

# Academy Training Group Limited

Independent Learning Provider

## Inspection dates

2–5 October 2018

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is an inadequate provider

- Leadership and management of the provision are weak. The owners are not effective in holding leaders and managers to account and do not ensure that learners receive a good learning experience.
- Leaders and managers do not have an accurate view of the quality of the provision and, consequently, do not have effective plans to make improvements.
- The proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications in painting and decorating, carpentry, fenestration and occupational work supervision is too low.
- Assessors do not plan effectively their assessment of learners' competencies in construction skills in the workplace. As a result, learners are not able to develop and demonstrate their skills in a timely way to achieve their qualifications.
- Safeguarding arrangements are ineffective. Leaders and managers have failed to implement a safeguarding policy and practices that lead to the protection and safety of all learners.
- Learners do not develop any new or more complex construction skills. No teaching takes place and assessors merely accredit learners for what they already know or can do as a result of working in the construction industry.
- Staff do not provide learners, many of whom speak English as a second language, with sufficient support to help them develop the English and mathematics skills they need to progress into further study or employment.
- Staff do not provide learners with appropriate information about the qualifications they are enrolled on or the advanced learning loan prior to the start of the course.
- Too many learners are not aware that they have taken out an advanced learning loan to pay for their course and that they are required to pay this back.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Inspectors were unable to identify any strengths.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Academy Training Group is an independent training provider that operates from a site in Harrow. The provider offers courses primarily in carpentry, fenestration, occupational work supervision and painting and decorating. Approximately 545 adult learners fund their course through the government's advanced learning loans.
- The majority of learners attending the provider do so in order to gain the qualification necessary to obtain a construction skills certification scheme card. All learners are employed on construction sites and assessments are undertaken at the learner's place of work.

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

- Urgently conduct a review of the existing safeguarding arrangements. Establish a comprehensive, well-informed policy that clearly highlights the protection measures applicable to all groups of learners. Leaders, managers and staff should complete the necessary training to increase their knowledge of safeguarding and then integrate this into their teaching.
- Increase the proportion of learners who achieve their qualification. To do this, support assessors to: develop assessments which are appropriate for the level of the course that learners are studying; plan effective programmes of assessment and review which help learners to develop and demonstrate skills in a timely way; and improve their oral and written feedback to learners to help them do better.
- Develop a teaching, learning and assessment strategy which will enable learners to achieve new skills and knowledge while on their course.
- Work more closely with employers, encouraging them to participate more in the planning of programmes and in facilitating assessment of learners' skills.
- Ensure that staff give learners appropriate information, advice and guidance at the start of and during the course. In particular, they should make sure that learners know the expectations around the advanced learning loan, and that they understand how they can progress in their career after the course.
- Ensure that staff and assessors help learners improve their skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) to increase their employment chances, through better use of initial testing, assessment and feedback.
- Use a range of evidence to evaluate their provision and ensure that their findings are sufficiently critical. They should use the findings of their evaluation to create an action plan to bring about rapid improvement.
- Strengthen the governance arrangements by providing the owner and director with the necessary information to ensure that they can scrutinise all aspects of the provision, including safeguarding, quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the wider outcomes attained by learners.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leaders and managers fail to meet their objectives and vision to deliver high-quality training and assessment which meet the needs of learners and employers in the construction industry.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that learners experience good-quality learning and assessment and too many learners do not achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers do not use advanced learner loan funding appropriately. They focus solely on providing assessment to accredit learners' prior skills. Learners receive no teaching to support them to develop new skills or knowledge.
- Leaders and managers do not take effective action when a learner is at risk of falling behind on their course. As a result, too many learners make very slow progress or no progress. Managers do not withdraw those who request to be taken off the programme quickly enough, so too many learners remain on the programme, despite having no intention of completing their qualifications.
- Leaders do not develop effective partnership arrangements with employers. They do not engage in discussions with employers to identify appropriate courses and qualifications to meet their needs. As a result, employers are not involved in the planning of the programme and assessment activities of those learners who work on their sites, and they do not see the benefit to them of employees being assessed at their workplace.
- Leaders and managers do not carry out rigorous evaluation of the quality of their programmes. The self-assessment report produced before the inspection is overly positive and fails to provide an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses based on clear evidence and accurate data. Leaders and managers do not set clear and challenging actions for improvement that set out how they intend to address the weaknesses identified through their evaluation.
- Leaders and managers do not focus sufficiently on improving teaching, learning and assessment. They make ineffective use of information gained through observations of assessment practice and so do not raise standards. They have not put in place a strategy for developing learners' skills in English, mathematics and ICT, resulting in poor progress for learners in these subjects, which may limit their chances in employment or self-employment.
- Leaders do not effectively evaluate the work of assessors or challenge them to ensure that learners make good progress from their starting points. They do not employ effective methods for improving teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders rarely carry out appraisals with staff or set actions that focus on improving the learning experience for learners. Leaders do not hold assessors to account when learners do not make expected progress or achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers do not provide assessors with the skills and knowledge to improve learners' understanding of fundamental British values, equality, diversity and the risks associated with the threat of terrorism and extremism. As a result, assessors' and learners' understanding of these topics is poor.

