

Inspection of Aspire to Learn Limited

Inspection dates:

26 to 28 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Apprenticeships

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Information about this provider

Aspire to Learn Limited (ATL) is a private training provider which operates mainly in London and Essex and has some provision in other regions. ATL started providing directly funded apprenticeships in December 2017. At the time of this inspection, 214 apprentices studied a range of standard-based apprenticeships at levels 2 to 5, with a few on framework apprenticeships. Most apprentices were on level 3 programmes in early years and childcare, adult care, business administration, housing and property management, and digital marketing. Since the previous inspection, leaders have introduced a number of apprenticeships at levels 4 and 5, including the level 5 healthcare assistant practitioner programme.

Most apprentices are aged 19 and over, and 41 apprentices are aged 16 to 18. At the time of this inspection, apprentices received most of their training online, with workplace observations and some progress reviews taking place face to face.

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

Apprentices do not receive suitable teaching and guidance during their apprenticeship programme. In most cases, apprentices who are near the end of their programme do not receive enough teaching to successfully prepare for their functional skills and final examinations. As a result, many make slow progress and struggle to complete their qualifications.

Apprentices' attitudes towards learning on different programmes vary too much. For example, apprentices on the healthcare assistant practitioner programme commit well to completing online tasks independently. In contrast, apprentices in childcare, health and social care, and housing and property management do not always complete their work. Tutors do not apply consistently high expectations of apprentices. They do not routinely set clear targets around work submission, meeting deadlines or attendance. Consequently, most apprentices do not meet their deadlines.

Apprentices do not have access to sufficient opportunities to develop their interests and knowledge beyond their qualifications. For example, leaders do not provide apprentices with training to develop their wider knowledge and understanding of topics such as healthy relationships and lifestyles. Consequently, apprentices are not sufficiently well prepared to deal with issues affecting their lives outside of work.

Apprentices behave well in their sessions and are ready to learn. When in lessons, they are polite and considerate of each other. They take part in discussions and respond to questions.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to report their concerns about safety and well-being.

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

Leaders and managers have identified many of the weaknesses in their provision. They have started to understand and tackle some of the significant issues with their programmes. However, these actions have not yet had a positive impact on the progress that most apprentices make. There is no governance structure in place, and leaders do not have sufficient support or challenge to improve the quality of their provision.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that the curriculum is appropriate and ambitious for apprentices. Tutors and assessors focus on completing units of qualifications and not on the development of the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours apprentices need to complete their apprenticeships. Consequently, apprentices do not develop a secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects and struggle to complete their apprenticeships.

Staff do not identify learners' needs and starting points accurately. They do not consider information about what apprentices already know and can do at the start of their programme. For example, when apprentices in early years and adult care programmes have substantial experience in their sector, staff do not revise learning plans to reflect this. As a result, too many apprentices in these subject areas do not find their course demanding enough.

Tutors and assessors have the relevant industry experience they need to teach their subjects. Leaders and managers ensure that all staff receive suitable training to improve their teaching practice. They have increased the frequency of meetings and training events. Staff value highly the training they receive. However, most of this training is quite recent, and its impact is not yet visible in teaching practice across the provision.

Tutors and assessors do not use suitable teaching strategies to enable learners to develop a sound knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Apprentices do not have appropriate opportunities within sessions to clarify misconceptions or practise newly taught knowledge and skills. Most apprentices struggle to understand the content in online resources, which in some cases is too complex. As a result, most apprentices cannot recall what they have been taught.

In teaching sessions, tutors and assessors do not consistently check apprentices' understanding before moving on to new topics. They do not use assessment effectively to identify gaps in apprentices' knowledge. Most staff do not check how well apprentices develop skills and professional behaviours specific to their standards over time. As a result, tutors and assessors are too slow to address gaps in apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Leaders have been too slow to put in place the teaching necessary to develop apprentices' knowledge of English and mathematics. Consequently, apprentices who need to pass English and mathematics qualifications to complete their programme do not do so within the planned time, causing delays to their final assessments.

Staff do not prepare apprentices sufficiently well for their programmes. Too often, apprentices do not know about the different components of their apprenticeship. For example, apprentices in early years and adult care programmes are not fully aware of the need to take a final examination to complete their programme. Apprentices report that they feel anxious and ill-prepared, and most do not pass their final assessment.

Tutors and assessors do not consistently provide timely or sufficiently detailed feedback to apprentices on their work. Too often, their feedback on apprentices' work lacks the detail needed to tell apprentices what they have done well and what they should do to improve their work. They do not routinely check if apprentices' work is of the appropriate standard and focus on achieving unit criteria rather than the quality of content. Consequently, most apprentices do not know what they need to do to improve their work.

Tutors and assessors do not set clear and or sufficiently detailed targets for those apprentices who fall behind with their work. As a result, apprentices who are struggling do not always know what steps they need to take to catch up. On a few occasions where apprentices have asked for guidance, tutors have not provided this. As a result, these apprentices remain behind.

Leaders do not have an accurate oversight of apprentices' attendance. Staff do not implement clear processes to follow up on absences, and they do not collect overall figures on attendance or punctuality. Consequently, they do not know which programme areas have low attendance and why.

Apprentices do not receive high quality and timely impartial careers advice and guidance. Tutors and assessors do not sufficiently discuss careers with apprentices in their reviews. As a result, most apprentices are not aware of the next steps available to them in their careers within their chosen sectors.

Senior leaders do not have appropriate systems and processes in place to track apprentices' progress or monitor the quality of teaching. Staff do not review or record apprentices' progress consistently. Consequently, they do not have an accurate oversight of apprentices' progress. Senior leaders do not have a robust action plan in place to address these issues to ensure rapid improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have suitable safeguarding policies in place. They carry out appropriate checks, such as disclosure and barring service checks, to ensure staff are safe to work with apprentices.

Staff undertake frequent training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They make check-in calls to apprentices to support their safety and well-being and deal with safeguarding concerns appropriately. They do not, however, record safeguarding incidents in sufficient detail.

Leaders do not have a thorough understanding of the local risks apprentices may face based on the areas in which they live and work. As a result, staff have not taught apprentices how to protect themselves from these risks.

Leaders provide apprentices with safeguarding training that helps them to understand issues such as online safety. Apprentices benefit from learning about safeguarding topics relevant to their job roles. For example, apprentices working in the healthcare sector learn about how to protect themselves from physical assault when they complete restraint training.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that apprentices receive sufficient teaching and guidance in all components of their apprenticeship programme, including English and mathematics.
- Staff should assess what apprentices know and can do at the start of their course. They should design an ambitious curriculum which enables each apprentice to build on their existing knowledge and skills.
- Leaders should develop a comprehensive personal development curriculum, which includes impartial careers advice and guidance, to teach apprentices about the opportunities available to them and prepare them for their next steps.
- Leaders should ensure that they have robust processes in place to track apprentices' progress and attendance to ensure apprentices achieve on time.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58568
Address	68, George Lane South Woodford London E18 1LW
Contact number	0208 989 9832
Website	www.aspire2learn.com
Company Director	Ziggy Pindoria
Provider type	Independent Learning Provider
Date of previous inspection	5 October 2010
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations delivery manager, 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.

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