

# Elmhouse Training

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

31 October–2 November 2017

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>	Adult learning programmes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>		
Outcomes for learners	<b>Requires improvement</b>		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- The proportion of learners who successfully achieve their qualification within the stipulated timeframe is too low.
- Teachers do not consistently set suitably challenging targets for learners to enable them to make rapid progress.
- Teachers' feedback on learners' work does not provide learners with sufficient information about what they have done well or how they can improve their work.
- Teachers place insufficient focus on the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Managers have not implemented suitable quality-improvement procedures or staff appraisals to achieve a consistently high standard of teaching and learning, or the timely achievement of learners.
- The current governance arrangements do not provide enough support or challenge to managers to help them assure the quality of provision, or to shape the strategic direction of the organisation.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Learners on early years and health and social care qualifications complete valuable work placements from which they acquire good vocational skills.
- Staff support learners well to develop their self-confidence and enthusiasm, and to manage any personal issues that might prevent them completing the course.
- On completion of their courses, a high proportion of learners successfully progress into employment.
- Managers have developed good partnerships with children's centres, housing associations, local nurseries and schools to help create valuable training opportunities and promote employment for local people.
- Learners are self-motivated, ambitious and committed to their learning.
- Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity, British values and the 'Prevent' duty, and the importance of these in their communities.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Elmhouse Training is a small, private training provider based in Tulse Hill, in the London Borough of Lambeth. Training is located in local community and children's centres across the London boroughs of Lambeth, Bromley and Lewisham. The provider recruits learners throughout the year. Learners fund their study via the advanced learning loans scheme.
- At the time of the inspection, the provider offered level 3 vocational programmes to adults training in early years, and health and social care. The organisation was also in the process of recruiting learners for an accountancy programme. In the previous academic year, it also ran courses in hairdressing, barbering, nail technology and a course for supporting teaching and learning in schools.
- Most learners are from minority ethnic heritages. The provider has a particularly high proportion of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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

- Implement more effective management procedures to help raise the quality and consistency of the provision. In particular:
  - increase the objectivity when evaluating the quality of provision, and identifying priorities for improvement
  - increase the effectiveness of the lesson observation scheme to help identify good practice, and focus more on priorities for improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
  - make better use of feedback from learners and employers when reviewing the quality of provision
  - introduce a more structured and detailed staff performance review and development process.
- Provide development for teachers, focusing in particular on the effective use of target-setting, and how to provide constructive, developmental feedback to learners.
- Increase the opportunities for learners to extend and develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Ensure that all learners receive suitable placements promptly at the beginning of their course to enable them to complete their qualification within the planned timescale.
- Extend governance arrangements so that leaders receive a greater level of support and challenge, shaping the strategic direction and maintaining quality of provision within the organisation.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Managers have not implemented suitable quality-improvement procedures to achieve a high standard of teaching and learning, or timely qualifications achievement. Many management procedures are new, and are yet to have an impact on raising the quality of the provision. For example, the self-assessment report lacks objective judgements, and does not focus sufficiently on areas for improvement.
- Managers have not established a thorough system to observe teaching and learning. The small number of observations that managers carry out do not focus enough on what teachers need to do to improve their practice. Managers do not seek the views of employers or learners adequately in order to help identify what further improvements are required.
- The staff appraisal process is underdeveloped. While some staff appraisals have taken place, the small size of the company has led to difficulties in achieving impartiality and objectivity. Managers have recently arranged external support to assist in the staff appraisal process. This is yet to have an impact as staff currently do not have suitably detailed performance targets against which managers can appraise them.
- Managers have a clear vision of the role of Elmhouse Training in meeting the needs of local people who wish to train in childcare and health and social care. They have good partnerships with children's centres, housing associations and schools to help promote training and employment for local people. The provider has a good reputation within the communities in which it works. For example, close partnerships with a local residents' association recently helped managers to secure new premises after the provider's previous teaching base became unavailable.
- Staff provide useful advice and guidance to prospective learners on the advanced learning loans. This helps learners identify and fund their training. In addition, before committing to a loan, managers provide the opportunity for learners to complete a probationary period. This helps learners decide whether the course meets their needs and aspirations. It also helps ensure that learners have the potential to complete the programme, before taking on the loan.
- Staff provide good support to learners and give good advice on additional qualifications that help them improve their employability. Those learners who wish to apply to higher education also receive valuable support, helping them progress successfully to university. Staff also provide laptops to a few learners, so they can work from home and complete assignments on time. These support measures are effective in helping learners remain on their course and achieve their qualifications.

### The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements are ineffective. While the company is small, and the current range of provision limited, there are plans to expand premises and increase the range of programmes offered. The current arrangements do not provide a suitable level of support or challenge to managers to help assure the quality of provision, or shape the strategic direction of the organisation.