- The majority of assessors have achieved vocational qualifications at a lower level than those which they are assessing. Leaders have not ensured that assessors have had any ongoing professional development to refresh, update or develop their occupational competence within their sector. As a consequence, they are not able to develop learners' skills beyond their current level or advise learners how to improve their practical skills.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Governance is not effective. Currently, no governance or independent scrutiny arrangements exist for the quality of the programmes on offer. The owner and director of operations do not have sufficient oversight of the quality of provision. They meet twice yearly to discuss performance, which focuses on the financial position of the company, proposed new business opportunities and achievement rates. They do not focus sufficiently on improving the quality of the learners' experience to enable learners to meet their full potential.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Leaders and managers have not paid enough attention to ensuring that their safeguarding arrangements are robust. Managers have not completed adequate checks to ensure that their employees are safe to work with their learners. They maintain poor records of staff's suitability and do not adhere to their own policies regarding checking staff.
- Staff have not had adequate training in safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead for the organisation is not suitably trained for this role and does not have sufficient knowledge in dealing with potential safeguarding issues. As a result, no clear process exists to identify and support vulnerable adults. The system for reporting safeguarding issues within the organisation, and their follow-up, does not provide sufficient detail on cases and their follow-up. The organisation has no arrangements with partner agencies to refer vulnerable learners for support.
- 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. Staff have received insufficient training on the 'Prevent' duty.
- Most learners are recent arrivals from other countries and do not know how to protect themselves from those who hold extreme views, including when they are online.
- Learners have an appropriate understanding of issues related to health and safety and feel safe on the construction sites where they work. Assessors highlight health and safety infringements when they see them in the workplace.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Inadequate**

- Staff have failed to establish an appropriate training programme. They do no teaching and only a minimal amount of assessment through the completion of a small number of questions to test learners' skills and knowledge. As a result, learners' progress is slow,

and learners are not provided with resources to support their own learning.

- Assessors' assessment of learners' work is often cursory and does not support them to improve. Assessors' records are often incoherent and incomplete and do not provide a basis for the ongoing monitoring of learners' progress. Assessors do not plan assessments appropriately. For example, they assess learners' competency in all the units of the level 3 qualification in a single visit to the learner's workplace.
- Assessors do not use the information gained at the start of the course about learners' prior knowledge and skills to plan a programme to enable individual learners to demonstrate their skills in a timely way to achieve their qualification. Almost all learners already work at the required level to gain their qualification. Learners told inspectors that they have not gained any new skills while completing their qualification.
- Assessors do not provide learners with feedback on their assessments to show how they might improve. Where staff do conduct reviews with learners, they do not set actions for learners to complete in between assessment visits. As a result, learners make slow progress towards achieving their qualification.
- Assessors do not support learners in developing their English, mathematics or ICT skills. For example, assessors do not help learners to improve their communication on the construction site or develop the English skills to progress into a supervisory role. Assessors do not help learners improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar through appropriate correction to written work. As a result, learners do not improve the poor standard of their written English.
- Learners have no access to resources or support materials that help them learn independently. Leaders and managers have developed a mobile telephone application to provide learners with support on collecting evidence for assessments, but they do not monitor its usage and learners were not aware of it.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

- Staff give poor advice and information to learners prior to enrolment and the start of their course. Staff do not carry out sufficient checks that the course is appropriate for each learner. As a result, too many learners do not complete their course.
- At the start of the course, staff assess learners' skills in the use of English and mathematics, but do not use the result of these tests to benefit learners. Too many of the English and mathematics assessments completed by learners are not marked by staff. Assessors are unaware of the outcomes of these assessments. When staff do not allow applicants to enrol on courses because of their poor skills in the use of English and mathematics, they do not refer them to other organisations which can help them improve their skills.
- Assessors do not offer learners any support with English and mathematics during their assessment visits. They do not promote the use of appropriate language in the workplace. Nor do they focus on the English and mathematics skills required for higher-level work, for example to produce quotes and costings and the use of appropriate language for negotiating with clients.
- Staff have not ensured that learners have a good enough understanding of the conditions of the advanced learning loan. Some learners are not aware that they have signed up for

a loan and that they will be required to pay it back.

- Staff do not provide learners with any access to advice and guidance on completing their course. Staff do not help learners understand how they can develop their careers further or refer them to other providers.

## Outcomes for learners

## Inadequate

- The proportion of learners who achieve their qualification is too low and declining. In fenestration and painting and decorating, the numbers of successful learners are too low, but are increasing. In carpentry and occupational work supervision, the numbers of successful learners are very low and declining.
- Managers do not routinely check where learners go when they have completed their course and qualification. As a result, they do not know whether the courses offered meet the needs of learners.
- Leaders and managers do not evaluate the performance of different groups of individuals. As a result, leaders and managers do not know whether any differences in achievement exist between groups of learners and what actions they need to take to address these.
- The standard of learners' work is poor and not appropriate for the level of the qualification they are on. Learners carry out tasks with no complex or intricate techniques that would typically be expected on a level 3 qualification. For example, painting and decorating learners carry out basic painting techniques, such as applying emulsion to a wall, and carpentry learners carry out only the most straightforward installation of door frames. Assessors accept the most basic answers from learners and, as a result, learners are not challenged to develop more advanced or complex work tasks or projects. Too often, the written element of learners' work does not reach the standards of the qualification.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	1236695
Type of provider	Independent Learning Provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	500
Principal/CEO	Varun Patel
Telephone number	08448 111 240
Website	www.academygroupuk.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)	0	0	0	0	0	545	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:	None							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of centre, 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

Steve Lambert, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Hughes	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graham Cunningham	Ofsted Inspector
Francoise Beregovo	Ofsted Inspector
Philida Schellekens	Ofsted Inspector
Christina Christou	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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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