

KT Associates

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

24–27 October 2017

Overall effectiveness		Inadequate	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate	Adult learning programmes	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate		
Outcomes for learners	Inadequate		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate provider

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Governance arrangements are ineffective; leaders and managers do not have sufficient information to provide challenge and support in relation to learners' progress and achievements.
- Leaders and managers do not carry out rigorous self-assessment to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision to plan improvements.
- Managers' monitoring of learners' progress is weak.
- Leaders and managers do not have a strategy to ensure that learners develop their English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- The quality of initial information, advice and guidance is weak; as a result, too many learners are joining courses that are too challenging for them.
- Assessors do not identify learners' starting points and do not use information about learners' existing skills and knowledge to plan learning and support that enable learners to progress.
- Teaching does not develop learners' knowledge and skills effectively; the standard of learners' work is too low.
- Learners do not know how to protect themselves from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- The proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications has declined and is very low.
- Current learners are making very slow progress.

The provider has the following strengths

- Staff develop learners' knowledge of diversity very effectively; learners demonstrate positive attitudes to the wide range of service users in their care.

Full report

Information about the provider

- KT Associates (KTA) was established in 1988 and has its headquarters in Stockton-on-Tees. In addition to the owner, who is the managing director, there are four other staff members who deliver and administer the programmes. Although not new to the company, the managing director took up her current role in April 2017 when two directors left.
- Learners are geographically dispersed, mainly across the north of England with a few in the West Midlands. KTA specialises in providing qualifications for adults over the age of 19, mainly in health and social care, funded through advanced learner loans. Assessors have contact with learners through a mix of face-to-face meetings, telephone calls, texts and emails. Meetings often take place in learners' homes or venues in the community.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve safeguarding arrangements by:
 - further revising the safeguarding policy to include reference to all recent legislation
 - providing clear guidance to learners so that they know how to refer themselves for support
 - developing links with appropriate external agencies and support services
 - implementing the 'Prevent' duty, including providing training for all staff
 - improving risk assessments so that they record accurately the risks for assessors and learners, particularly when working in learners' homes and community venues
 - ensuring that steps are taken to minimise or eliminate risks when they are identified.
- Strengthen governance arrangements by ensuring that leaders and managers collect and use information on learners' attendance, progress, achievement and progression on completion to provide appropriate challenge and support.
- Improve self-assessment by ensuring that it is carried out routinely and rigorously, and is based on clear evidence and accurate performance data. Ensure that the views of learners and employers are gathered and used when evaluating the provision. Produce and implement a challenging improvement plan.
- Ensure that managers monitor the progress of all learners, so that they can identify and provide support to those who make slow progress and may be at risk of withdrawing from the programme.
- Implement a strategy to enable learners to improve their English, mathematics and ICT skills alongside their vocational learning. Provide staff training and suitable resources to support the strategy.
- Improve learners' progress and achievement by:
 - improving the quality of information, advice and guidance that learners receive before enrolling
 - ensuring that learners are placed on the right course at the right level, according to

their abilities and job roles, and that they are aware fully of the amount of time and commitment needed to succeed