## Safeguarding

- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff receive suitable safeguarding training. Learners and staff are clear on reporting procedures should they have any safeguarding concerns. Managers, teachers and learners have a good understanding of local risks in respect to extremism and radicalisation. Managers have suitable links with the local police, for example if they need to seek advice on any particular local threats.
- Learners feel safe. Managers carry out suitable pre-employment checks on staff and ensure that staff receive effective training on safeguarding. Staff promote British values well, which helps learners appreciate the diverse cultural needs within their local community.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teachers do not consistently set challenging personal targets for learners. On occasions, they do not encourage learners sufficiently to take ownership of their learning. For example, learners' targets often relate to the completion of units on their qualification rather than focusing in detail on the development of specific skills and behaviours required for working in the care sector.
- Staff do not consistently provide a strong enough link between practical skills development and learners' acquisition of the underpinning theoretical knowledge. As a result, a minority of learners make slow progress.
- Prior to commencing their course, several learners have already gained a degree level qualification, or acquired good vocational knowledge and experience from previous employment. Teachers do not always take this level of prior knowledge or skill into account. As a result, much of the work is too easy for those most able learners.
- Teachers' feedback to learners does not provide them with sufficient information about what they have done well or how they can improve their work. Tutors frequently use descriptors such as 'good' and 'well done' when marking learners' work without providing them with the information about what they need to do to improve further.
- Teachers pay insufficient attention to the development of learners' literacy and numeracy skills. In theory lessons, teachers do not promote sufficiently skills such as speaking, reading or the development of vocational language. In addition, teachers do not identify or provide feedback on weaknesses in learners' spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Teachers do not involve staff from learners' work placements sufficiently in their learning and development. Mentors in the workplace do not always know what skills or behaviours learners should be learning and practising while on placement. Teachers do not communicate sufficiently clearly with staff in the workplace about arrangements for carrying out workplace observations of learners. This occasionally results in delays in assessment and delays in learners achieving their qualifications.

- The large majority of learners are self-motivated, ambitious and committed to their learning. They attend lessons regularly, and secure high-quality placements with good providers who enable them to develop their care skills. For example, an early years learner recently secured placements at three different community venues, to ensure she could gain the breadth of experience of working with three different age-ranges of young children.
- Learners enjoy their learning; they work collaboratively and productively in lessons and contribute well to discussions, sharing their placement experiences.
- Effective partnerships with community providers enable learners to access learning and placements in their local communities, children's centres, nurseries and primary schools. Learners gain a strong sense of pride from the contribution they make to their communities.
- Tutors use questioning techniques well to help challenge learners, and to develop their understanding. For example, a teacher helped a group of learners explore and analyse a well-known serious case review, following the death of a young child. As a result, learners improved their understanding of how they might recognise when children are at risk of harm or abuse.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Staff work well with learners to enable them to develop their self-confidence and enthusiasm for their chosen area of study. Learners are motivated to progress and achieve; they are committed and enjoy their learning. Teaching staff support and encourage learners to work hard.
- All learners on early years and health and social care qualifications complete substantial and valuable blocks of work placement as a mandatory element of their course. Learners develop first-hand the knowledge and skills they require to work in the industry.
- Learners' written course work is adequate, and meets the requirements of the qualification. Learners produce work at the standard expected for level 3 courses.
- Learners work very well together. They have good opportunities to discuss a broad range of topics. They respect each other's opinions and make positive contributions to group activities and discussions.
- Staff encourage and advise learners to take additional courses with other local training providers to complement their main programme. For example, learners achieved qualifications in areas such as paediatric first aid and food hygiene to improve their career and progression opportunities.
- Learners receive effective advice and guidance to assist them in progressing to employment or to higher education. Staff provide the support and encouragement learners need to produce curriculum vitae and personal development plans, to explore suitable career opportunities and to apply for jobs or to higher education, at the appropriate time.
- Learners have a good understanding of safeguarding, both for themselves and for the children in their care. Staff successfully promote a strong sense of equality across the culturally diverse learner group.

- Learners have a good understanding of British values and the 'Prevent' duty and how they apply these in their communities. For example, learners spoke confidently about how they help young children understand the importance of respecting each other and taking things in turn. Learners also explained how young children in nurseries learn the rudiments of democracy, for example by voting for which fruit they all wish to eat at breaktime.
- A small minority of learners do not have sufficient opportunities to improve their literacy or numeracy skills. While staff check to ensure that all learners have a suitable level of literacy to succeed on their courses, those learners who are less confident do not receive much guidance to help them improve their skills in these areas.

### **Outcomes for learners**

### **Requires improvement**

- The proportion of learners who successfully achieved their qualifications in 2016/17 was high; however, too few learners achieve within the planned timescale. Learners were particularly slow to achieve their qualifications in hairdressing, barbering and nail technology. At the time of the inspection, the organisation was not offering these subject options.
- A minority of learners do not progress quickly enough. On occasion, this is due to a delay in learners gaining placements, or delays in teachers carrying out workplace assessment.
- The majority of learners develop relevant and appropriate knowledge and skills from their course. For example, one former learner who took a course in children and young people's workforce explained confidently and articulately how he had learned about the importance of 'schemas' in young children – the urges and behaviours that influence their attitude to play. Learners enjoy their courses, grow in confidence, and acquire the knowledge and skills they need to progress to the next stage.
- On completion of their courses, a high proportion of learners successfully progress into employment. The majority of learners gain work in jobs related to their area of study, or become self-employed. A few learners also progress to university.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	1236915
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	48
Principal/CEO	Marcia Abrams
Telephone number	020 3538 5530
Website	<a href="http://www.elmhousetraining.com">www.elmhousetraining.com</a>

## 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)	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the centre manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. 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.

## Inspection team

Peter Nelson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tricia Collis	Ofsted Inspector
David Baber	Ofsted Inspector



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