

27 March 2018

Ms Lorraine Nadel and Mr Colin Denton
Apprenticeships and Training Services Consortium Limited
34 Arcadia Ave
London
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Dear Ms Nadel and Mr Denton

Short inspection of Apprenticeships and Training Services Consortium Limited (ATSCL)

Following the short inspection on 27 and 28 February 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in November 2013.

This provider continues to be good.

Your apprentices and trainees, both at Tempdent Limited and at North London Garages GTA Limited (NLGG), continue to benefit from good-quality education and training, leading to high achievement. They are well supported to progress to further learning and employment. Learners very much enjoy their studies and feel safe in their training venues and at work. Their behaviour and attitudes to work are very good, including their attendance and punctuality.

You have made good use of the significant time since the previous inspection to ensure that both arms of ATSCL have kept pace with key changes to their respective industries and training needs.

Both Tempdent and NLGG are well respected by employers within dental nursing and motor vehicle engineering respectively. Managers and staff work closely with employers, trade, professional and regulatory bodies to develop, and maintain, a relevant curriculum for learners. For example, Tempdent is at the heart of the various strands of development for apprenticeship standards for dental nursing, including participation as a 'trailblazer'.

By responding well to employers' and learners' needs, you have increased apprenticeship numbers and improved apprentices' access to training, including through the well-managed subcontracted provision for motor vehicle engineering at nearby colleges of further education. Apprentices progress to managerial positions in dental practices and garages, and some start their own business or continue studies in higher education.

You have developed the pre-apprenticeship programme in dental nursing, customised to meet the needs of a large levy-paying employer, which helps potential apprentices make informed decisions on their suitability for the level 3 dental nursing programme. Similarly, the small traineeship programme provides a good introduction to the motor vehicle industry, with high numbers progressing to apprenticeships.

You have paid good attention to rectifying the areas for improvement identified at your previous inspection. Learners' achievement, their assessment, the promotion of equality and diversity, and the use of data to better deal with underperformance, have all improved.

The vast majority of learners make good progress and achieve well. Tutor/assessors now provide learners with good feedback on the standard of their work, including after workplace observations. Actions for improvement are appropriately highlighted and any outstanding issues from previous observations are explored.

Tutor/assessors' feedback on learners' coursework and portfolio work is similarly improved. It is developmental and clearly highlights any areas that learners need to improve. Tutor/assessors make learners aware of their progress and of the further work needed to complete their training. Learners now collect a wide range of evidence, including photographs and clear written information. The range of portfolio evidence for learners on the motor vehicle programmes includes job cards, photographs and frequent observations.

Managers have taken effective action to improve the promotion of equality and diversity themes to learners. For example, dental nursing apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity as these apply to patients through their duty for dignity and respect. Learners recognise patients' differing needs and how to respond to them. Tutor/assessors use progress reviews well to promote equality and diversity, asking challenging questions to probe learners' understanding, and using helpful prompts during reviews to explore important themes.

As your self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses accurately identifies, managers have more work to do in: leading improvement in the further development of learners' English skills; ensuring the consistently rigorous application of all quality improvement measures, including fully evaluative and comprehensive observations of training; ensuring the full use of good practice from either Tempdent or NLGG across the whole consortium; and further extending the full range of ATSCCL quality procedures to the more recently appointed subcontractors.

Safeguarding is effective.

Managers have ensured that safeguarding arrangements continue to be effective for learners. The close-knit team of managers and other staff has the care and welfare of learners at the centre of its work. They know their learners well and safeguarding is proactively ensured as part of the good arrangements for learners' support.

Successful safeguarding extends to apprentices' workplaces and to the work of your subcontractors.

Your learners have a particularly good understanding of safeguarding, key risks and what to do should they have concerns about their own safety or that of others. From discussions with learners, it was evident to inspectors that staff take every opportunity to reinforce learners' understanding about safeguarding and that it was not just something that was mentioned at their induction.

Since the previous inspection, managers have ensured that their response to changes in safeguarding, and to national priorities, is timely and effective, including meeting the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. Key aspects of the 'Prevent' duty have been introduced well to both staff and learners and they have a sound understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism, and what to do if they have any concerns.

