Management of the study programme is good. Communication is very effective because managers make sure that all staff are clear about priorities. The study programme manager leads a motivational planning meeting with tutors each morning to discuss targets for the day, identifying key issues relating to individual learners. All staff, including the executive managing director, meet weekly to discuss performance, quality and other operational issues.
- Quality improvement and performance management arrangements are highly effective. Managers make very good use of data to identify trends in performance and to measure the impact and progress of improvement initiatives. Managers observe tutors regularly and provide developmental feedback which is directly linked to targets on action plans which address areas for improvement. Where staff do not meet the required standard, appropriate action is taken to address underperformance. However, managers do not always use performance reviews well enough to check that staff have completed the tasks set for them.
- Managers have made significant progress since the previous inspection in developing effective processes to ensure all aspects of the study programmes improve, such as progress reviews, assessment and target-setting.

- Self-assessment is very effective and takes into account the views of staff, learners and employers. The process is rigorous and the self-assessment report includes a thorough analysis of data on learners' attendance and achievements. Effective processes are in place to take account of the views of learners and their parents. The self-assessment report highlights most of the strengths and areas for development identified by inspectors, and contains accurate judgements.
- The programmes meet the needs of learners, employers and the local community well. The provider has extensive local links which benefit learners. For example, it has a vast range of high-quality and supportive work placements. In appropriate cases, managers ensure that parents and carers of learners receive regular updates on progress.
- The promotion equality and diversity is a high priority for leaders and managers. Learners are recruited from diverse ethnic groups and have a wide range of characteristics and additional learning needs. Staff work effectively to create a culture of respect and understanding throughout the organisation. Staff take learners' welfare very seriously and identify and resolve appropriately any breach of the equality and diversity policies and expectations.
- Managers undertake close analysis of achievement data to identify differences in the achievement of different groups of learners. Where gaps are identified positive actions follow promptly to address any inequalities. The provider has correctly identified that staff require further training to enable them to promote equality and diversity more effectively in lessons.
- Safeguarding arrangements require improvement. Staff and learners have a clear understanding of safeguarding and the processes to follow should concerns arise. All staff have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training including the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, and the designated senior staff responsible for safeguarding have attended advanced training. The provider maintains a central record of staff checks and follows careful staff recruitment processes. However, not all staff and learners comply with the provider's health and safety guidance. For example, learners and some staff do not wear identity badges and fire escape routes are not kept clear.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Archway Academy Limited

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	2				
Outcomes for learners	2			2	2				
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2			2	2				
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2			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+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	179								
Managing Director	Mr Jim Ryan								
Date of previous inspection	February 2014								
Website address	www.archwayacademy.org.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+	
	53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+			
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	0		1		1				
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A								
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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A. 								

Contextual information

Archway Academy Limited is a private education and training organisation established in 2004, in Bordesley, east Birmingham. This inspection report covers the training provided to young people aged 16 to 19 on the study programme and traineeships. The education provided to boys and girls aged 10 to 16 who attend the linked school is inspected separately under the independent schools' standards. Learners receive training in English and mathematics as well as undertaking vocational qualifications including in bricklaying, carpentry, painting and decorating, hospitality, art, hairdressing and beauty therapy. Learners represent the diverse backgrounds of the local multi-cultural communities. Many learners have recognised learning difficulties and/or disabilities such as dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or Asperger's syndrome.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Daniel Grant Additional Inspector

Four additional inspectors, assisted by the Quality and Improvement Officer 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 looked at records of 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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