

Academy Transformation Trust Further Education

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

6–9 June 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Adult learning programmes	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- The standard of learners' and apprentices' work is good and they develop good vocational skills; employers are impressed at the rate at which learners acquire new skills.
- Tutors have high expectations for learners and apprentices, plan lessons well and make learning interesting and enjoyable. As a result, the vast majority of learners are well motivated, participate in learning and make good progress.
- Learners and apprentices receive good support and guidance from staff when recruited and throughout their programmes.
- Staff work closely with local employers to offer programmes that meet employers' needs and ensure that meaningful work experience and work placements are available for learners.
- Leaders and managers have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and, as a result, a high proportion of learners and apprentices achieve their qualifications and go on to further study, employment or an apprenticeship.
- In a minority of learning sessions, tutors do not stretch the most able learners to work on more challenging tasks in class or further their knowledge.
- The development of learners' English and mathematics skills varies considerably between the different provision types.
- The proportion of learners and apprentices who achieve a good pass in GCSE English and mathematics or who successfully complete their functional skills qualifications is too low.
- Learners on study programmes do not maintain good attendance, especially in English and mathematics.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Academy Transformation Trust Further Education (ATTFE) is part of a national multi-academy trust with 11 primary schools and 10 secondary schools across the country. ATTFE was created from the academy conversion of two Nottinghamshire local authority maintained schools. It has Education Funding Agency (EFA) and Skills Funding Agency (SFA) contracts that began on 1 January 2013. ATTFE's provision is concentrated in the former north Nottinghamshire coalfields where unemployment is above the national average.
- Around 574 learners and apprentices study with ATTFE and its subcontractor. Some 150 are intermediate and advanced apprentices, of whom 133 are aged 19 or over. Around 80 learners aged 16 to 19 are on study programmes. Approximately 340 are on adult learning programmes, including employability programmes. Nearly half of the 107 apprentices are on advanced-level programmes. Precisely 45 learners study with the subcontractor, of whom 19 are on adult learning programmes, and 26 are on study programmes.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the overall quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - all teaching staff plan and use activities that meet learners' needs and challenge them to achieve or exceed their targets
 - tutors provide activities during learning sessions that stretch all learners, especially the most able.
- Improve learners' English and mathematics skills by ensuring that tutors:
 - implement fully the current plans to improve all learners' English and mathematics skills earlier in their programmes
 - set challenging targets and provide detailed feedback that extend learners' English and mathematics skills
 - promote effectively the application of English and mathematics skills in the workplace and in everyday life
 - maintain the focus on improving learners' attendance in English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and managers have successfully maintained the strengths identified at the previous inspection and resolved most of the weaknesses, while managing significant organisational change. At the same time, they have also ensured that all programmes and types of provision meet in full the requirements of the relevant funding and awarding bodies.
- Senior leaders and managers are ambitious for learners and apprentices. They have a clear focus that all staff share on bringing about improvements. The quality of provision has improved as a consequence of leaders' careful attention to eradicating poor teaching and learning and ensuring robust performance management, including that of subcontractors.
- Outcomes for learners and apprentices have improved since the previous inspection. ATTFE's tutors and assessors are highly focused on preparing learners and apprentices to gain the skills and attitudes required for their next steps; as a result, the large majority go on to further education, training or employment.
- Managers have improved their monitoring of learners' and apprentices' progress, including the progress of those in subcontracted provision. Monthly caseload management meetings with the subcontractor focus clearly on overall achievement. Managers take prompt action to ensure that apprentices are on target to complete within the planned timescale.
- Performance management arrangements are good. Leaders have applied effective procedures for identifying and, where appropriate, removing staff who consistently under-perform. Regular meetings between senior managers and curriculum managers ensure that tutors are held to account for the quality of provision for which they are responsible.
- Managers use the results of observations of teaching and learning to help tutors improve. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all of the framework types is good.
- Senior leaders and managers work effectively with a range of partners, including employers and Jobcentre Plus staff to plan and deliver education and training that meets national, regional and local priorities. The provision of a range of adult learning programmes that enable learners from disadvantaged backgrounds to participate in education and gain skills for employment is a direct result of these links. The impact of locating learning centres in areas of relative economic deprivation has been to widen participation in learning by the most disadvantaged groups.
- Action planning for improvement has been very effective. Staff at all levels take responsibility for ensuring that they carry out improvements promptly and that learners benefit from the impact of these actions. The self-assessment report correctly identifies almost all of the provider's strengths and areas for improvement. As a consequence, leaders' self-assessment judgements for all aspects of provision matched those given by inspectors.
- Managers have successfully introduced and integrated the promotion and reinforcement of British values and awareness of the risks posed to learners and apprentices by the

threat of radicalisation and extremist ideologies. As a result, learners and apprentices have a good working understanding of how to keep themselves safe from these threats.

