

# Inspection of Aspire Training Team Limited

Inspection dates:

25 to 28 July 2023

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

---

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

**Information about this provider**

Aspire Training Team Limited (Aspire) is an independent learning provider based in Bournemouth. Aspire was formerly known as Tops Training which was formed in 1997. The rebranding to Aspire Training Team Limited took place in 2004. Aspire specialises in providing apprenticeships in early years education and has around 380 apprentices. Around 240 apprentices study the level 3 early years educator apprenticeship, 120 apprentices the level 2 early years practitioner apprenticeship and 11 learners the level 5 early years senior practitioner apprenticeship. A small number of apprentices study business administrator, customer service and team leader apprenticeships. Around a quarter of apprentices are under 18 years old. The provider works with 160 employers across the south west of England.

Around 50 adult learners study level 3 and level 4 diplomas in early years and children and young people's workforce. Around 17 learners are 16 to 18 years old and study certificates in care at entry level and level 1. At the time of the inspection, learners studying education programmes for young people had already completed their courses.

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

Learners value the expertise and subject knowledge their trainers have. This helps them to improve their knowledge, skills and behaviours and resolve real workplace challenges.

Learners value highly the care and support that staff at Aspire provide to them. Their training is adapted to meet their work and family commitments and this gives them the time they need to study.

Learners feel listened to by Aspire's staff and this gives them a voice to say how training is provided to them to meet their needs. Learners appreciate how trainers adjust the order in which the curriculum is taught. This allows them to make the most of opportunities at work and demonstrate the new skills and knowledge they have developed.

Learners are proud to be part of Aspire Training. They enjoy their training and attend well. When work commitments prevent them from attending training or reviews of their progress, trainers quickly rearrange appointments to help prevent learners from falling behind with their studies.

Learners behave well. Training sessions and reviews of progress between trainers and apprentices are conducted respectfully. Learners are keen to improve and learn more about the subjects and topics they study.

Most learners have a good understanding of fundamental British values. They can explain how the rule of law applies to their early years' workplaces and how as leaders and supervisors they must ensure that the policies in their settings comply with legal requirements. Learners studying the early years educator apprenticeship learn the importance of positive role modelling and discuss how feelings and emotions promote positive values and behaviours with the young children in their care.

Trainers signpost learners to helpful and relevant short courses in, for example, resilience, managing anxiety and critical thinking. However, they do not know how many learners participate in these courses.

Learners feel safe. They know who to go to if they have a concern.

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

Trainers are highly experienced in, and knowledgeable about, early years settings. They work closely with employers to plan the curriculum and training so that it meets their needs. Trainers carefully consider learners' work patterns to ensure that training plans are adapted to align with the working hours and term dates of their employers.

Trainers use an assessment of what learners know and can do when they start their training effectively to inform detailed quarterly reviews with learners and their employer. At these reviews, they assess well how learners are developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Learners take part in three thorough information, advice and guidance meetings with their trainer during the programme. As a result, learners receive the information they need to help them to plan their next steps towards achieving their training and career goals.

Trainers ensure learners practise and refine the skills they develop. They plan training well so that learners have the opportunity to apply what they know at work. For example, where apprentices on the team leader apprenticeship find delegating responsibilities in the workplace difficult, they learn how to improve their leadership skills by participating in role-play scenarios. Trainers plan training so that learners revisit important knowledge until they understand it fully. For example, learners learn the basics of effective communication and reflect on how they can use this knowledge to help them resolve and overcome communication barriers in the workplace.

Trainers prepare apprentices well for their end-of-course assessments. They focus well on the knowledge and skills that apprentices need to improve. Trainers plan practice assessments for apprentices and make good use of trainers who are unfamiliar to the apprentices to help them build their confidence in conducting professional discussions. As a result, the majority of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship gain higher grades.

Trainers do not set learners targets that are sufficiently detailed and helpful. Too often, targets are linked to the completion of work rather than helping learners to deepen their knowledge and improve further their skills and behaviours. Consequently, learners do not always know what they need to do to improve.

Trainers use assessment purposefully. They use effective training strategies to ensure that learners have a full understanding of topics. For example, learners' written assignments are followed up with professional discussions with trainers to help them to expand and deepen their knowledge of the assignment content.

Trainers are adept at using their experience as early years leaders and practitioners to help learners to resolve real workplace problems. They use relatable scenarios to provide learners with useful strategies which they can use at work.

Leaders ensure that they meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. They assess apprentices' prior skills and knowledge at the start of their apprenticeship. They use this information to ensure that apprentices get the training they are entitled to, both at work and with Aspire.

