

Barrett Bell Ltd

Independent Learning Provider

Inspection dates

23–26 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders' clear vision and high ambitions successfully centre on helping unemployed learners achieve their aspirations.
- Leaders work well with partners to ensure that a large proportion of learners move into employment.
- Leaders have focused well on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Learners benefit from very good careers information, advice and guidance.
- Learners achieve well. Achievement rates are high with no significant gaps in the achievement of different groups of learners.
- Tutors provide learners with good support that helps them make good progress.
- Tutors use their significant industry experience to help learners develop the skills and knowledge required to gain and progress in employment.
- Tutors accurately assess learners' practical skills development through rigorous questioning and checking of knowledge.
- Learners make very good progress in developing their mathematical skills, particularly in the context of their chosen profession.
- Learners are proud of their achievements and appreciate the positive impact on their lives and the lives of their families.
- Learners develop their employability skills exceptionally well.
- Improvement planning targets are not sufficiently clear, so leaders are not able to evaluate the progress of planned actions effectively.
- In too many cases, learners do not develop their English skills beyond the basic requirements needed to pass their qualifications.
- Tutors do not use the results of assessment of learners' starting points sufficiently well to plan and provide learning, especially for the development of English skills.
- The attendance and punctuality of a few learners requires improvement.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Barret Bell Ltd is a niche provider focusing solely on training learners to become gas engineers. The two directors started the company in 2006 and delivered training under a subcontract to another provider. In 2015/16 they gained their own contract and provided training principally for learners referred to them by Jobcentre Plus. Directors plan to develop their provision further by increasing the number of job centres and local authorities with which they work.
- The provider has two training centres, Stevenage and Watford. To meet the industry's requirement for separate training and certification sites, those trained at one site are certified at the other. The requirement for gas engineers has increased due to planned redevelopment work in the region. Current learners are studying for a level 3 adult learning qualification in gas engineering.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that staff use the assessment of learners' starting points to provide activities that meet individual needs, especially for developing wider English skills.
- Improve the attendance and punctuality of the few learners for whom this is an issue.
- Make sure that quality improvement targets are measurable and monitored frequently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have a clear vision for the company and high ambitions for their learners. These centre around helping unemployed learners to move into employment within the gas industry. Staff at all levels understand the vision and are fully committed to the company's mission.
- Leaders work well with partners to make sure that a high proportion of learners move into employment. Leaders work closely with the local borough council, local enterprise partnerships and Jobcentre Plus as well as local and national employers. Currently, most learners achieve their qualification and a large proportion move into employment because of their training.
- Leaders have designed an effective curriculum to cater for the needs of learners seeking employment in the gas servicing industry. They adapt the curriculum effectively to take account of new qualifications and developments. For example, leaders have introduced a new level 3 qualification for January 2019 to improve learners' employability prospects.
- Leaders focus well on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and have significantly improved the systems for assessing its quality. The appointment of a quality manager has had a considerable positive impact on this aspect of the provision. Feedback from recent lesson observations and walkthroughs has improved tutors' expertise and enabled them to work more effectively as a team. Leaders have ensured that good practice is effectively shared across the organisation.
- Leaders know the quality of their provision well. They had identified the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors and have made clear improvements to the quality of the provision, particularly since the start of 2018. However, leaders do not currently review the quality improvement and business plans frequently enough to check progress towards achieving targets. Targets and performance indicators in improvement plans are not always measurable and time-constrained. As a result, leaders are unable to evaluate fully whether they have been achieved. For example, the business plan has a key performance indicator to improve attendance but does not set any measurable target.
- Leaders have a clear focus on developing learners' skills in English and mathematics. They have introduced a clear process for assessment of these skills on entry and ensure that these subjects are integrated into the curriculum. This has enabled learners to develop good skills in mathematics. However, leaders recognise that they do not ensure that learners develop their English skills well enough beyond the minimum requirements of their qualification.
- Leaders ensure that learners receive very good careers information, advice and guidance. Most learners are studying to gain employment within gas servicing industries. They benefit from frequent visits from employers who talk to them about job opportunities and inform them about the skills they will need. Leaders and managers make sure that those who are considering self-employment receive detailed information about working for themselves.
- Managers make sure that learners develop their knowledge of equality of opportunity well, such as how to deal with customers who are deaf or have sight problems.

- Leaders, managers and tutors work hard to make sure that learners understand how to be successful employees and citizens. Learners, many of who come from different backgrounds, faiths and beliefs, behave well and show respect for tutors, staff and each other. There have been no recent cases of bullying or harassment

The governance of the provider

- Directors know their business well and are fully involved in the self-assessment process. They work closely with an external consultant to inform their understanding of the quality of the provision further.
- Monthly meetings between the external consultant and senior managers provide robust challenge and help leaders and managers to understand the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers ensure that learners are safe, including when online. All staff receive detailed and appropriate training in safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty.
- Staff and learners understand how to refer concerns to the safeguarding team. The extensive staff training includes subjects such as female genital mutilation, child protection and safer recruitment.
- Leaders and managers closely monitor any safeguarding issues that arise. They carry out detailed risk assessments that lead to improvements in safety. For example, a recent fire risk assessment resulted in the installation of new fire detectors in both training locations.
- The designated safeguarding officers are suitably qualified and deal appropriately with referrals. They involve and refer to external agencies when needed. They keep detailed records of safeguarding incidents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Tutors provide learners with very good support that helps them make good progress. Learners who fall behind are given the attention they need to enable them to catch up. A typical response from a learner was how the support provided outside of formal learning was a key factor for staying in learning, finding employment and taking on additional training.
- Staff record details of learners' attempts to achieve a 100% pass mark and managers use this information to provide and promote appropriate resources to help learners pass first time. They identified that those learners who make full use of the virtual learning environment usually pass first time. Staff generally use reviews well to set and monitor learners' progress towards their short-term targets
- Tutors use their significant industry experience to help learners develop the skills and knowledge required to gain, and progress in, employment. Tutors work well with learners to help them apply their theoretical knowledge in practical sessions. Learners use industry-relevant resources while training. Not only do learners train on modern domestic