The governance of the provider

- Governance is effective. The board of directors and senior leadership team accurately identify the most significant areas for improvement, such as the poor achievements in English and mathematics and the lack of sufficient challenge for the most able learners in a minority of lessons.
- Directors are well informed about the performance of subcontracted provision and have taken decisive action to deal with poor-quality provision.
- Directors and senior managers have produced detailed action plans to drive up the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for learners and apprentices. Significant in-year improvements are evident in the progress made by apprentices and by learners on study programmes. However, it is too early to judge the full impact of these actions.
- Directors have a diverse range of skills which equip them well to challenge and support ATTFE's senior leaders.
- Directors have a clear vision for the future of ATTFE and they have a suitably clear grasp of what has improved and what needs to improve further.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding officer provides effective leadership to ensure the safety of learners and apprentices.
- Tutors, assessors and relevant staff regularly receive training to reinforce their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding principles and procedures. Designated safeguarding officers investigate thoroughly incidents referred to them and maintain accurate records of the actions taken.
- Managers ensure that subcontractors carry out comprehensive vetting of their staff and maintain accurate staff records.
- Learners and apprentices feel safe. They have a good understanding of safeguarding topics, including how to stay safe online.
- Tutors and assessors carefully maintain the health and safety of learners and apprentices in the workplace. Apprentices demonstrate safe working practices.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Tutors and assessors have high expectations of their learners and apprentices. Tutors plan lessons well and, in the majority of cases, they make good use of the available information on learners' and apprentices' prior attainment and aptitudes to devise learning activities that meet their needs.
- The teaching of practical subjects for learners on study programmes and off-the-job training for apprentices are good. Tutors are highly experienced in their vocational

subjects and they use their skills and enthusiasm to motivate and inspire learners and apprentices to progress and achieve. Tutors in hairdressing and beauty therapy, hospitality, catering, and health and social care use their industry and commercial knowledge to help learners and apprentices develop a good range of specialist vocational skills and knowledge that employers value. Adult learners benefit from well-designed and interactive learning activities that help them to achieve high standards.

- ATTFE offers an appropriate induction and pre-course taster sessions for learners on study programmes that help to ensure that they enrol on a course that matches their interests and aspirations. Learners and apprentices receive clear and impartial advice and guidance before they enrol on a course, as well as during their studies.
- The very large majority of learners and apprentices can articulate clearly their next steps and they know what they have to do to achieve their learning or career goals.
- Staff track and monitor learners' and apprentices' progress well. They know how well they are doing, what they need to do to improve and are encouraged to work to the best of their ability and achieve the outcomes of which they are capable. Tutors work well with learners to help them manage their progress and achieve their targets. They take prompt action to ensure that learners do not fall behind with their work.
- Tutors identify learners' support needs promptly. Individual learner support arrangements are good and meet needs well. Tutors make good use of learning support assistants to help learners during sessions. They plan well to support learners with special educational needs such as dyslexia.
- The large majority of learners receive detailed, constructive and developmental feedback from their tutors, which clearly tells them how they can improve their work. In most lessons, tutors check carefully that all learners are ready to progress to the next stage of their learning.
- Workplace assessment for apprentices is good. Assessors plan assessments flexibly to meet the business and commercial pressures of a learner's workplace. Assessors visit frequently to ensure that apprentices have sufficient opportunities to complete their units in the planned timescales. During assessment, apprentices can articulate what they have learned and are able to provide clear explanations of the technical tasks they are carrying out.
- The feedback to apprentices on the work they have completed in their portfolios is comprehensive and clear and enables the apprentice to improve and make progress. Assessors routinely correct spelling and grammar errors to enable apprentices to learn from their mistakes and improve the quality of their written English.
- Learners and apprentices behave well in workshops, classrooms and in the workplace. They respect their peers and are able to communicate well with tutors and colleagues and customers in the workplace. They respect the views of others and use appropriate language in learning sessions. Tutors and assessors promote equality of opportunity and diversity during learning sessions and progress reviews and treat all learners fairly, which they value.
- The development of learners' English and mathematics skills varies markedly between the different provision types. Learners on adult programmes develop good skills in English, especially in the writing of curriculum vitae and job application letters. However, tutors provide few opportunities for learners to develop their mathematics skills in non-

