

# Inspection of Aspiration Training Limited

Inspection dates:

4 to 7 July 2023

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| The quality of education                     | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Behaviour and attitudes                      | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Personal development                         | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Leadership and management                    | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Adult learning programmes                    | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Apprenticeships                              | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good                        |

## Information about this provider

Aspiration Training Limited (ATL) is a national independent learning provider, based in Redditch, in the West Midlands.

ATL provides apprenticeships and adult courses predominantly in the health, public services and care sectors, and in business, administration and law. At the time of inspection, there were 1,893 learners in total.

Of these, 1,756 were apprentices. A total of 918 apprentices were studying apprenticeships relating to the dental sector, 592 were studying apprenticeships in the early years sector, 201 in the adult care sector, and 17 were studying the level 3 children, young people and families practitioner. The remaining 28 apprentices were on business, administration and law apprenticeships.

A total of 137 adult learners were studying level 2 adult learning programmes. Of these, 122 were on courses relating to the early years and adult social care sector, 11 were studying functional skills mathematics and four were studying functional skills English.

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

Too many apprentices and adult learners do not develop or maintain positive attitudes to their learning. They fall behind with their studies, and too many apprentices leave early and do not achieve their apprenticeship.

Apprentices and adult learners who remain on their apprenticeship or course enjoy their learning. They appreciate the calm and positive environment that coaches create during online lessons. This helps them to concentrate fully on their studies.

Apprentices build positive relationships with their coaches. They value the sector knowledge and expertise that their coaches have. Apprentices learn valuable knowledge and skills that support them at work.

Apprentices studying level 3 dental nurse have experienced changes in coaches, which has disrupted their learning. A small minority of these apprentices have become frustrated and demotivated. This has slowed their progress.

Apprentices and adult learners develop positive professional behaviours. For example, apprentices studying the level 3 adult care worker develop a sound understanding of the '6 Cs of care' (care, compassion, competence, communication, courage and commitment) and use these principles to care for their clients in a sensitive manner.

Apprentices and adult learners develop their understanding of equality and diversity. They learn about the duties, responsibilities and boundaries of their role, including the regulatory and legal frameworks for the care sector.

Apprentices and adult learners feel safe in their lessons and at work. They know who to report their concerns to.

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

Leaders and managers have developed a range of apprenticeship and adult learning courses for adult care, early years and dental nursing. These sectors have significant staff and skills shortages and high rates of staff turnover. The curriculums provided develop the knowledge and skills required by employers in these sectors. However, too many apprentices choose to leave the sector in which they work and do not achieve their apprenticeship.

Leaders rightly recognise the need to take action to reduce the number of apprentices who fall behind or leave their apprenticeship early. They have revised their apprentice recruitment process and monitor and support more closely apprentices who have been identified as being at risk of falling behind. Where necessary, they have stopped working with employers who do not meet the requirement to support apprentices to complete their off-the-job studies. These strategies are showing early indications of improving the retention of apprentices.

Leaders recruit coaches who are vocational specialists in the sectors they teach. Leaders prioritise staff training to ensure that coaches are up to date with industry practices and are appropriately qualified to teach. Apprentices, adult learners and their employers value the up-to-date knowledge and experience that coaches have. For example, adult care coaches understand how to prepare for regulatory inspections. Dental nurse coaches keep their General Dental Council registration and professional development up to date.

Coaches use information about what sector knowledge and experience apprentices have to plan their learning. This ensures that apprentices build on what they already know and can do. For example, level 3 lead adult care worker apprentices become better able to manage and support colleagues dealing with patient bereavement.

Coaches present new ideas effectively in their teaching and use their sector awareness to help apprentices develop and secure their knowledge. Coaches make successful use of questioning to test apprentices' recall of topics. They use scenario-based discussions to build on apprentices' knowledge and understanding. For example, when introducing health and safety topics, coaches use scenario-based discussions to help apprentices to link hazards and risks to the safe and effective use of personal protective equipment in their own work setting.

Coaches use a range of assessment methods to inform their teaching and assessment effectively. They use questioning, professional discussions and workplace observations, multiple-choice tests and witness testimonies from apprentices' workplace mentors. As a result, apprentices know more and can remember more and are prepared for their final assessments.

