

# Aspire Training Team Limited

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

5–8 December 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Outstanding

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- The vast majority of learners make good progress and secure full-time employment with their current employer; many gain additional responsibilities or promotion at work.
- Most learners grow in confidence quickly. They demonstrate good practical skills in varied settings, including nurseries and care homes.
- Learners adopt their employers' values, cultures and beliefs swiftly and become valuable employees.
- Learners on level 1 study programmes do well, often from low starting points or disadvantaged backgrounds, and a large majority move on to follow apprenticeships.
- Directors and managers provide good development and training for staff which improve their skills in teaching and management. Staff are often promoted to more senior positions and are excellent role models for learners.
- Senior managers and directors do not have sufficient management information to monitor the achievement and progress of groups of learners or the effectiveness of different types of provision.
- Quality improvement procedures and self-assessment arrangements are not focused strongly enough on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Learners' achievement of functional skills qualifications in English, mathematics and information communications technology is not high enough.

## **Full report**

### **Information about the provider**

- Aspire Training Team Limited (ATT) is a small independent learning provider based in Poole in Dorset. Formed in 2004, it specialises in apprenticeships in childcare, and also offers apprenticeships in health and social care, business administration and management. In addition, it provides level 1 study programmes and enrolls adult learners on courses at levels 3, 4 and 5. ATT is part of the Hadland Care Group (HCG). ATT operates as a separate company but shares a managing director with HCG. HCG employs approximately half of ATT's apprentices. The remainder work for employers in Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset, mostly in nurseries, residential care homes and hospitals.
- At the time of inspection, 219 learners were following apprenticeship programmes; just over half of these programmes were at advanced level. Sixteen learners aged 16 to 18 were following a study programme in childcare and 32 adult learners were following various care-related courses at levels 3 to 5.

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

- Directors and senior managers should produce and analyse data routinely which identifies how well learners on all courses are making progress towards completing their qualifications, and take appropriate actions for improvement in learners' outcomes.
- Ensure that quality improvement and self-assessment arrangements are focused tightly on continually improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly of functional skills.
- Senior managers should provide training and support to improve the teaching of English, mathematics and information communications technology (ICT) so that learners' achievement of qualifications in these subjects improves.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- ATT's senior management team has created a positive and inclusive environment where staff and learners flourish. Managers and staff rapidly develop positive relationships with learners and are passionate about supporting learners and employers. They clearly identify learners' strengths and the support they need to gain qualifications and employment.
- In 2014/15, senior managers successfully introduced an innovative level 1 study programme, which prepared learners well for childcare apprenticeships. The study programme is highly effective at introducing learners, many of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds, to working in the sector.
- Managers review the performance of staff effectively. Managers identify clear targets for staff through appraisals; each individual's progress towards achieving them is monitored well and discussed during regular meetings. Managers link appraisals effectively to staff training and continuous personal development, which they record accurately. As a result, staff are up to date with current working practices in the care sector and develop higher-level skills, strategies and knowledge which enable them to plan more effectively to support their learners.
- Senior managers work closely with a range of partners, including other local providers, employers and local authorities, in order to stay updated on relevant local issues and to improve their practice. For example, managers worked closely with social workers to ensure that learners with specific needs, including care leavers and those with histories of self-harm, received good emotional and practical support from the start of their programme. Managers collaborated closely with another local training provider to produce ATT's 'Prevent' duty policy.
- Directors and senior managers do not have a suitable strategy to improve learners' achievement of English, mathematics and ICT qualifications. In 2016/17, not enough learners successfully achieved functional skills qualifications and the numbers of learners achieving high grades in GCSE English and mathematics were low.
- Directors and managers do not have accurate information and data which ensure that they have an accurate picture of how well different types of courses are performing or how well particular groups of learners are making progress towards achieving their qualifications. As a consequence, managers are unable to plan clearly to promote improvement.
- Self-assessment reflects the views of staff, learners and employers, but the resulting report does not contain a thorough enough analysis of the strengths and weaknesses that have been identified. Quality improvement arrangements do not focus sufficiently on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