mathematics classes. Learners on study programmes develop useful mathematics skills, particularly on vocational programmes. However, the development of basic reading and writing skills is less effective.

- In a minority of lessons, tutors do not provide sufficiently challenging work for the most able learners. A few learners become disengaged because they finish learning activities before their peers, and tutors do not provide them with additional activities to deepen or broaden their knowledge. The pace of these sessions is often slow. As a result, the most able learners do not produce the work of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- ATTFE offers learning opportunities at a wide range of venues in deprived areas of Ashfield and Ollerton, and surrounding districts in North Nottinghamshire. Staff positively encourage learners to take pride in their work and commitment to learning. Learners and apprentices report that they enjoy learning and the benefits that it brings them.
- Learners develop confidence, self-awareness and an understanding of how to learn independently, especially for those on adult programmes, many of whom have not participated in formal learning since they left school. Adults on employability programmes gain valuable personal and social skills that increase significantly their prospects of employment.
- Learners receive good-quality impartial careers advice and guidance. They are able to articulate their next steps in education and training and many have clear aspirations to achieve in the sector they are studying.
- Learners and apprentices develop very good employability skills. Curriculum staff have well-established links with local and regional employers that have helped to provide good-quality work placements and apprenticeship opportunities. The proportion of adult learners completing the employability skills programme is much higher than for similar providers and many progress into sustained employment, including through academies developed in conjunction with local Jobcentre Plus offices.
- Learners and apprentices are very well behaved and courteous in classrooms, workshops and in the provider's public areas. They work well with each other in class and have good relationships with staff.
- Tutors promote learners' understanding of British values well during learning sessions; a good range of posters and displays in classrooms reinforces these values. The large majority of learners and apprentices have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. They understand why they should be tolerant and respectful of different cultures.
- Attendance is not consistently good across all provision types and subject areas. The attendance of adult learners on employability programmes and apprentices on off-the-job learning sessions is good. Attendance for learners on study programmes is low, especially in English and mathematics classes.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Outcomes for learners and apprentices are good. The proportion of learners on adult programmes who achieve has risen steadily for the last three years and is now similar to that of other providers. Outcomes in 2015/16 were high at entry level and at level 3 but required improvement at levels 1 and 2. In-year data suggests that outcomes at levels 1 and 2 are improving significantly.
- Apprenticeship achievement rates have increased over a two-year period and in 2015/16, were well above the national rate. The achievement rate for learners on study programmes has increased steadily over a three-year period from a low starting point, but it still remains too low.
- Few performance differences exist between different groups of learners. Learners on advanced programmes perform better than those on lower levels of study. Learners who have special educational needs achieve slightly better than their peers. Managers are aware of these disparities and have implemented a range of measures to minimise these performance gaps; however, it is too soon to assess their impact.
- The proportion of learners and apprentices who stay on programme until the end is high. Few learners or apprentices leave their programme early.
- Learners make good progress from their starting points. Those on vocational study programmes gain skills in hairdressing, carpentry and joinery, teaching, and health and social care that considerably improve their employability. Learners produce good-quality work and are proud of their achievements. Apprentices become valuable employees for the companies that employ them. Employers speak very highly of the quality of the work that their apprentices are able to do.
- The proportion of learners who progress into further education, training or employment is high. Almost all apprentices remain in employment after their studies and a minority also go on to study an apprenticeship at a higher level. The majority of learners on study programmes progress into apprenticeships or higher-level study. The few who leave their programme without completing it nevertheless go on into employment or further study.
- Outcomes for learners on study programmes in 2015/16 required improvement. Managers have rightly determined that these low outcomes were largely attributable to learners failing to achieve their English and mathematics qualifications. In-year data suggests that more learners than last year will achieve their qualification in English and mathematics. However, it is too soon to assess the full impact of measures that college managers have taken to improve outcomes in these subjects.
- In 2015/16, the proportion of apprentices who did not achieve their apprenticeship qualification within the planned period of study was below the national rate. Managers swiftly identified performance and quality concerns with two subcontractors as the main cause of this underperformance. Managers have now taken over one of these subcontractors and are in the process of acquiring the other, so that they can directly oversee and manage the quality of this provision. Early indications suggest that current apprentices are making the progress expected of them and that the proportion who have exceeded their planned end date is diminishing rapidly.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- At the time of the inspection, 63 learners aged 16 to 19 were enrolled on full-time vocational study programmes at level 2. The largest vocational areas were hairdressing and beauty therapy, construction, health and social care, and business administration.
