

# Inspection of Achieving Excellence UK Ltd

Inspection dates:

25 to 28 July 2023

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

## Information about this provider

Achieving Excellence Limited (Achieving Excellence) is a national independent learning provider based in Lewisham, London. Achieving Excellence offers a range of standards-based apprenticeship programmes from level 2 through to level 5 in children and young people's families, adult care, early years, business administration, supply chain warehouse, customer service, team leader or supervisor and operations or departmental manager. Training takes place through a variety of one-to-one sessions online and face to face in the workplace.

At the time of the inspection, there were 402 apprentices in learning. The majority are over the age of 19 and study within the adult care, early years and children and young people's family curriculum areas. The vast majority of apprentices study within London. There are a few apprentices in the Midlands and East of England regions.

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

The quality of education apprentices receive is too varied and inconsistent. While apprentices benefit from frequent one-to-one sessions with their tutors to discuss the apprenticeship and to give them support to complete their assignments, tutors do not provide apprentices with sufficient teaching. For example, too often, tutors do not give clear explanations on areas that apprentices do not understand or remember. Instead, they direct apprentices to find this information out independently. As a result, apprentices make slow progress.

Most employers support apprentices to gain new skills in the workplace. Through effective on-the-job training, apprentices learn new knowledge and can apply what they have learned in their jobs. For example, apprentices studying the children, young people and families programmes complete training in equality and diversity, infection control and how to manage aggressive behaviours from young people in their care. As a result, apprentices are equipped to do their roles effectively.

Apprentices have good attitudes towards learning. Tutors create positive online and classroom learning environments. For example, they host online sessions where the apprentices can discuss their placement at ease. As a result, apprentices are motivated, and they have good attendance at training sessions.

Apprentices are not sufficiently clear on what to expect in their final assessment. A minority are unsure about the grade they are aiming for. The proportion of apprentices who achieve their apprenticeship is too low. However, of those that do achieve, a high proportion gain high grades. The majority of apprentices achieve their English and mathematics goals. Of those apprentices who complete their programme, the vast majority remain in employment and many gain promotion or additional responsibility at work.

Apprentices feel safe during their training and know how to stay safe at work. For example, adult care apprentices know that when visiting clients on their own, they need to contact their employer to confirm that they are safe.

Apprentices have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe in relation to their work setting. This is because tutors frequently discuss these topics in training sessions. For example, they understand about mental harm and can explain online risks, including the dangers associated with online radicalisation.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders have made insufficient improvements to the quality of education that apprentices receive. Leaders use a limited range of information and processes to review and scrutinise the provision. Their quality improvement plans are undeveloped. Leaders do not make sure that there is sufficient challenge and scrutiny at leadership level. They do not have good enough oversight of the provision and the actions they need to take to improve weaknesses.

As a result, the quality of education apprentices receive still requires improvement.

Leaders have put in place additional resources and processes to support apprentices to achieve. The rapid improvement plans for apprentices who have fallen behind are beginning to help a few apprentices to get back on track. However, tutors are not consistent in the way they use these plans. This contributes to too many apprentices making slow progress and not achieving within the planned time.

Tutors design the content of each apprenticeship curriculum logically. They make sure that apprentices learn essential knowledge early in their programme. For example, in the children, young people and families programmes, tutors teach apprentices the development stages of children at the start of the course as this is knowledge apprentices need throughout their studies. Employers appreciate the opportunity for staff to train as apprentices. They recognise the benefit and impact this brings to their company.

Most tutors have up-to-date and relevant knowledge and experience in the sectors they teach. They use this well in their discussions with apprentices to give examples of scenarios they have dealt with. For example, in early years educator programmes, tutors provide context in topics such as special educational needs and disabilities, outdoor learning and experiential learning. Apprentices value the expertise and knowledge their tutors have.

Tutors do not assess accurately enough apprentices' prior knowledge, skills and behaviours at the start of programmes. They rely too heavily on apprentices' own assessment of their prior knowledge against a limited set of criteria. As a result, apprentices who already have substantial knowledge and experience are taught the same content as other apprentices. For a few apprentices, the apprenticeship is not demanding enough.

Most tutors use effective techniques in face-to-face training to check what apprentices can remember from earlier lessons. For example, in adult care and children, young people and families, tutors frequently check apprentices' knowledge on core topics such as safeguarding, health and safety and policies. Tutors give apprentices suitable advice on research techniques. However, in early years programmes, tutors are not as effective at checking apprentices' understanding.

Leaders do not ensure that tutors are adequately skilled at teaching lessons online. This is because they do not provide sufficient training and development opportunities for tutors. During online sessions, tutors do not present information clearly enough. They do not check sufficiently that apprentices understand concepts before they move on to new material. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning apprentices experience in online sessions is not good enough, and this slows down their progress.

Tutors make sure that most apprentices receive timely progress reviews. However, apprentices' line managers are not always in attendance. This means that line managers do not have sufficient opportunities to provide feedback on the progress

their apprentices make at work. Too often in reviews, tutors do not sufficiently reflect with apprentices on the knowledge, skills and behaviours they gain.

Most tutors give apprentices developmental feedback on their work, and apprentices produce work to the required standard. However, this is not consistent across all programmes and in particular on the early years courses, where tutors' feedback is not helpful enough for apprentices. As a result, these apprentices do not know what the standard of their work is.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have made improvements to the range of opportunities available to apprentices beyond their vocational training. Apprentices have access to a good range of additional online, short training courses through which they develop their wider skills. Training includes dealing with conflict, stress management, infection control, fraud, money laundering, anaphylaxis and autoinjectors.

Tutors promote fundamental British values well through one-to-one sessions. They also use topics to promote discussions and check apprentices' knowledge of these values. Most apprentices have a secure understanding of these values and can discuss them in the context of their work settings. For example, tutors teach adult care apprentices how the rule of law and personal liberty link to the Care Act 2014 when managing the personal dignity of clients.

Tutors provide apprentices with suitable careers advice and guidance early on in their studies. For many apprentices, this continues throughout their programme. The vast majority of apprentices understand the opportunities available to them and are clear about their intended next steps.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have suitable risk assessments and policies to safeguard staff and apprentices, such as a 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and safeguarding policy. The safeguarding policy provides clear and helpful advice and guidance to staff and apprentices on how to identify, report and manage concerns. Leaders have effective safer recruitment processes in place. This ensures staff are suitable to work with apprentices.

Designated safeguarding leads (DSL) are appropriately trained to carry out their roles. Staff create a positive culture to safeguard apprentices when in learning and at work. They provide effective support and guidance to apprentices. Tutors understand their safeguarding responsibilities well. Apprentices know who to report concerns to, and they are confident action would be taken by staff.

DSLs regularly meet with external agencies such as the police. This provides them with opportunities to understand the current risks to apprentices locally. For example, radicalisation and extremism, county lines, gang culture and grooming.

DSLs share this information with staff and apprentices through regular newsletters.

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

- Tutors must accurately identify what apprentices already know and can do at the start of programmes. They should use this information to make sure that apprentices have a challenging and ambitious curriculum.
- Leaders must ensure that tutors have the skills and expertise they need to teach online lessons so that they explain concepts clearly and check that apprentices understand what they are taught.
- Leaders must ensure that a high proportion of apprentices achieve their qualification within the planned time.
- Leaders should ensure that employers contribute to apprentices' progress reviews so that they understand and are able to contribute further to the progress their apprentices make.
- Leaders must ensure they have thorough oversight and scrutiny of the provision so they can take timely and effective action to address weaknesses.

## 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>	15 to 17 September 2021
<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 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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