Most apprentices who need their English and mathematics qualifications to pass their apprenticeship receive support. Coaches use information about what English and mathematics skills apprentices need to learn to plan their learning. However, pass rates for mathematics are too low and a small minority of apprentices do not receive the support they need to complete their apprenticeship on time.

Coaches do not closely support the development of English and mathematics skills for apprentices who have already achieved their qualifications. As a result, apprentices do not routinely develop their English and mathematics skills. For example, in level 2 early years practitioner, coaches do not give feedback to apprentices on their written work to develop their writing skills, spelling and use of capital letters. Apprentices repeat mistakes and do not improve the quality of their writing.

Apprentices who remain on their course develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, level 3 dental nurse apprentices can locate infections on x-ray images and recommend appropriate treatment plans for their patients. Level 2 early years practitioner apprentices learn new approaches to support and play with children with additional needs. As a result, most apprentices who complete their apprenticeship achieve. A minority achieve the highest grades.

Managers' and coaches' use of starting points is inconsistent for adult learners. They do not use information about what adult learners who study level 2 principles of dementia care already know and can do to plan their learning. Interaction with learners is focused on the self-directed completion of workbooks and qualification units. As a result, learners do not systematically build on their previous knowledge and experience of working with clients with dementia.

However, in adult functional mathematics, coaches use information about what learners know and can do to plan their learning. Coaches plan personalised learning that builds on learners' strengths and focuses on their areas for development. For example, learners learn and practise calculations for numbers, fractions and percentages before applying them in everyday contexts. As a result, learners are motivated, progress on to more complex mathematical topics and use their new skills at work.

Adult learners develop useful new knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, functional mathematics learners learn to use the column method for addition calculations. Level 2 dementia care learners can name the different areas of the brain affected by dementia and the common types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's and vascular dementia. Most adult learners achieve their qualification.

Leaders do not ensure that apprentices and learners benefit from a clear and well-planned careers education, information, advice and guidance programme. Too many apprentices and adult learners are unclear about their next steps and the opportunities available to them. Leaders have developed resources based on a range of personal development topics, including career development planning. However, leaders rightly recognise they need to do more to measure the impact of these resources.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. Safeguarding is discussed frequently in team and governance meetings to ensure it remains a high priority for all.

Leaders have ensured that appropriate policies and procedures are in place. They follow these procedures with care.

Leaders do not ensure that young apprentices learn about healthy relationships outside of work and topics such as sexual harassment, banter, consent, misogyny and child-on-child abuse.

Too few apprentices and learners are aware of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, including the local risks where they live and work.

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

- Leaders and managers should reduce the number of apprentices and adult learners who leave early or fall behind and those who do not complete their apprenticeship or qualification on time.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices routinely get the time they need away from work to study. Line managers should attend progress review meetings to ensure that apprentices receive the support they need to do well.
- Leaders should ensure that coaches use information about what adult learners already know and can do to plan their learning.
- Leaders and coaches should ensure that learners and apprentices know what they need to do to achieve the highest grades.
- Leaders should ensure that young apprentices learn about healthy relationships, including topics such as sexual harassment, consent and misogyny.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices and adult learners develop their understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, including the potential risks in their local area.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that all learners and apprentices develop the English and mathematical skills needed for their next steps in education or employment.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices and learners benefit from a clear and well-planned careers education, advice and guidance programme.

## **Provider details**

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>      | 57680  |
| <b>Address</b>                      | Grosvenor House<br>Prospect Hill<br>Redditch<br>B97 4DL                    |
| <b>Contact number</b>               | 01527 359646   |
| <b>Website</b>                      | <a href="http://www.aspirationtraining.com">www.aspirationtraining.com</a> |
| <b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b> | Iain Salisbury   |
| <b>Provider type</b>                | Independent learning provider  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>  | 29 November to 2 December 2016   |
| <b>Main subcontractors</b>          | Not applicable   |

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Director of Quality and Compliance, 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

|                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Rachel Clark, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Helen Morgan                 | His Majesty's Inspector |
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