- setting more meaningful targets for learners that indicate clearly what they need to learn
 - improving assessors' feedback to learners so that it motivates and aids their learning
 - using a wider range of learning and assessment methods and resources to meet individual preferences and learning needs.
- Improve the assessment of learners' starting points and use information about learners' existing skills and knowledge to plan and provide learning and support that meet individual needs.
 - Raise the standard of teaching and learning by providing staff development in the craft of teaching. Make observations of sessions more rigorous by evaluating the impact of teaching on learners' progress and the standard of their work.
 - Provide guidance and training for learners on the dangers posed by those who hold extremist views so that they can understand how these risks apply to their own lives and how to keep themselves safe.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leaders and managers do not have a clear vision or strategic ambition for the company. They focus narrowly and reactively on day-to-day operational issues relating to individual learners to the exclusion of wider strategies to improve the provision. Although leaders and managers are aware of the sharp downturn in learners' achievements, they have not identified the problem quickly enough or formulated a plan to stem the decline.
- Leaders and managers do not use self-assessment rigorously or routinely to evaluate the provision and gain a realistic view of its quality. The self-assessment report produced just before the inspection is overly positive and fails to provide an accurate appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision based on clear evidence and accurate data. Leaders and managers do not have a clear and challenging improvement plan that sets out how they intend to address the weaknesses identified through self-assessment.
- Leaders and managers do not monitor learners' progress and achievements sufficiently well and do not have an accurate overview of the number of learners who need support to accelerate their learning. While staff discuss individual learners at weekly assessor meetings, they do not monitor the progress that learners make compared with the progress expected given their stage in learning.
- Leaders' and managers' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment gained through observations of sessions is ineffective in raising standards. Observations place insufficient focus on the progress that learners make and fail to provide assessors with clear feedback to help them to improve their practice.
- Assessors have had little professional development to update and develop their teaching and assessment skills. They concentrate on satisfying awarding organisation assessment criteria and do not focus enough on the craft of teaching.
- Leaders and managers do not place sufficient priority on the development of learners' English, mathematics and ICT skills. Few learners improve these skills to the level needed to flourish in the care sector.
- Leaders have created a flexible curriculum to meet the needs of employees in the health and care sectors and to ensure progression pathways. However, employers are not involved fully enough and do not support learners' workplace assessments sufficiently. Most employers do not provide facilities for staff members to meet with their assessors in the workplace. Consequently, assessors meet learners in their homes or in community venues, including supermarket cafes and, in one instance, a public house.

The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements are ineffective. Senior managers do not have clear oversight of the quality of programmes. They do not have sufficient high-level information on the company's performance and, therefore, provide little challenge in relation to learners' attendance, progress, retention, achievement and progression following completion of their course.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- During the inspection, managers took steps to strengthen safeguarding arrangements. They revised the policies and procedures to reflect the current staff structure and some recent legislation. The safeguarding lead and deputy officers carried out online training in safer recruitment and understanding radicalisation and extremism to equip them for their roles. The managing director applied for Disclosure and Barring Service checks, as records of previous checks for some staff could not be located. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these actions.
- Leaders and managers have been too slow to implement the 'Prevent' duty. They have not assessed the risks that learners may face at work and in their everyday lives. They do not work in partnership with external agencies to identify and reduce the risks to learners. Assessors have not carried out training in relation to safeguarding or protecting learners from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Most learners do not know how to protect themselves from those who hold extreme views, including when they are online.
- Risk assessments for assessors working with learners in their homes and other external venues are weak. They do not assess potential risks and their severity accurately, including when assessors carry out late-evening, lone-working appointments and when family members and friends, including babies and young children, are in learners' homes and community venues. Where concerns are identified, appropriate steps to reduce or eliminate the risk are not taken swiftly enough.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Assessors do not identify learners' skills and abilities effectively when learners start their courses, including learners' vocational skills and experience, and their abilities in English and mathematics. As a result, too many learners do not get the support that they need, fall behind with their work and do not achieve their qualifications.
- Too often, assessors place learners on courses that do not match their job roles. For example, care assistants taking level 4 courses find it difficult to meet the requirements of their programme due to their limited work responsibilities and, as a result, they make very slow progress.
- Assessors do not plan and deliver learning programmes well. For too many learners, the amount of time they spend on their studies is insufficient, with unduly long gaps between meetings with their assessors. Assessors' plans to re-engage learners and support them to catch up with their work are unsuccessful. Assessors do not involve employers sufficiently in planning learning and assessment.
- Assessment planning is weak. Assessors do not prepare learners appropriately for assessments. Where courses require learners to be assessed in the workplace, a minority of observations are severely delayed due to difficulties in arranging access to learners at work.
- Assessors use a very limited range of learning and assessment resources. Learners mainly use the workbooks provided by KTA to develop and assess their knowledge. Many learners struggle to complete the workbooks due to their weak writing skills and are too

dependent on their assessors' help. Assessors do not use alternative assessment methods or develop learners' wider study and research skills.