gas appliances, but also have a range of older types of appliances. This helps learners develop practical skills related to the range of appliances they will encounter in the workplace.

- Tutors accurately assess learners' practical skills through rigorous questioning and checking of knowledge. For example, learners in a practical session were presented with a range of scenarios about a specific vented hot water system. The tutor questioned learners about the potential of each line of enquiry and the implications of following and not following specific guidance. This helped to identify gaps in learning and in which aspects of the vented heating systems learners needed additional training.
- All learners benefit from the verbal feedback that they receive during classes. They respond well to critical learning points such as improving their gas tightness testing and identification of faults. In one session, the tutor referred to a learner's previous practical tasks and skilfully linked them to current learning. This allowed the learner to solve a problem found in an external flue liner.
- Written feedback is not effective in helping learners understand what they need to do to improve. Learning points are not recorded well enough for learners to build upon or to improve.
- Tutors do not use assessments of starting points sufficiently well to plan and provide learning, especially for developing English skills. Although tutors support some learners well, they do not provide sufficient challenge for the more able learners, or those who can work at a faster pace.
- In a few cases, tutors do not use reviews to challenge learners to help them make better progress. For example, poor attendance is not challenged sufficiently, and, in too many cases, reviewers do not discuss English and mathematics skills development needs in sufficient detail.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners enjoy their studies and behave extremely well in lessons. They contribute well and fully engage in learning. They develop confidence and skills, and enhance their career prospects.
- Learners are proud of their achievements and understand the positive impact their studies will have on their lives and the lives of their families, particularly those who are unemployed. One learner said, 'this course has turned my life around and I can now see a future for me and my family.'
- All learners are respectful and supportive of each other. Peer support is commonplace and enables learners to make good progress. Learners in theory classes work together to find manufacturers' information about gas cookers and appliances. In practical sessions, they test each other against tutor-set scenarios to find and fix faults, such as the pressure checking of water systems.
- Learners develop their independence and research skills well.
- Learners develop their employability skills exceptionally well. Early in their courses, learners go on work placement with approved employers and benefit from the regularity and range of work placements. For example, learners might spend considerable time

shadowing skilled engineers before being allowed to work under supervision to commission and service boilers. In addition, there is a range of useful additional sessions covering such topics as interview techniques, writing a curriculum vitae and how to dress appropriately.

- Learners develop a good understanding of the risks of radicalisation, extremism and how British values apply to them and their work with the public. This is covered thoroughly at induction and reinforced with informative posters and displays in the workplace. Staff make good use of scenarios in the context of their chosen profession to explore these issues. For example, what action to take if extremist material was present in a customer's property.
- Learners are safe and know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. They have a good understanding of safeguarding, including specific risks such as the impact of drug use on their employment prospects. Staff reinforce safety in the context of their work, for example encouraging learners to explain what to do if calling at a customer's house and the door was answered by a child who said that her parents were not at home.
- Learners develop sufficient English skills to achieve their qualifications but, in too many cases, learners, particularly those with low starting points, do not develop their wider English skills. Staff carry out detailed assessments of learners' starting points, which they record well. However, they do not do enough to help develop English skills or to record the progress. In too many instances learners' work contains errors.
- The attendance and punctuality of a few learners requires improvement. In previous years, attendance and punctuality for most learners were very poor. However, leaders have improved this significantly through enhanced monitoring and recording. Staff challenge lateness well.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Learners' achievement rates are very high and above those nationally. They dipped slightly in 2017/18 but were still high. There are no significant gaps in achievement between different groups of learners.
- The proportion of learners who are unemployed at the start of their course and go on to gain employment is very high.
- Learners in employment at the start of their programmes progress onto more demanding work.
- Retention rates have increased year on year and are now high.
- Learners are very competent users of tools and produce work of good quality. They are articulate when talking about their profession and make good use of technical language.
- Because of good support from tutors, learners make very good progress in developing their mathematical skills, particularly in the context of their profession. For example, learners accurately calculate pipe sizes, prepare estimates for customers and convert metric and imperial measurements. Learners use this mathematical knowledge well to develop their fault-finding skills, for example converting cubic feet into the metric scale to find the specific problem with a system and fixing the fault.

- Learners' work meets the requirements of their programmes. They gain skills, knowledge and behaviours that help them either gain or progress in their employment. They develop well their confidence and self-esteem.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1247997
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	156
Principal/CEO	William Barrett-Bell & Natalie Barrett-Bell
Telephone number	07540 723372
Website	www.barrettbell.co.uk

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)	–	–	–	–	–	94	–	–
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 quality and curriculum manager, 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. Inspectors observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Derrick Baughan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andy Fitt	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ian Frear	Ofsted Inspector
Barry Dolan	Ofsted Inspector

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