

# Short inspection of Achievement Training Limited

Inspection dates:

8–9 January 2020

## **Outcome**

Achievement Training Limited continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

The Achievement Training Limited (ATL) headquarters, including its three training centres, are based in Plymouth's city centre. ATL offers apprenticeships, adult learning and traineeships programmes. It is also subcontracted by City College Plymouth, ATL's owner, to deliver study programmes to 16–18 year-olds. This programme was not in scope for this inspection.

ATL's 250 apprentices are employed in public- and private-sector organisations located across the south west of England. Around half of apprentices are on business, health and social care, or information and communication technology (ICT) programmes, with most of the remainder on early years and education-related programmes. ATL employs two subcontractors who have a total of 26 apprentices. Just under 300 adults are following programmes from entry level to level 3 in subjects including health and social care, animal care, hair and beauty therapy, functional skills, foundation learning and employability. Also, 11 learners between 16 and 19 years of age are following traineeship programmes.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

ATL staff support learners very well. The effectiveness of the personal and professional support they provide is a key strength of the provision. It is one of the main reasons learners give when they explain why they enjoy and make good progress in learning. Just under half of all learners at ATL go on to achieve at successively higher levels of ATL courses or elsewhere.

ATL's apprentices benefit from a curriculum that is built on close and productive relationships with public- and private-sector employers in the region. Adult learners and trainees also benefit from good contact with employers, such as additional opportunities for industry-specific training and/or work experience.

ATL learners feel safe and are treated fairly by college staff. They are attentive and keen to learn. They are consistently respectful of others and behave well.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

ATL leaders' curriculum planning is based on their thorough local and regional assessment of need and close collaboration with employers. The design of all ATL's curriculums builds on learners' previous knowledge and prepares them for future work well. Particularly productive working partnerships with public- and private-sector employers ensure that the curriculum is planned jointly and effectively. The specialist apprenticeship curriculums meet employers' and employees' particular needs successfully. Employers respect and value these links with ATL. They work closely with its leaders to ensure that apprentices gain the new skills, knowledge and behaviours required.

Leaders' most recent curriculum planning and prospectuses ensure that prospective learners get useful detail on learning programmes. This includes the number and type of jobs in the immediate and wider areas, analysis of progression options and how much employees might earn in different sectors. Learners understand their curriculum and know what is expected of them from the outset.

The small number of young learners aged 16 to 19 enjoy their time on ATL's traineeship programme. Most attend well and complete and achieve their programmes of learning. They welcome the calm and supportive learning environment, which helps improve their confidence in working with others. Staff provide valuable mentoring support and rightly focus trainees on developing work skills such as punctuality, adopting appropriate wear for work and acceptable social communication. As a result, the great majority develop new skills to support them into work. However, a minority had not developed these skills, knowledge or behaviours well enough due to delays, now resolved, in starting their work experience.

The curriculums for adults allow learners to build on their knowledge and apply and test it practically within their courses. For example, reflexology learners develop their anatomical knowledge and practical skills through completing 100 client treatments. They then write up case studies which are assessed by tutors. Animal care learners enjoy visits from external experts timed to link to their units of study. Adult learners preparing for work in the adult care sector learn the essential new skills, knowledge and behaviours that prepare them well for their future work roles. These learners have frequently re-engaged with learning following negative learning experiences or long periods of unemployment. The curriculums for adults are flexible enough to enable learners who cannot attend on a specific day to attend on a different day and to spend time with their tutor to catch up or complete work using distance learning.

Tutors on adult courses are well qualified and use their vocational experience insightfully to ensure learners gain up-to-date knowledge. They offer adult learners, many of whom have experienced some form of disadvantage, very high levels of professional and pastoral support. Learners with additional learning needs are particularly well supported. Most adult learners make good progress in their studies and complete their courses. They develop good personal and employability skills.

Tutors' teaching and assessment on adult programmes are mostly effective and include a range of methodologies that motivate and inspire learners. A very small minority of tutors are insufficiently experienced and lack the confidence to manage the behaviour of more challenging learners. As a result, other learners are not always able to participate fully in discussions or give their feedback.

Teaching and learning resources are generally of good quality, particularly in hair and beauty. The early years educators' environment is vibrant and stimulating and includes interactive whiteboards which competent tutors use highly effectively to include learners in active learning. The facilities for animal care learners easily accommodate a good range of small mammals and rodents. However, managers recognise the value of learners having routine access to outdoor animal facilities to provide opportunities for realistic training with larger animals. Plans for this are at an early stage.

Like the great majority of ATL learners, apprentices are well motivated and have a good understanding of the programme they are on. They can explain clearly the benefits and impact of their apprenticeship on improving their professional skills, such as communication, managing budgets, improving organisational systems and developing their awareness of how they interact with others. Apprentices' assessors are skilled and knowledgeable, ensuring that learners make good progress and learn in depth. While most employers respect and value their links with ATL, a small minority of learners do not receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training consistently.

Advice and careers guidance for adults before and during their courses are effective and ensure that learners are placed on the appropriate course and level. Beauty learners are offered the opportunity of a trial day to help confirm whether the course is right for them before they enrol. Tutors in animal care ensure that learners are placed on courses that match learners' abilities and their future career aspirations. Many learners, particularly adults, progress from level 2 to level 3 courses with ATL. Few trainees can recall receiving formal careers guidance, but most have clear and realistic plans for their next steps. Many go on to study at higher levels.

In most cases, the standard of learners' work meets or exceeds the level of qualifications learners are aiming for. ATL learners' overall retention and achievement rates are high on almost all programmes, but their timely achievement of qualifications is not always high enough. Learners' attendance and punctuality are not consistently good on a small minority of programmes.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Learners feel safe, nurtured and supported by ATL. They comment particularly on how well staff make them feel part of the ATL 'family'. One full-time designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and two part-time leads maintain the extensive and

effective safeguarding arrangements. All ATL staff are well trained in safeguarding. Staff respond promptly and appropriately to any safeguarding-related matters. The full-time DSL uses very useful links and close involvement with Plymouth social services teams, other local authority teams and the police to resolve the very few serious incidents recorded. The majority of trainees and adults struggle to recall any safeguarding or 'Prevent' duty training or how these might relate to their lives, but do know whom to go to if they have any concerns.

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

- Leaders should ensure that all learners have a good understanding of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty by exploring with them and making clear how these aspects are relevant to learners' everyday lives and local context.
- Leaders should ensure that the small minority of teachers with less experience of classroom management develop the relevant skills so that learners' experience of the curriculum is consistently good.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices receive their full entitlement of off-the-job training consistently.
- Leaders should improve the achievement of learners' qualifications within the planned timescale.

## Provider details

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<b>Address</b>	Norwich Union House 2 St Andrew's Cross Roundabout Plymouth PL1 1DN
<b>Contact number</b>	01752 202261
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<b>CEO</b>	Kathy Barnes
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 January 2016
<b>Subcontractors</b>	Direct Training 2 Care Ltd ATN Training Solutions and Consultancy Ltd

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in July 2011.

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

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