### The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements are not strong enough. Directors of HCG and ATT have a strong focus on the long-term sustainability and growth of their core business in childcare and related sectors, and manage this well, but they recognise they need to improve ATT's

governance arrangements. They are aware that they do not currently use data on learners' achievements, progress or destinations well enough or place sufficient emphasis on continually improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

## Safeguarding

- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Clear processes and procedures are in place and staff know how to use them. Learners demonstrate a good practical understanding of the importance of safeguarding at work.
- Managers carry out appropriate pre-employment checks on all new staff. They provide good financial and administrative support to learners on study programmes when they are applying for the Disclosure and Barring Service checks that they need before taking up placements in childcare settings.
- Staff and learners receive appropriate and regular training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Learners feel safe and know how to report any concerns. An appropriate 'Prevent' action plan is in place.
- Health and safety procedures for work placements and training centres are very effective. Checking and monitoring of placements are regular. Appropriate risk assessments are in place. A comprehensive health and safety manual covers ATT's activities thoroughly.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- ATT offers intermediate and advanced apprenticeships in childcare, health and social care and business administration in partnership with over 70 employers. Its level 1 study programme provides a solid foundation in childcare for 16- to 18-year-olds who wish to progress to apprenticeships. These learners swiftly develop skills and knowledge in caring for children and how they develop through attending weekly workshops. Their learning enables them to move on to good-quality work placements in childcare settings. ATT's assessors provide the small number of adult learners with work-based support to undertake qualifications in childcare, business administration and management.
- Almost all learners gain a range of useful skills and knowledge quickly because of highly effective and regular support from assessors, and from their employers. Most learners and assessors have a good understanding of the progress that they are making. Learners organise appropriate development activities for children which meet their individual needs, and are confident in talking to parents and carers. However, adult learners make less progress and do not always complete work in the agreed time. At levels 4 and 5, a minority of learners do not use research skills effectively or reference their work as expected at this level.
- Managers and assessors set clear and ambitious targets so that learners know what is expected of them. As a result, most learners achieve high standards at work. However, assessors are not helping all learners to reach their full potential. For example, they do not adapt their assessment practice well enough so that learners with dyslexia or who speak English as a second language make similar progress to that of their peers.
- ATT's assessors are suitably qualified and experienced, and use this experience well to ensure that learners are taught current practice. All assessors complete appropriate

education and training qualifications. They make excellent use of their sector expertise to ensure that learners are successful in their education and employment. Assessors respond promptly online and by telephone to learners' queries between face-to-face visits. Learners appreciate highly the flexible and frequent support that they receive from assessors and employers.

- Employers encourage learners to develop their language and numeracy skills at work, and this increases their effectiveness. For example, improvements in learners' sentence construction and spelling mean that they produce clearer observation reports of children's activities. Learners use their improved mathematical skills to create spreadsheets and graphs to record data and reconcile accounts.
- Learners in childcare settings develop good skills in using ICT by collecting video and photographic evidence of children's activities that they share with families. Business administration learners improve the accuracy of their work by routine use of spellchecking and through careful proofreading. The large majority of learners make good use of electronic portfolios to submit their work and obtain feedback from their assessor.
- Assessors keep employers well informed about the progress of their individual apprentices. Employers speak highly of the training that their apprentices receive and the vast majority are closely involved in their learners' studies. Employers also provide suitable workplace activities which further develop learners' practical skills effectively. Employers take part in useful discussions with assessors and learners on how well the learner is doing and what each learner needs to do to make further progress.
- Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity in care settings, which adds depth to how they do their jobs. Learners plan varied play and learning activities which ensure that all children can take part. In care settings, learners understand the importance of providing care to clients that meets their individual needs and preferences. Learners' good understanding of diversity enables them to plan activities for children and families around, for example, religious events and festivals.
- Learners demonstrate a strong understanding of, and embrace the importance of, environmental sustainability, which is promoted well to families and children. Employers encourage learners to use sustainable resources, such as printing activities and resources in black and white rather than colour, using bamboo toothbrushes as an alternative to plastic for cleaning children's teeth and not using plastic-based glitter in artwork.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Learners have high aspirations and believe that they have the potential to be successful on their training programmes. They are inspired and motivated by their assessors and managers, many of whom were previously learners or apprentices themselves.
- Most learners quickly develop positive work attitudes which meet their employers' expectations. Apprentices maintain high standards of professional conduct and appearance, and conform to work dress codes set by employers. Learners are helpful to colleagues and families and contribute well towards their employers' businesses. Their attendance at work and meetings with assessors is good.
- Learners following study programmes attend learning sessions regularly and punctually. Employers and study programme learners are carefully matched to maximise the benefits

