

# Inspection of The Autism Project - CareTrade

Inspection dates: 16–18 November 2021

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Information about this provider

The Autism Project (TAP) is part of the CareTrade Charitable Trust, which is a registered charity based in Southwark, London. Learners are young people who have autism aged between 18 and 25. At the time of the inspection, there were 25 learners who have education and health care (EHC) plans and high needs. TAP works with 10 different local authorities.

Learners follow a two-year employment programme that enables them to develop workplace skills, so they are able to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. The programme equips learners with the skills they need for work, including English and mathematics. The majority of the programme is delivered through learning in the workplace. Learners take part in work placements that are based in hospitals and professional catering kitchens.

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

Learners enjoy their supported internships. They have good-quality individual programmes, providing them with challenging and meaningful learning experiences. As a result, the majority of learners succeed and move into employment at the end of their programme.

Learners have good support from employers who are well trained and experienced in working with young people who have autism. Employers take the time to get to know and meet learners' individual support needs and career aspirations well. As a result, learners successfully complete their work placements with employers.

Learners benefit from attending the small and inclusive learning centre. Tutors create a calm environment for learners. Learners participate enthusiastically in lessons as tutors and job coaches make lessons exciting and interesting.

Learners form new friendships with their peers during their programme. The fitness and well-being activities, such as yoga, help learners to form these new friendships. Learners find these activities fun.

Learners receive helpful and informative careers advice to help them prepare for their next steps. They attend job clubs, careers fairs, hear from guest speakers and take part in taster work-experience placements to explore what they might do once they complete their course. As a result, learners are well informed of the opportunities available to them after TAP.

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

Trustees and leaders have made effective improvements across the curriculum since the previous inspection. The recent introduction of a coherent process to recognise and record learners' progress and achievements enables leaders to better plan the curriculum against the individual needs of learners.

Leaders have high aspirations for learners to move into sustainable employment. Learners are encouraged by staff to consider ambitious career prospects that they can aspire to in commercial kitchens and administration roles. As a result, most learners undertake job roles that are meaningful and challenging.

Tutors use a wide range of effective assessment tools and information to determine learners' starting points. They use information about learners' EHC plan outcomes, prior knowledge, skills and qualifications to develop a personalised curriculum that links reflects learners' career aspirations. As a result, learners complete programmes that are suitable to their individual needs.

Job coaches teach learners the importance of punctuality well. Learners develop their understanding of the importance to arrive at work on time and use a clocking-

in, clocking-out system. As a result, attendance and punctuality on work placements is good.

Job coaches and employers carefully assess learners' knowledge and skills in the workplace. They challenge learners to do things that are new to them, such as accurately weighing dough to make flatbreads, cutting vegetables to the right size with precision, and cooking flatbreads so they are golden brown. As a result, learners are encouraged to meet commercial standards in their work.

Learners benefit from specialist therapeutic input that improves their social and relationship skills. For example, speech and language therapists deliver social group sessions. In these, learners discuss current affairs topics such as fake news, racism, and equality. As a result, learners improve their social and communication skills.

Tutors guide learners sensitively to review their work in lessons. They use effective questioning strategies to encourage learners to reflect on what they learn. For example, in making Christmas pom-poms, learners identified where they had made errors and how to adjust their approach to winding wool to ensure the product is to an acceptable standard to sell.

Tutors create a clear connection between what they teach learners in lessons and what learners do in their work placements. Learners complete journals to capture their development in the workplace and to record areas they need to improve. Tutors use this information to tailor the curriculum for individual learners. For example, where needed, learners benefit from additional mathematics lessons in budgeting and forecasting which gives them the knowledge and skills for a job in the accountancy sector. The majority of learners make good progress and move into sustainable employment. However, on a few occasions, tutors do not record in enough detail the skills and knowledge learners have gained, including in their workplaces, and lack a full overview of learners' progress.

Leaders do not plan a sufficient range of opportunities for learners to develop knowledge and skills on topics such as healthy living and relationships. Learners develop a basic awareness through stand-alone ad-hoc workshops. However, there are no ongoing opportunities for learners to further develop their knowledge and skills. As a result, the majority of learners only have the basic knowledge and skills needed to make safe and informed life choices.

Learners are well prepared for life in modern Britain and develop new knowledge on topics, such as the risks of radicalisation and extremism, equal opportunities, and the role of British values in their communities and wider society.

Leaders offer a limited range of extra-curricular activities to learners such as yoga, meditation and mindfulness. The range and take-up of activities are limited. As a result, learners do not have sufficient opportunities to fully explore their talents and interests through high-quality activities.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have significantly strengthened safeguarding since the previous inspection. Designated safeguarding leads are suitably qualified. They have effective partnerships that help them to understand the regional threats and risks to young people in the different London boroughs.

As a result of extensive training in topics, such as 'Prevent' duty, county lines, INCEL and peer-on-peer abuse, staff have a good awareness on how to spot signs of abuse or harm to learners.

Leaders implement and adhere to safe recruitment processes. They have thorough recruitment processes to ensure that newly recruited staff are suitable to work with vulnerable young people.

Learners say they feel safe when they are at the learning centre and at their place of work.

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

- Leaders should ensure that learners progress is recorded in sufficient detail so that learners have a detailed record of their progress and achievement over time.
- Leaders should ensure that all learners have access to and participate in high-quality extra-curricular activities to develop their talents and interests.
- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum includes more frequent and comprehensive opportunities for learners to develop their knowledge on, for example, personal and social relationships and health topics.

## Provider details

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<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.care-trade.org">www.care-trade.org</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Karen Edwards
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent Specialist College
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 January–1 February 2018

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of education, 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 visiting 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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