- Action plans that assessors put in place to promote learning between sessions are not specific enough. Too often, assessors set targets to complete qualification units or sections of the workbooks, which learners are unable to achieve by the agreed date. Assessors do not set targets that identify what learners need to do to improve their skills or knowledge.
- Assessors do not provide feedback that helps learners to improve. As a result, learners are insufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve, and the standard of their work does not improve over time.
- Assessors do not encourage learners to take responsibility for their studies. They do not give learners access to work that they have completed previously to consolidate their learning. Learners do not have access to information about their programme and their progress; they are often unaware of their target completion dates and the progress that they have made.
- Staff hold appropriate professional and vocational qualifications and use their subject knowledge effectively to draw on learners' workplace experience and make learning relevant. They work flexibly to accommodate learners' shift patterns and personal circumstances.
- Assessors ensure that learners have a good understanding of the diverse needs of the service users who they support in the care industry. Learners promote respect and tolerance at work, including, for example, when working with service users who have dementia and those who speak English as an additional language.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

- Pre-enrolment advice and guidance are weak and do not help learners to make well-informed choices. Assessors do not provide learners with sufficient information about the content of programmes, or the commitment required, to ensure that they enrol onto an appropriate course. Too many learners are on courses at too high a level for their abilities, and they struggle to cope with the level and volume of work.
- A minority of learners do not understand that they are taking out a loan to fund their course. Most learners hold the view that they will not have to pay back the loan in the future. They have low aspirations and do not anticipate earning above the threshold for repayments.
- Learners frequently cancel scheduled contact with their assessor, resulting in long intervals between learning sessions and learners' slow progress. Learners lack motivation and commitment to their studies because the work is too difficult for them.
- Assessors do not develop learners' English, mathematics and ICT skills. They do not identify adequately learners' starting points and provide insufficient support to help learners to develop these skills. Assessors do not develop the mathematics skills that learners need for their job roles when covering topics such as administering medicines.
- Assessors are too slow to identify learners who require additional support, such as those with dyslexia. Managers do not ensure that appropriate support, tailored to individual

needs, is provided.

- Written work produced by too many learners is not of a sufficiently high standard. Learners' answers to questions are frequently superficial and descriptive, even for those studying at higher levels who are required to provide evaluative and analytical responses. Too often, assessors write answers in the workbooks on behalf of their learners after a discussion. This does not develop learners' knowledge and understanding sufficiently.
- Learners gain a basic understanding of the meaning and importance of safeguarding through their vocational studies. They know how to keep themselves safe and follow safe working practices. However, staff do not provide learners with safeguarding updates, such as on honour-based crime, peer-on-peer abuse or human trafficking.
- Learners have little understanding of the dangers posed by those who hold extremist views at work and in their everyday lives.

Outcomes for learners

Inadequate

- The proportion of learners who achieved their qualifications in 2016/17 was low, having declined considerably from the previous year. In the current year so far, achievements have fallen further to a very low level.
- In 2016/17, achievement of level 4 qualifications in health and social care and level 3 qualifications in ICT were particularly low. Achievements for learners studying level 3 qualifications in health and social care fell from a high level the previous year to below that seen nationally.
- Current learners are making slow progress; around a fifth are already beyond their planned completion date. Too many learners are unaware of the completion date for their qualifications, and do not know how much progress they have made so far. In many instances, they have achieved too little and are not on track to complete their qualifications on time.
- Managers do not record the impact that gaining qualifications has on learners' career plans and progression. A small number of learners progress to higher-level programmes, gain promotion at work or start their own businesses after completing their studies.
- Managers do not monitor data on the achievements of different groups of learners.

Provider details

Unique reference number	52888
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	279
Principal/CEO	Fiona Anable
Telephone number	01642 602721
Website	www.kt-associates.com

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)	-	-	-	-	-	115	-	105
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
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	-							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used 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 and assessments. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Pat Hornsby, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Angus	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynne Paxton	Ofsted Inspector

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