

# ALM Training Services Limited

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

19–21 April 2016

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Trainers do not plan theory sessions well enough to meet fully the identified needs of all learners.
- Managers do not record quality improvement activities sufficiently to support their ability to monitor the impact of improvements regularly.
- Trainers do not challenge learners sufficiently to enable them to achieve their full potential in mathematics and English.
- Managers do not analyse data well enough to enable them to identify trends quickly so that they can take prompt action when necessary to ensure learners make good progress.
- A minority of learners do not remain on the programme to complete their qualification aims.
- The attendance of a few learners is low.

### The provider has the following strengths

- The large majority of learners who complete the study programme gain their qualifications.
- Learners achieve high standards in their vocational work because trainers have high expectations and are ambitious for them to succeed.
- Learners benefit from the good training in practical warehousing skills.
- Managers have selected relevant short courses that provide learners with useful skills and certificates for gaining employment.
- Learners quickly develop self-confidence, learn to behave and speak appropriately and arrive punctually in readiness for work experience and employment.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- ALM Training Services Limited (ALM) has its head office in Tilbury. It offers a study programme in warehousing and storage in Colchester for 15 learners who were previously not in education, employment or training and who had no, or very few, qualifications when they started. The first full year of the programme was in 2014/15. The programme relocated to a more accessible site in the centre of Colchester two weeks prior to the inspection. Two trainers develop the learners' vocational skills, along with a teacher who works part time to develop English and mathematics.
- In addition, ALM provides warehouse and logistics training to a range of employers and for other providers, but none of this provision was within the scope of this inspection.

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

- Ensure that trainers plan lessons to take into account the starting points of learners and the results of their progress reports, so that all learners are supported and challenged to achieve their full potential and gain functional skills qualifications in mathematics and English at the highest level of which they are capable.
- As a matter of urgency, develop ways of recording quality improvement activities, including the observation of teaching, learning and assessment, so that managers can monitor required improvements regularly to ensure that they are having a positive impact on learners' progress and trainers can share good practice.
- Analyse and evaluate data more thoroughly, especially on learners' progress and achievement, so that managers can identify trends in performance and take action quickly when learners are at risk of not completing their aims.
- Monitor retention rates carefully to see whether recent actions to improve retention help learners to stay on the programme to the end.
- Improve attendance for the few learners whose attendance is low by continuing to contact them on the day of their absence so that they benefit from the learning they are offered.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because managers have not put in place sufficiently robust systems to ensure that teaching and learning are of a consistently high quality. Managers give useful oral feedback to trainers following their quality assurance visits and observations but do not record it. This limits their ability to monitor the improvements they request, focus staff development to meet trainers' needs and to share the good practice that they see. However, their performance management actions following observations are effective in ensuring that trainers successfully build a good rapport with learners and develop their practical skills well.
- The analysis of data is not yet good. Managers collect sufficient accurate data on learners' progress from their starting points and their achievement and progression into employment and training, but they do not analyse it well enough to identify trends quickly and put interventions in place if learners are at risk of not achieving.
- Managers and trainers have high ambitions for their learners, most of whom have multiple barriers to learning; they are committed to helping them gain employment or further training. As a result, most learners gain good personal, social and employability skills to prepare them for the next stage in their careers. Although learners understand the importance of mathematics and English, trainers do not give these skills sufficient priority at the start of the programme; consequently, learners' progress in English and mathematics is too slow.
- Managers work closely with the local authority, local enterprise partnership and local employers to design the study programme well to reduce the number of learners who are not in education, employment or training in north Essex and to give learners skills relevant to local job opportunities. They consult closely with the local authority and the youth offending team and have staff with expertise to adapt the programme quickly to meet changing needs when these are identified. Managers and trainers successfully stimulate interest in warehousing skills, for example by taking a lorry fitted with lift truck driving simulators both to schools careers fairs and to rural areas.
- The self-assessment report is broadly accurate and reflects the findings of this inspection. Managers understand their provision well. Actions to improve provision are in place, but have not yet had sufficient impact on learners and learning.
- Trainers promote equal opportunities well through discussion of topical events and by relevant posters and information displayed around the learning area. Learners are made aware of the dangers of low-level harassment and diversity, for example of the potential for over-dominance of male culture within the industry. An anti-bullying policy is well designed to include questions for staff to ask, so that staff take appropriate action to resolve situations.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - This is a company owned entirely by the managing director who is responsible for all aspects of the company. As such, it has no governance overseeing the provision.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
  - All staff have checks to ensure that they can work safely with young people, and have completed safeguarding training.
  - The designated officer has links with the local authority safeguarding manager, and has completed training in Channel referrals, awareness of female genital mutilation and forced marriage and has shared this information so that other staff are aware of what to do if they have concerns about learners.
  - All staff have received 'Prevent' duty training, and this has led to the protection of one learner from pressure from an extremist group.
  - Fortnightly visits from a money advisory service help learners to understand how to manage money, which have succeeded in helping a learner avoid financial manipulation by an adult.
  - Learners say they feel safe.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because trainers do not ensure that theory sessions are designed to help all learners make good progress. Learners' starting points are assessed thoroughly at the start of the course, but trainers do not use this information well enough to plan lessons

that stretch the most able and support those who need further help. In a minority of sessions, trainers do not check learning and use questioning in order to probe and elicit a deeper understanding by learners, to provide a clear view of whether learners are ready to move on.

