

# Inspection of Apprenticeship Learning Solutions Ltd

Inspection dates:

3–5 August 2021

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Apprenticeships

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Apprenticeship Training Solutions Ltd (ALS) is based in Cardiff and began to recruit apprenticeships in England in 2018. ALS are owned by Associated Community Training Limited (trading as ACT Training) which is part of the Cardiff and Vale College group (CAVC). At the time of the inspection, there were 30 apprentices studying at level 3 on an aerospace engineering technician standard apprenticeship. All apprentices work for one major employer that specialises in defence aerospace. Apprentices studying on level 3 team leading and level 2 gas industry apprenticeships completed their courses earlier this year. ALS also delivers apprenticeships in Wales. These apprenticeships were not in scope for this inspection.

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

Engineering apprentices spend the first year of their three-year course at the CAVC aviation training centre in Cardiff. They live in residential accommodation in Cardiff city centre that is approved by CAVC. Apprentices describe how this foundation year helps them gain very useful underpinning knowledge and skills in aerospace engineering. They also learn how to live independently for the first time. From the start of their courses, apprentices study engineering systems and practise maintenance routines directly on real aircraft. As a result, apprentices develop good practical skills and technical knowledge that helps them in their workplace. They also learn how to work together in a team to ensure the safety of an aircraft.

During the remainder of their apprenticeships, apprentices complete three work placements with their employer at different locations across the United Kingdom. Through these placements, apprentices gain valuable experience working with different fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. They develop their knowledge and skills rapidly. Apprentices' competence and confidence grow quickly. As a result, they move on to more complex and demanding tasks, and their supervisors give them extra responsibilities which they relish.

Apprentices are highly motivated to learn and do well. They are very proud of what they can do, what they have learned and the role they play with their employer. They are highly committed to their careers within the aviation sector.

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

Knowledgeable senior leaders work very closely with very large national and international employers to provide high-quality apprenticeships. The strong partnership they have with the aerospace employer enables ALS to plan and deliver a well-structured engineering apprenticeship that meets very specific employer and aviation sector requirements. It also provides aerospace engineering apprentices with a well-coordinated experience of on- and off-the-job training.

Experienced and well-qualified staff teach and assess apprentices well, using good facilities and resources. Tutors use their specialist knowledge to explain important concepts to apprentices well, such as aviation engineering legislation, and safe workshop practices. They make effective use of assessment to check apprentices' understanding and to correct any misconceptions. Tutors and assessors set apprentices tasks that become more complex as apprentices' understanding and competence grow. For example, apprentices gradually undertake more complicated maintenance activities such as pre-flight checks.

ALS staff ensure that apprentices practise skills frequently, such as riveting aircraft fuselage repairs and undertaking flight instrument checks. Apprentices can remove

large components, such as brake assemblies, propellers or complete engines using specialist lift equipment correctly. Supervisors in the workplace develop further the underpinning knowledge and skills that apprentices gain at the aviation training centre so that apprentices become more competent and work increasingly with less supervision. As apprentices progress through their course the standard of repairs they undertake improves quickly. Apprentices understand the importance of very high-quality repairs in a sector that has high degrees of health and safety scrutiny.

Working closely with the employer, ALS staff have established a positive and supportive culture that demands high expectations of behaviours and attitudes of apprentices. Consequently, apprentices work hard to meet or exceed these standards successfully. They are rightly proud of what they achieve.

Staff support apprentices with learning difficulties well. They work closely with the employer to devise useful tools to help these apprentices. For example, those with dyslexia receive additional assistance from staff, such as with study skills and time management, that help them learn and improve their work.

Staff worked diligently with the employer and apprentices to ensure there was minimal disruption to training during COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdowns. First-year apprentices learned remotely for a short time. They returned to the aviation training centre as soon as this was permitted, so that they could continue with their practical training. Staff supported apprentices well to catch up on any work they missed. As a result, the apprentices who are due to complete their qualifications are soon to undertake their final external assessment.

Senior managers, and members of the governing board, have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They have useful experience and expertise of the delivery of apprenticeships in England.

Managers do not always ensure that important processes and procedures, such as recording staff training or how apprentices' accommodation is approved, are communicated effectively and efficiently to ALS staff. Not all ALS staff know how to use recently introduced systems effectively, such as apprentices' electronic portfolios, as managers have not provided them with enough training.

Tutors and assessors do not develop apprentices' English skills well enough, particularly during their placements. Consequently, apprentices do not always produce written work, including technical reports, at a consistently high standard. Apprentices continue to develop their engineering mathematical skills well due to the content and structure of the course, and the support they receive from their staff.

ALS staff do not provide apprentices with enough teaching and information on topics that impact on their wider personal and professional lives. For example, apprentices that live in rented accommodation during their placements do not learn how to budget effectively so that they can pay their bills because staff do not teach them these skills.

Tutors or assessors are not always confident to discuss potentially difficult topics with apprentices, such as modern slavery or county lines, so apprentices do not develop a good understanding of these subjects.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. They recognised recently that the manager responsible for safeguarding should be at a more senior level. Those involved in the safeguarding of apprentices have completed appropriate training to conduct their duties, including 'Prevent' duty training. They also have access to expertise within the wider CAVC group. Staff have regular safeguarding updates.

Managers check that the accommodation used by apprentices in Cardiff is risk-assessed, safe and appropriate.

Apprentices benefit from the services of a well-being team based at the aviation training centre. They have access to ALS and employer staff 24 hours-a-day should they have concerns or need help.

Most apprentices have a good understanding of safeguarding in their work. They understand the potential threats from extremism and radicalisation in the aviation industry but see little relevance of this to their personal lives because staff do not explore this with them well enough or often enough.

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

- Teach apprentices about topics that affect their personal lives and deepen their understanding of life in modern Britain. Provide them with the monetary and other life skills, such as healthy eating, that they need to live independently during their placements. Develop staff confidence in discussing complex human topics with apprentices, such as modern slavery and drugs misuse.
- Develop apprentices' English skills, particularly on their placements, so that they improve their technical report-writing skills as well as their day-to-day communications skills.
- Accelerate the ongoing review of policies, processes, and procedures. Make these more easily available and understood by all, so that staff continue to improve their support to apprentices.
- Give staff more training on new systems to monitor apprentices' progress and well-being.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	50081
<b>Address</b>	ALS Training Ocean Park House East Tyndall Street Cardiff CF24 5ET
<b>Contact number</b>	02922 677020
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.alstraining.org">www.alstraining.org</a>
<b>Directors</b>	Helena Williams and Sarah John
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality manager, 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

Helen Flint, lead inspector

Russell Shobbrook

Martin Bennett

Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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