

# Inspection of Achieving Excellence UK Limited

Inspection dates:

15–17 September 2021

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Achieving Excellence UK Limited (Achieving Excellence) is an independent training provider based in Lewisham, London. Achieving Excellence gained a direct contract to teach apprenticeship programmes in 2017. At the time of this inspection, there were 233 apprentices, including eight on a break in learning. All apprentices are adults.

Achieving Excellence offers healthcare and childcare apprenticeships to a range of employers. Almost a third of apprentices were working towards standards-based apprenticeships in healthcare from levels 2 to 5. Fifty-five apprentices were on children and young people standards levels 2 to 5. There were six apprentices on the level 3 business administrator standards and three apprentices working towards early years frameworks.

The provider had 36 apprentices on business standards and frameworks from levels 2 to 5, most of whom were employed by one large national employer. In total, Achieving Excellence supported 36 apprentices to achieve their programmes in the 2020/21 academic year, 13 of whom completed standards.

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

The experience of apprentices differs considerably depending on their programme and the expertise of their tutor. In most instances, apprentices complete a considerable amount of self-directed reading and research to gain the knowledge they need to achieve. Where direct teaching does take place, this is mainly through monthly, one-to-one sessions which are not consistently good, although apprentices value the support tutors give them in these sessions. Apprentices do not tend to interact with one another unless they work for the same employer, and this limits their opportunity to learn from and share experiences with their peers.

Most apprentices develop a greater degree of confidence, which helps them to fulfil their roles at work. For example, apprentices on the level 3 team leader/supervisor apprenticeship have gained the confidence to lead meetings with key account holders and senior personnel. Similarly, level 5 children, young people and families manager apprentices are able to make use of the wide range of communication tools they have learned to manage their staff more effectively.

Too many adult care apprentices do not receive the time they are entitled to, during their working week, to complete their apprenticeship. Level 5 management apprentices have faced additional challenges in completing their apprenticeship, as multiple changes in staff have disrupted their learning. Despite challenges in managing their workload, apprentices who have fallen behind are ambitious and driven to achieve their qualifications and progress in their careers.

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

Leaders offer a range of programmes that fit within their areas of expertise and meet the needs of national employers. Employers appreciate that these programmes enable them to retain employees who they want to become future leaders and reduce staff turnover.

While leaders have introduced quality assurance processes, including taking helpful feedback from apprentices, they do not use the information they have effectively enough to raise standards. They have been slow to identify and take actions to improve the quality of training for a large proportion of apprentices.

Leaders do not build consistently strong relationships with all employers. They involve employers well on team leader and business apprenticeships. Employers feel suitably informed about the progress of their apprentices. As a result, they support apprentices in the development and application of new knowledge, skills and behaviours and often promote apprentices into more senior roles as a result of their studies. On childcare and adult care apprenticeships, staff do not communicate clearly enough the requirements of an apprenticeship programme. As a result, in too many cases, apprentices do not receive their entitlement to effective training, and time for training during their working week.

On business and care apprenticeships, tutors do not adequately take account of apprentices' prior qualifications or experiences when teaching the curriculum. As a result, in a few cases, apprentices find assessment work difficult and lack the knowledge and skills to complete it; whereas in other instances, apprentices complete assignments which do not enable them to develop further their knowledge or skills.

On care programmes, tutors do not consistently follow the curriculum as it is planned. As a result, apprentices do not benefit from a well-sequenced curriculum in which their learning builds over time or that is linked to the work they do in their work setting.

On apprenticeships in healthcare and childcare, taught content is not sufficiently challenging, and tutors do not use effective enough teaching techniques to help apprentices remember what they need to. When apprentices have one-to-one sessions with their tutors, they find these useful to guide them to complete assignments. As a result, just over three quarters of apprentices achieve their programmes.

Leaders have been slow to implement an effective teaching model for functional skills qualifications. Leaders have not provided tutors with sufficient training in how to teach apprentices English or mathematics effectively. Many apprentices do not improve their knowledge of these subjects. As a result, they do not develop these skills or achieve the qualifications quickly enough to complete their apprenticeship in the planned timeframe.

Tutors do not have consistently high expectations of their apprentices and the work they produce. Too often, tutors do not provide apprentices with high-quality feedback on their written work so that apprentices know what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Targets set by tutors focus too narrowly on completing assignment tasks rather than developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Many apprentices have English as an additional language. Too often, tutors do not challenge apprentices to correct grammatical errors in their assignments or help them to use technical language correctly.

For too many apprentices, their programme does not extend beyond the content of their qualification, and personal development is ad-hoc rather than planned into the curriculum. While leaders promote fundamental British values, equality of opportunity and diversity at induction, too few tutors follow this up with apprentices in training sessions or reviews so that apprentices know how these topics apply to them.

The quality of careers advice and guidance that apprentices receive varies depending on the expertise of their tutors. For example, level 5 adult care apprentices discuss their career aspirations with their tutors and receive helpful advice about future career opportunities. However, not all tutors offer well-informed careers guidance.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices feel safe at work and in their training and would feel comfortable to talk to their employers or tutors if they were to have any concerns. The provider has clear reporting procedures for apprentices through male or female safeguarding staff or a central email address. Where any concerns about learner's safeguarding are raised, leaders respond to them swiftly and keep appropriate records of their actions.

The safeguarding team is knowledgeable about the different risks that apprentices may face in their work sectors. To remain well informed, they meet with local safeguarding boards and pass any relevant information to tutors and apprentices through monthly emails and discussions. Leaders conduct appropriate checks to assure themselves that their staff are safe to work with adults and young people.

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

- Leaders should ensure that tutors have the skills they need to use effective teaching techniques so that the curriculum content is challenging and apprentices remember what they have learned.
- Leaders should communicate effectively with all employers the full requirements of an apprenticeship programme and involve employers in the curriculum for their apprentices.
- Tutors should accurately assess apprentices' starting points and design an individual plan of learning for each apprentice that meets their needs.
- Leaders should have thorough oversight of the quality of teaching to develop a consistently high-quality and effectively taught curriculum for all programmes.

## Provider details

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<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Richard Shuttleworth
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous progress monitoring 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 visiting online 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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Julia Gray	Ofsted Inspector

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