- Learners enjoy their practical training in the warehouse. Trainers use their considerable knowledge and expertise to provide learning activities that excite and interest learners; they set high standards for driving skills and provide learners with a detailed understanding of health and safety. They use high-quality training videos in the classroom that reinforce learners' understanding. As a result, learners who attend frequently are becoming skilled lift truck operatives.
- Trainers know their learners well and provide much effective coaching, particularly in practical and employment skills; consequently, learners develop a useful range of abilities that will stand them in good stead when they start employment or an apprenticeship. For example, most use lift trucks carefully and safely in very confined spaces to load and unload warehouse racking. Most become more reliable and develop good team working skills. As a result, most of those who complete the course gain jobs in warehousing or similar trades. A significant number return to full-time education.
- Learners benefit from training and support that engage them and develop their self-confidence. They develop useful skills that prepare them well for employment and daily life. Learners improve their personal attitudes towards learning, and as a result gain self-belief and improve their behaviour.
- Managers give learners detailed information, advice and guidance at the start of the programme and learners are given good advice about other training routes when their aspirations cannot be met by ALM. For example, a learner who wished to qualify in animal care was directed to an appropriate course. Another learner was helped to gain the improved grades she needed and now attends a college course. Although trainers give learners accurate and impartial advice about future employment and training, and most learners want to progress to apprenticeships, they do not understand in detail what this entails and trainers do not challenge them sufficiently to gain the level of functional skills they need to enable them to become apprentices.
- The formal assessment given by trainers is frequent, accurate and reliable. Learners work through their course using log books to record their answers and have their skills signed off when competent. Trainers' feedback to learners provides helpful advice on how they can improve their work and refine their skills; this motivates the majority of learners to do their best and work hard.
- Trainers and administrators track and monitor learners' progress effectively and learners collaborate with staff in setting their long- and short-term goals and targets. For the majority this helps them focus on improving attendance and progress. Trainers set high expectations for the learners' practical knowledge and skills, but learners are less aware of the improvements required in their work, particularly in English and mathematics, which limits their progress in these key employment skills.
- Trainers are good role models for the industry and help overcome learners' barriers to learning. In progress reviews, trainers encourage learners to discuss aspects of diversity so that they are better prepared for working with a wide range of people in a workplace setting.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

are good

- Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good because trainers have a good rapport with their learners and, as a result, learners who were previously not in education, employment or training learn skills that increase their confidence and prepare them well for entering employment. Learners are respectful of the staff and each other. They are committed to the programme, and make progress in spite of their significant barriers to learning. They take pride in their work and can explain their skills and knowledge clearly and confidently. They see warehousing and lift truck qualifications as a good passport to continuous employment. Their occasional lapses into inappropriate language and behaviour are quickly and appropriately challenged by staff.
- Trainers are ambitious for their learners and set high expectations for knowledge and skill development. Learners follow their trainers' instructions well in sessions and are well motivated to extend their learning independently by completing their workbooks in their own time. Although the majority of learners are not fully confident with writing, they produce detailed answers to the questions in their workbooks.
- Learners understand the importance of personal protective equipment in protecting themselves and others from harm and are diligent in wearing safety boots and high visibility vests. They understand and adhere to the key safety regulations for warehousing. Learners understand how to stay safe online, but are less sure about how to deal with extremist behaviour. Training in this and in British values is planned

but has not yet taken place.

- Learners develop good spoken English skills. They are articulate and discuss their work at length and with confidence. Although their written English skills are less well developed, they have helpful sessions on letter writing and how to improve their letters of application. While practising their interview techniques with each other and providing peer feedback they demonstrate their good understanding of how to express themselves well in this important formal situation. However, learners are not developing their mathematics and written English skills rapidly enough to prepare them for an apprenticeship. Information and communications technology skills are not included in the programme sufficiently.
- Learners benefit from well-chosen, additional short courses on employment rights and responsibilities, plant operations and training in health and safety, through which they gain their licence to work on large construction sites. In 2013/14 and 2014/15 learners gained valuable work experience while refurbishing buildings for local providers. Managers have planned work experience for the current group, both through the links with other providers and the employers for whom they provide commercial training, but this has not yet taken place.
- Attendance for a few learners is not yet good. Although attendance is cited in progress reviews, there are too few targets or actions set for improvement.

## Outcomes for learners

## require improvement

- Not enough learners remain on the programme to achieve their main learning aims; however, most remained until the final month when the focus of training shifted from developing broad skills for employment, to preparing for functional skills tests in English and mathematics. Those who left in the final month without completing their qualification aims gained in-house certificates in warehousing and health and safety. In the first full year of the programme, 2014/15, the majority of learners stayed until the end of the programme, all of whom were previously not in education, employment or training.
- Pass rates are high for those who remain. In 2014/15 all learners who remained until the end of the course gained functional skills in mathematics, and almost all achieved their qualifications in functional skills in English, employment rights and responsibilities in the logistics environment at level 2, warehousing and storage at level 1, and health and safety at work at level 1. This included their certification to work on construction sites.
- Progression rates into employment, training and education are not high enough. Around half of learners in 2014/15 progressed into employment and education, including into apprenticeships. However, most of those who did not progress, including those who did not achieve their qualifications, are searching for training or employment opportunities and managers offer them on-going advice and guidance to help them achieve their goals.
- Trainers ensure that they set learners high and challenging targets in their practical work, for example learners drive lift trucks safely and comply with the high standards they are set. However, trainers do not challenge all learners sufficiently in their English and mathematics and as a result learners do not achieve their full potential.
- Current learners enjoy learning. They make good progress in self-confidence and are able to communicate and behave appropriately in interviews and workplaces.
- There are no discernible gaps in the achievement of different groups.

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16–18
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	19
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mr Darren Coleman
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.almtrainingservices.co.uk">www.almtrainingservices.co.uk</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

<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>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<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+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0					
<b>Number of learners aged 14–16</b>	0							
<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>■ No subcontractors</li> </ul>							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Pauline Hawkesford, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Martin Bennett

Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the quality and operations manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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