- Tutors have high expectations of their learners. They motivate learners to achieve high standards and to prepare for employment. They develop their practical and vocational skills well. Learners' destinations are largely positive, with the majority progressing to an apprenticeship, employment or to study higher-level qualifications.
- Most learners have good subject knowledge as a result of the particularly effective teaching, learning and assessment that they receive. They talk proudly about the skills and knowledge that they have learned during their programmes and how they can apply them in the workplace.
- Behaviour in classes and during breaktimes is good. Learners arrive at class ready and prepared to learn. They demonstrate respect for their peers and for ATTFE staff.
- Learners develop mathematics skills well. They learn how to handle money, measure and calculate areas and quantities of materials. For example, learners who volunteer in the running of ATTFE's student canteen manage stock well, sell products and keep the canteen secure. They work diligently and with minimal supervision.
- Learners have good knowledge of their next steps, including career opportunities. They have access to well-planned work experience, leading to employment or an apprenticeship for a few learners. ATTFE managers have good links with employers, which enable learners to benefit from a broad range of opportunities for work experience.
- ATTFE's pastoral lead, supported by course tutors, manages and provides personalised welfare and pastoral support for learners. As a result, the proportion of learners who leave their programme early is small.
- Learners are safe and know how to keep themselves safe when attending classes, at home and at work. Instances of bullying are rare. Tutors promote British values well through the curriculum, for example by engaging learners in discussions about the threats posed to democracy by the recent attacks in Manchester and London.
- A minority of tutors do not use all of the information available about learners to plan and execute lessons based on learners' individual needs. This results in the most able learners receiving insufficient challenge to meet their full potential. In a few instances, those requiring further academic support do not receive the support that they need to progress and achieve.
- Tutors do not develop learners' English skills sufficiently well. Learners receive insufficient opportunities to help develop their academic writing and research skills to prepare them for higher levels of learning.
- Attendance is too low, particularly in mathematics and English classes.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- At the time of the inspection, ATTFE had enrolled 219 learners on part-time adult programmes at venues across the Ashfield and Ollerton areas of North Nottinghamshire. Most learners were attending courses at levels 1 or 2 in English, mathematics, employability and independent living.
- Teaching is well planned with a good variety of learning activities. Tutors are enthusiastic about their subject and encourage learners to reach their potential; as a result, learners tackle new and challenging tasks positively. Learners work to well-considered short-term targets, which they set jointly with their tutor. They receive detailed feedback on their written work which tells them how to improve and achieve higher marks. Learners on foundation-level courses develop valuable personal, social and employability skills.
- Learners on employability courses discuss the value of different team roles and learn how to write curriculum vitae and cover letters that enable them to apply confidently for jobs. In mathematics, learners confidently set one another questions on topics such as units of conversion.
- Learners on independent living courses develop writing, discussion and presentation skills integrated with topics such as British values, music and horticulture. On the few higher-level courses, such as counselling and therapeutic massage, learners benefit from the considerable industry expertise of tutors.
- Learners with mental health difficulties who found leaving their home difficult now have sufficient confidence to attend classes. They report that their increased well-being and confidence are the result of the support they have received and skills they have developed at ATTFE.
- Managers work well with local partners to help provide new opportunities for the many disadvantaged learners that ATTFE serves. The local Jobcentre Plus office refers learners to programmes which match learners' needs, for example separate programmes for those who have become recently unemployed and for those who are long-term unemployed.
- The creation of sector-based work academies focused on jobs with local employers has led to considerable numbers of learners moving from long-term unemployment into sustainable employment. Jobcentre Plus managers value these programmes because they contribute well to reducing unemployment in identified priority areas.
- A strong community ethos pervades ATTFE. Tutors know their learners well and they provide very good support to help them progress and achieve. ATTFE runs a well-used onsite café which provides adult learners with job search facilities and details of learning opportunities. Through using the café as a base, the local Citizens' Advice Bureau is able to support the often vulnerable adult learners with housing, welfare and financial problems.
- Learners feel safe at ATTFE. Tutors integrate safeguarding topics within programmes, most notably e-safety and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Learners engage well in mature class discussions on these topics.
- Tutors develop learners' English skills well, for example by identifying and correcting punctuation and grammatical errors in written work and encouraging the use of dictionaries to check the spelling of unfamiliar words. On a few courses, tutors provide