In relation to safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty policies, NLGG and Tempdent have separate policies. They are not contradictory, but managers need to remove the potential for confusion for staff and learners by introducing a single ATSC policy and guidelines. Although your work with an updated 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan is under way, it is not yet complete and requires speedy attention.

Managers and lead safeguarding officers have good and productive contacts with local and regional expert safeguarding bodies and individuals, helping them to better deal with issues and readily to receive advice. Of particular help is that Tempdent's education welfare officer, one of the lead safeguarding officers, is also a designated 'Prevent' duty facilitator for the local borough.

You have very effectively introduced learners to British values and help them to cope well with life and work in modern Britain. In nearly all of the training sessions seen by inspectors, aspects of British values were introduced well by tutors and discussed by learners.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and managers continue to ensure that the quality of provision for learners is good, while working well to bring about further improvement.
- Particularly notable is the extent of improvement in the successful completion of apprenticeships over the last three years, for both dental nursing and motor vehicle engineering. Framework achievement and achievement within planned timescales are both high.
- Learners make good progress on their courses, and develop high levels of practical skills, competence and confidence. Learners' progression within their jobs, and to more demanding jobs, is good. However, as managers recognise, once apprentices have achieved English skills at the level required by their apprenticeship, their further progress in English is not assured.
- Aspects of quality improvement still require improvement, such as the

consistent implementation of the scheme of training observations, and ensuring that all staff are fully involved with the quality improvement plan.

- Leaders and managers have further successfully promoted ATSCL's reputation as a high-quality training provider for the dental nursing profession and motor vehicle engineering industry. ATSCL makes a very positive contribution to the development of the curriculum in these areas, including apprenticeship standards in dental nursing.
- Managers' close engagement with employers and with subcontractors means that learners work in well-resourced environments. For example, dental nurses work in comfortable surgeries, using a good range of equipment, and motor vehicle apprentices work in well-equipped garages and college workshops that offer very good opportunities to work on modern vehicles using high-quality diagnostic machines.
- Managers and all staff ensure the good promotion of themes of equality and diversity within ATSCL. This now includes good coverage by tutor/assessors in training, assessments and reviews.
- Managers have further successfully developed the online webinar workshops for dental nursing apprentices. Positively noted at the previous inspection, this e-learning initiative, with greatly enhanced resources for learners, provides good study opportunities for very many apprentices across the country.
- Managers and all staff now make good use of reliable and readily available data on learners' progress and performance. Tutor/assessors view attendance rates and quickly identify any slow progress or other concerns. Managers review monthly data to identify course underperformance.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the management of the relatively small number of subcontracting partners is good. They are aware that the more robust quality assurance arrangements typical for longstanding subcontractors need to be fully applied to more recently appointed subcontractors.
- Careers guidance is good, both at the outset, and on completion of programmes, for both the motor vehicle and dental nursing apprenticeships. The vast majority of apprentices are clear on their career pathways and opportunities for additional qualifications.
- Managers ensure that good guidance is provided on professional qualifications, including those for dental hygienists and practice managers. Those wanting to progress to university are given clear, objective advice on their options, including access to higher education courses.
- The small number of learners on a traineeship are less clear on milestones and career pathways, including how they can progress to sustained employment and an apprenticeship.

Next steps for the provider

Managers and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of provision continues to improve, through the rigorous application of all quality assurance arrangements, and by the speedy implementation of planned improvements, such as those to training observations and the use of quality improvement plans
- opportunities for apprentices to further develop their English skills are carefully planned and implemented, and well promoted to learners
- they build upon the expert practice used with apprentices so that trainees are better helped to understand their opportunities for career development.

Yours sincerely

David Martin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors were assisted by the managing director and chief executive of Tempdent and NLGG respectively. Inspectors met with leaders, managers, tutors and assessors, staff at subcontracting further education colleges, employers and learners. Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment, both at apprentices' workplaces and at your training centres and at subcontractors, and reviewed learners' work. They reviewed key policies and documents, including those relating to self-assessment, performance and safeguarding. They also considered the views of learners.