Leaders are ambitious for their learners. They have high expectations for them to do well. Leaders ensure that learners receive the training they need to achieve the grades that they are capable of. Half of all learners that complete their apprenticeship achieve a distinction grade in their final assessment. Over half of the apprentices who complete their apprenticeship move into jobs, and around one fifth progress to an

apprenticeship at a higher level. A minority of apprentices go on to study an early years programme at university.

Leaders understand well the importance of training qualified practitioners and leaders to help employers to address staffing shortages and to support sustainable childcare provision. They have strong and effective relationships with employers who value how well Aspire staff plan training so that it meets their skills needs.

Leaders meet with trainers each month to check the progress learners are making in developing new knowledge and skills. They put in place the support learners need to meet the expected level of performance. They check the quality of apprentices' off-the-job training and monitor how well they attend work and training. They intervene quickly to provide remedial support when an apprentice falls behind in their studies.

Leaders identify well those learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They ensure that trainers provide these learners with the additional time they need to help them learn in line with their peers. However, leaders do not scrutinise well enough the quality and impact of the support provided by trainers to learners.

Leaders ensure that trainers have the appropriate expertise to teach their subjects. They provide trainers with the professional development and training they need. For example, early years trainers spend time working in different childcare settings. They learn about new theories and practice such as schema play theory. Leaders provide subject-specialist workshops for those trainers that need to improve their teaching of mathematics. As a result, trainers are confident in supporting learners with all the components of their apprenticeship.

Leaders take appropriate steps to make training inclusive. They recognise the very low take-up of training in the early years sector by male learners. Leaders are taking remedial action to promote careers in early years to men and have recently introduced a working group. However, leaders recognise it is too soon to see a meaningful impact of this work.

Leaders are considerate of the workload and well-being of their staff. They ensure that trainers new to the organisation receive an effective induction programme, which includes shadowing other trainers at work. New trainers have a reduced caseload of learners to help them to cope better with the demands of the new role.

Leaders help to ensure that Aspire is an inclusive place to work and train and work hard to prevent bullying, harassment and discrimination. Leaders provide staff with effective training in equality, sexual harassment awareness and lone working. Staff value the support they receive from leaders and managers and are proud to work for Aspire.

Leaders care about the working environment for staff, learners and children. They ensure that sustainability values permeate the organisation and enrich the training learners receive. Learners learn how to create eco-classrooms using, for example, reusable nappies, reusable hygiene aprons and refillable pens. Staff are trained in

sustainability, and trainers discuss environmental 'hot topics' with learners every month.

Governors and leaders understand well the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of training. They hold strategic and operational meetings with trainers to check the progress learners are making over time. Leaders pay careful attention to learners' planned training end dates and ensure that most learners complete their apprenticeship on time. However, leaders and those responsible for governance do not pay sufficient attention to all components of the apprenticeship. Too little scrutiny is placed on the wider development of learners' personal skills. They do not analyse well enough the effectiveness of the support provided to help learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to help them achieve their apprenticeship.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders meet the statutory requirements for safeguarding. They ensure that the staff responsible for safeguarding are appropriately trained and qualified. Staff responsible for recruitment are trained in and have appropriate knowledge of safer recruitment.

Staff responsible for safeguarding respond to concerns and manage learner referrals well. They refer learners to appropriate external services such as general practitioners and support agencies that provide specialist support and advice on topics such as domestic abuse. They make frequent calls to check on the welfare of their learners.

Leaders identified that poor mental health was the main reason for learners withdrawing from their programme and responded proactively by training staff in mental health first aid.

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

- Ensure that those responsible for governance improve their scrutiny of all parts of the curriculum, including for learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Ensure that opportunities to develop learners' personal skills and knowledge are better planned and implemented effectively within apprenticeships and learning programmes.
- Ensure that trainers set learners targets that clearly explain what they need to do to continually improve their work.
- Ensure that trainers provide learners with feedback that helps them to improve their knowledge, skills and behaviours.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	55015
<b>Address</b>	3 Wollaston Road Bournemouth BH6 4AR
<b>Contact number</b>	01202551553
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.aspiretrainingteam.co.uk">www.aspiretrainingteam.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Sam King
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 to 8 December 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality and audit, 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

Cliff Shaw, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Matt Hann	His Majesty's Inspector
Hilary Yuille	Ofsted Inspector
Clare Hood	Ofsted Inspector
Vicky Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Hannah Staddon	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023