learners with mathematics-related activities. However, opportunities to develop mathematics skills across the curriculum are generally limited.

- In a minority of lessons, tutors do not use strategies to challenge the most able learners to achieve their full potential. In these sessions, all learners work on the same task, despite their different abilities and starting points. Although less-able learners receive support in class, not enough tutors stretch the most able to complete challenging tasks or deepen their knowledge. For these learners, the pace of sessions is often too slow.

Apprenticeships

Good

- At the time of the inspection, 107 apprentices were on programmes. Most apprentices are aged over 19 and a majority are on an advanced apprenticeship programme. ATTFE's apprenticeship provision, all of which it delivers directly, meets in full the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship programme.
- The number of apprentices who successfully complete their framework has increased over the last two years and was well above the national rate in 2015/16. However, the proportion who complete within the planned period has not risen so quickly. Prompt in-year action by managers has resulted in a significant decline in the number of apprentices who had exceeded their planned end date, from around 30 to just five at the time of the inspection. Current apprentices make at least the progress expected of them and most are on target to achieve within the planned timescales.
- Tutors, assessors and employers have high expectations for their apprentices which motivate them to achieve and progress well. Assessors help apprentices to understand the theory that underpins practical work, which enables them to develop confidence and the ability to perform their role in the workplace to professional standards.
- Employer engagement with ATTFE's apprenticeship programme has improved considerably. Employers are now more aware of the requirements of the apprenticeship framework and how they can support their apprentices. Several employers work closely with ATTFE staff to coordinate on- and off-the-job training and to ensure that apprentices are able to achieve the skills and knowledge required by the apprenticeship framework.
- The use of data by managers and assessors to provide accurate information about apprentices' progress has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Consequently, apprentices are now fully aware of the progress they have made and what they need to do to complete their studies.
- Knowledgeable and experienced assessors carry out well-planned and frequent workplace assessments which ensure that apprentices make the expected progress. Apprentices enjoy their learning and they prepare thoroughly for assessments and reviews. Targets set for apprentices are clear and concise and enable them to develop the required skills.
- Assessors promote the importance of spoken English well. Feedback on apprentices' written work helps them to develop their English and mathematics skills in a vocational context. Consequently, apprentices use professional terminology accurately when communicating with colleagues, employers and customers in the workplace.
- Apprentices feel safe in the workplace. They demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and how to report any concerns. Assessors check apprentices' understanding of safeguarding and equality and diversity well. They have a

good understanding of radicalisation and extremism and they discuss these topics during assessments and reviews. Assessors and tutors use a range of helpful and accessible learning resources to promote modern British values.

Provider details

Unique reference number	59200
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	765
Principal/CEO	Liz Barrett
Telephone number	01216 322340
Website	www.academytransformationtrust.co.uk/further-education

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	5	85	63	17	10	30	-	9
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	7	34	23	37	-	6		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
Funding received from:	Education and skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Qualvoc Limited							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and telephone calls 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.

Inspection team

Jai Sharda, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gerard McGrath	Her Majesty's Inspector
Barry Dolan	Ofsted Inspector
Saul Pope	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Frear	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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