

# Inspection of Women's Technology Training Limited

Inspection dates: 20 to 22 September 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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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>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Information about this provider

Women's Technology Training Limited, known as Blackburne House (BH), is a registered charity and part of the Blackburne House Group which includes a wellness centre, counselling service, social enterprise hub and bistro. BH's mission is to provide education for women who are disadvantaged and to enable them to develop and reach their full potential.

Leaders engage effectively with the local community, provide support and remove barriers to learning so that learners can access education. A significant number of learners are refugees, asylum seekers, lone parents, long-term unemployed, carers or women who have not previously achieved any qualifications.

Learners can enrol on a range of courses. These include teacher training, holistic therapies, healthcare, access to higher education, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and GCSEs. Leaders design the curriculum in line with the Liverpool city region's priorities and they are responsive to the needs of local businesses. They provide training to support women to gain employment or progress to further or higher education.

There are currently 324 learners studying at BH. Most learners are aged over 19. Seventeen are aged 16 to 18.

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

Learners enjoy their time at BH. They come to lessons fully prepared for learning and motivated to achieve. They listen attentively to their tutors and peers, ask questions and participate in activities. In healthcare, learners thoughtfully contribute to discussions about current healthcare issues such as NHS strikes and whistle-blowing. In complementary therapies, learners are enthusiastic about helping clients to reduce their reliance on medication and to improve their mental health.

Most learners acquire substantial new knowledge and skills. ESOL learners format letters correctly. They then learn to develop their sentence structure using compound and complex sentences. Learners on access to health begin by exploring ethical theories such as utilitarianism and consequentialism. They then use these theories to consider medical interventions such as euthanasia.

Tutors maintain effective links with employers. They invite representatives from local hospitals and ambulance trusts to discuss potential careers in health. In complementary therapies, tutors bring in specialists who have set up their own businesses so learners understand how they can be self-employed.

Tutors have high expectations for learners. If learners struggle, leaders provide comprehensive support. This includes signposting them to charities, their own nursery and providing financial and well-being support. Learners have access to bursaries for IT equipment, travel passes and clothing from a local retailer. This results in students staying in learning and developing their resilience.

Leaders and tutors know their learners very well. They never tire of supporting them through challenging and precarious times. Learners feel safe and know how to report any concerns they have.

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

Leaders are passionate about their mission to transform women's lives. They work tirelessly to raise the aspirations of the most disadvantaged learners through the education and support services they provide. They create a culture and ethos which empowers women, and helps them to thrive and to embrace their potential.

Tutors plan and teach courses in a logical order. Learners on complementary therapies begin with anatomy and physiology and then move on to link this to reflexology. Learners therefore deepen their understanding of the impact of complementary therapy treatments on the body. Learners on healthcare courses learn about cells and their functions before they look at how cells work in the different systems of the body, for example the integumentary and endocrine systems.

Leaders have not developed a sufficiently ambitious curriculum for level 1 ESOL courses. Tutors do not fully consider what learners already know and can do at the

start of their course. They do not always use age-appropriate resources pitched at the right level. Learners who have progressed from entry level courses repeat similar learning at the start of their level 1 course. Tutors do not identify swiftly enough those learners who can move more rapidly through the different curriculums. Consequently, a few learners do not progress as quickly as they could.

Tutors do not use information about students' starting points well enough. Level 3 complementary learners complete a self-assessment of their organisation skills, confidence and massage techniques at the start of their course. However, tutors do not use the results to capture learners' progress and development. Tutors complete individual learning plans with learners, but they do not include incremental steps to help learners to achieve their goals.

Most tutors use assessment well to check learners' understanding. In lessons, they effectively use questioning, quizzes and tasks to check learning. At the end of every topic, tutors set more comprehensive assessments to check learners have retained their knowledge and understanding. Most learners benefit from useful feedback from tutors. This identifies what learners have completed well and what they need to develop further. Access to higher education learners develop their academic writing, use of technical language, referencing and evaluative writing. However, on a minority of other courses, tutors provide limited developmental feedback and learners do not know how to improve their work.

Leaders and tutors identify learners' support needs swiftly. They put action plans in place, arrange extra tutorials and integrate support from the learning support team. Although these support plans are reviewed regularly by the tutor and learning support coordinator, they do not identify the impact of the support or the progress that learners make.

Leaders promote learners' development through activities that deepen their understanding of topics that extend beyond the curriculum. ESOL learners who are new to the country visit local museums to learn about the history of the UK and Liverpool. Learners benefit from a learning environment that is inclusive and accepting of all. They develop their understanding of different cultures and celebrate diversity.

Leaders have recently started to offer more impartial careers advice and guidance. This includes working with the National Careers Service to provide information sessions and one-to-one careers interviews for learners. Leaders signpost learners to local job fairs and charitable schemes. For example, a six-week employability course to support the aspirations of unemployed individuals from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities. Approximately two thirds of learners progress to employment, further or higher education.

After a period of significant change in the senior management team, leadership roles have now stabilised. Leaders have a sharper focus on quality assurance and quality improvement. They have a sound understanding of their provision's strengths and weaknesses and reflect honestly and openly about what needs to be improved.

Tutors are appropriately qualified with relevant vocational and academic experiences. Leaders recognise that they had not placed sufficient emphasis on tutors' professional development as teachers and now prioritise this. Tutors benefit from training to further develop their teaching skills. They develop skills in questioning techniques and how to use artificial intelligence to design quizzes. ESOL tutors have accessed external training and use the knowledge learned to inform their teaching. For example, they now use warm-up exercises at the start of sessions to focus learners and prepare them to learn.

Leaders have comprehensively overhauled their quality assurance processes. They take a consistent, standardised approach to lesson observations, capturing feedback from learners and reporting on their achievements. This is having a positive impact on learners' achievement which improved significantly last year. However, leaders' quality assurance tools tend to focus too much on tutors' compliance with systems rather than the quality of education.

Governors bring a wealth of experience to their roles. They have a passion for changing the lives of women in the community and maintain a strong focus on the organisation's mission and purpose. They take a proactive approach to supporting leaders. They conduct lesson visits to get close to learners' experiences in education, training and support. Governors pay particularly close attention to safeguarding matters and learners' well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Ensure that the curriculum for ESOL is suitably ambitious and builds carefully on what learners already know and can do.
- Review learners' progress more systematically so that learners know what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Develop quality assurance processes that focus in more detail on the quality of education that learners receive.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	55416
<b>Address</b>	Blackburne House Blackburne Place Liverpool L8 7PE
<b>Contact number</b>	0151 709 4356
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.blackburnehouse.co.uk">www.blackburnehouse.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Andrea Rushton
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14–17 March 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the interim head of education 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

Helen Whelan, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Suzanne Horner	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Humphreys	His Majesty's Inspector
Victor Reid	His Majesty's Inspector
Maria Rayworth	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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

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