

Inspection of Apprentice Team Ltd

Inspection dates: 10–13 March 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

The company's chief executive officer established Apprentice Team Ltd (ATL) in September 2013 to provide apprenticeship and work-based training, initially for other providers through subcontracting arrangements. In July 2017, the company gained a contract to train apprentices funded through the apprenticeship levy. At the same time, it also gained a contract to deliver adult learning programmes.

ATL provides training for 121 apprentices, 35 of whom are aged 16 to 18. Currently, 95 apprentices are on standards-based programmes from levels 2 to 4. They follow programmes in customer service, management, team leader/supervisor, digital marketing, human resources, hospitality and retail. ATL provides training for 26 apprentices on frameworks at levels 2 and 3 in customer service, business administration and management. Currently, 19 part-time adult learners take functional skills qualifications in English or mathematics at level 1 or 2.

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

Apprentices and adult learners are very positive about their studies. They benefit from an inclusive approach and receive good support from staff. This allows them to participate fully in their studies where previously they may have lacked confidence or experienced barriers to learning.

Assessor/tutors respond well to the needs of apprentices and adult learners. They provide good-quality individual sessions, which they adjust to meet learners' needs. As a result, apprentices and adult learners receive valuable preparation for employment or their next steps following their courses.

Most apprentices develop good levels of new knowledge and skills, which allows them to take on more responsibility at work. For example, apprentices on hospitality programmes quickly gain the ability to deliver training to new staff on service standards and how to deal with difficult customers. Employers are right to value the contribution that apprentices make in their workplaces.

Adult learners develop effective independent learning skills while studying English and mathematics. They learn to manage and maximise their study time between lessons. This enables them to develop their skills quickly and achieve particularly well.

Apprentices and adult learners are highly motivated. They benefit from respectful and positive relationships with their assessor/tutors. They understand their responsibilities to keep others safe in the workplace and during training. Apprentices and adult learners feel safe.

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

Leaders and managers have an ambitious vision for the organisation, focused on the company's core area of expertise in business administration and customer service. Staff are committed to providing high-quality apprenticeship and adult learning programmes. They meet the needs of apprentices, adult learners, employers and community partners well.

Leaders recruit well-qualified staff who are enthusiastic about their subject and specialisms. Assessor/tutors use their vocational expertise effectively to help apprentices develop the technical knowledge and skills they need to be successful. For example, customer service apprentices learn relevant technical language early in their programme, so that they are confident in dealing with clients and complex complaints.

Most assessor/tutors establish apprentices' and adult learners' starting points. They use this information to plan the curriculum well to meet their individual needs. This enables apprentices and adult learners to develop their knowledge and skills quickly so that they can be successful in their roles. For instance, apprentices studying team

leading develop their knowledge and skills in personal effectiveness first, so that they become more able to support the teams they manage.

Assessor/tutors check apprentices' knowledge and understanding through a variety of useful techniques. These include the completion of high-quality workbooks and homework tasks. Detailed verbal feedback challenges apprentices' understanding of subjects and helps them to improve the standard of their work. However, a few assessor/tutors do not provide sufficiently detailed records of this feedback, and a small minority of apprentices do not take notes. This means that apprentices do not always have something to refer to that identifies how they should improve.

Apprentices develop a good range of knowledge and skills, which enables them to play a full role in supporting their employer's business. For example, apprentices in business administration implement systems that improve efficiency, such as monitoring systems for purchasing and expenditure. This reduces manual tracking and saves time.

Most apprentices are well prepared for their end-point assessment. Apprentices start this preparation early in their programme and undertake a number of useful mock activities. This includes practising the pronunciation of technical terms and giving presentations. Consequently, apprentices feel ready for their examinations and a high percentage of them achieve the highest grade available.

Adult learners benefit from a responsive curriculum through a personalised, one-to-one tutoring programme. This allows them to attend learning sessions that take account of their personal, family and work commitments. The vast majority of adult learners achieve their qualifications in English and mathematics.

Leaders and managers have detailed approaches to monitoring the quality of the curriculum. They recognise that not enough apprentices achieve within the planned timescales. Following a recent detailed and accurate review of the reasons for this, they have quickly implemented a range of actions and changes. These include amending the curriculum on offer and revising the guidance given to employers and apprentices. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of these actions.

Assessor/tutors do not always provide apprentices or adult learners with enough detailed careers advice about their next steps. This is particularly the case when they wish to progress to a course outside ATL. As a result, a few apprentices and adult learners are unaware of the full range of options that may be available to them. For example, apprentices who want to progress to specialist courses in legal studies do not receive guidance to identify their options.

Most apprentices do not benefit from enough opportunities to develop their wider knowledge, interests and capabilities beyond their main area of study. Leaders and managers have started to increase these opportunities, but it is too early to see how these developments benefit apprentices.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers prioritise the safety of apprentices and adult learners. Staff receive frequent useful updates on safeguarding and know how to report any concerns. Leaders and managers deal with incidents swiftly and take appropriate actions. Leaders have appropriate policies for safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty, which they update routinely. Leaders follow safe recruitment practices.

Apprentices and adult learners feel safe in training and in work. However, they do not have a full understanding of British values or the risks they may face in their local areas. Leaders and managers have prioritised continuing professional development (CPD) for staff in these areas. Nevertheless, assessor/tutors are not confident enough in discussing these topics in detail.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers must ensure that apprentices and adult learners have a broader understanding of their career options. They should provide opportunities for apprentices to develop their wider knowledge and skills beyond their core curriculum.
- Leaders and managers should review and strengthen arrangements for teaching apprentices and adult learners, so they are more aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism, and British values.
- Leaders should carefully evaluate the impact of the CPD they provide for assessor/tutors so that they are confident that it leads to improvements in the quality of education.
- Leaders and managers should monitor carefully the impact of the actions that they have implemented to increase the number of apprentices who achieve within the planned timescales, so that actions improve apprentices' outcomes.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1270911
Address	12 Saltergate Chesterfield S40 1UT
Contact number	01246 278931
Website	www.apprenticeteam.org
CEO	Katie Johnstone
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the CEO, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. 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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