of work placement opportunities. These learners quickly develop positive relationships, relevant skills and the knowledge to move on to an apprenticeship.

- Most learners develop high levels of self-confidence very quickly. They become more self-assured through taking on wider responsibilities and using their own initiative, supported well by employers and assessors. For example, in one childcare setting, an apprentice introduced Makaton sign language to support a child, who is now making better than expected progress.
- Learners develop good communication skills. Consequently, they communicate well with work colleagues, clients in care homes and parents and carers in nurseries. Learners have clear guidelines for safe behaviours which they follow closely, which keep themselves and those they work with safe. Learners are thoughtful and caring. They show high levels of respect to one another and to colleagues at work. They learn to share and work well together as a team.
- Assessors and trainers provide learners with useful mental health awareness sessions so that learners can manage the pressure of working and studying successfully.
- Assessors do not provide learners with enough information about wider career possibilities which would help them understand the full range of opportunities available to them in employment or further and higher education.
- Most learners understand how fundamental British values apply in their work but do not always understand how to apply the values to their responsibilities in the community and to their personal lives. Learning activities and one-to-one sessions rarely include discussions which explore social and personal issues to help prepare learners well for life in modern Britain.

## Outcomes for learners

## Good

- Learners' achievement of their apprenticeship frameworks is high and almost all apprentices completed their framework within their planned timescale in 2015/16. ATT's data for 2016/17 indicates that achievement remained high. Current apprentices are making good progress towards completing their programmes, and most of the small number who have completed their programmes so far this year have achieved the qualification.
- Learners on study programmes achieve well. They make good progress, often from low starting points. They quickly develop a good understanding of the care and welfare of children. The vast majority of learners go on to follow apprenticeships in childcare with ATT and most of the remainder return to full-time education or other full-time employment.
- Care sector learners develop high-quality practical skills that meet the professional standards required. They produce good written work that meets the requirements of their qualifications. Almost all apprentices are having a positive impact on their employers' businesses and they are highly valued employees.
- The vast majority of apprentices complete an intermediate programme and move on to the advanced-level programme. Advanced-level apprentices in business management, childcare, and health and social care gain additional responsibilities at work, including team management, the supervision of staff and preparing care plans. About a quarter of

learners continue their training beyond the advanced level, for example to levels 4 and 5.

- Most learners develop and apply improved functional skills in English and mathematics at work. However, the number of ATT's learners achieving entry-level functional skills qualifications in 2016/17 was not high enough and the number achieving level 2 in these subjects declined in the same period and was too low.
- In 2016/17, the number of learners achieving their ICT qualifications was low and declining and the number of learners achieving ICT at level 1 was lower than the previous year. At level 2, the number achieving in 2016/17 had declined significantly compared to 2015/16.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	55015
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18 and 19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	266
Managing Director	Cheryl Hadland
Telephone number	01202 649646
Website	<a href="http://www.aspiretrainingteam.co.uk">www.aspiretrainingteam.co.uk</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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	16	–	–	–	–	12	–	20
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	54	37	41	87	–	–	–	–
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	1				1			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	–							
Number of learners for whom 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 ATT operations director, 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, 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.

## Inspection team

Lyn Bourne, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Penny Mathers	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Zimmerman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Carolyn Brownsea	Ofsted Inspector

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