

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Archway Academy Limited**

**24 March 2005**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

## Overall judgement

Where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, **or**
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory.

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **Archway Academy Limited**

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Archway Academy Limited is a private education and training organisation based in Saltley, East Birmingham. It has provided Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes since February 2004. It funds its training provision through Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and recruits its learners from the local community. The executive director is supported by a head of department and deputy head of department. There are 17 staff in total, seven of whom are directly involved in training and assessment on government-funded programmes.

2. The 2001 census identified that Birmingham's minority ethnic groups represented 29.6 per cent of the local population, compared with 20 per cent in the West Midlands and 9.1 per cent nationally. In February 2005, the unemployment rate in Birmingham was 5 per cent, compared with 2.8 per cent in the West Midlands and 2.3 per cent nationally.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Foundation programmes

3. There are currently 17 learners on E2E programmes. The learner group includes young offenders and young people with a range of social, behavioural and emotional needs. Most learners join the programme through self-referral or through Connexions, though there are also referrals from schools, care homes and relevant external agencies. All learners work to improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills and support is available for those who speak English as an additional language. Learners can work towards qualifications in information technology (IT), forklift truck driving and citizenship. Work experience and job tasters are also available. Most individual learning plans assume a programme length of six months. All learners complete an induction which includes assessments of their literacy, numeracy and language skills and identifies any other support needs such as childcare. Topics such as health and safety, equal opportunities, fire safety, first aid, drug awareness and sex education are routinely included in the induction period. The E2E programme has a co-ordinator who also acts as a key worker and three other staff who work as tutors and as key workers.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	10
Number of staff interviewed	18
Number of employers interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2
Number of visits	1

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

4. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, leadership and management are satisfactory and the arrangements for equality of opportunity are good. Arrangements for quality assurance are unsatisfactory. Work-based learning in foundation programmes are satisfactory.

## GRADES

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak*

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality assurance		4

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Employability/employment training</i></b> - Entry to Employment	17	3

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

5. Retention and achievement are satisfactory. In 2003-04, 35 learners joined the programme, 15 of whom progressed into jobs or further education.

6. **Achievement of additional qualifications is good.** Of the current learners, 13 have achieved certificates in fire safety, and 11 have achieved basic first aid certificates. Staff maintain registers of attendance and routinely contact learners who are absent.

### Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Foundation programmes	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

7. **Learner support is good.** Staff make arrangements for learners to undertake activities away from the learning centre and accompany them if necessary. The provider supports learners after they leave the programme through, for example, help with curriculum vitae, career advice and informal counselling.

8. Training is satisfactory. Learners respond well to questions and have good working relationships with tutors. Tutors work very well to involve learners in discussions and other activities. Most learning sessions are well planned. Written procedures are in place to cover learner enrolment and induction.

9. **Learners' personal and social needs are not sufficiently identified at initial assessment.** There is too much reliance on learners identifying their own strengths and weaknesses and insufficient structure to the process of collecting information through the observation of learners in group activities.

10. **Accommodation is inadequate.** Some rooms are too small for the number of learners or certain learning activities.

11. **There are insufficient work placements.** Until recently no work placements were available. However, following the appointment of a work-placement officer, three learners have now completed a work placement.

## Leadership and management

12. **Strategic leadership is good.** The executive director has effectively guided the provider to increase the number of learners on programmes, improve achievement rates and identify appropriate new premises to accommodate the increased demand. The provider is committed to promoting learning to under-represented groups and disaffected learners.

13. **Staff development is good** and clearly focused on the improvement of teaching and learning. All staff receive appraisals every six months. All staff are encouraged to access appropriate training development opportunities and wide range of development programmes is available. Five staff are currently working towards teaching qualifications.

14. **Particularly effective measures have been introduced to widen participation.** Marketing materials are available in a number of languages used within the local community. All staff are personally involved in delivering leaflets and presentations to community groups. The executive director is very active within the local area. Seventy per cent of current learners are from minority ethnic groups. The current equal opportunities development plan includes an objective to recruit more women learners.

15. Staff and learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is clearly introduced at induction and learners are given useful information booklets on diversity. All staff have received recent updated training on equal opportunity and diversity issues. The staff training and development plan includes plans for training staff to receive training in literacy and numeracy.

16. The management information system is adequate and produces reliable information. Many meetings feature informal discussions on learner progress. The provider has recently recruited a literacy and numeracy tutor.

17. Archway Academy's management team has not focused sufficiently on actions to improve progression, retention and achievement rates. Staff meetings do not feature sufficient discussion of learners' progression and achievement. The company's performance against LSC profiles is discussed during these meetings but there is insufficient attention paid to the progress of individual learners or how their progress could be improved through focused action.

18. Targets for learner progression and achievement appraisals are not routinely set or reviewed during staff appraisals.

19. **Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete.** The quality assurance process does not cover all key aspects of the learning process, for example, initial assessment and formal reviews are not observed. The current system of session observations is not sufficient to bring improvements in practice.

20. The self-assessment report did not adequately identify the strengths and weaknesses of the foundation programme.



## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- good strategic leadership
- good staff development
- particularly effective measures to widen participation

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate target-setting
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- insufficient actions to improve learner progression and achievement

## **Foundation programmes**

### ***Employability/employment training***

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement of additional qualifications
- good learner support
- clearly planned programme

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate accommodation
- insufficient identification of learners' personal and social needs at initial assessment
- insufficient work placements

**WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT ARCHWAY ACADEMY LIMITED:**

- the helpful staff
- carrying out interview practice
- the support provided for completing application forms

**WHAT LEARNERS THINK ARCHWAY ACADEMY LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:**

- the size of the rooms used for learning sessions
- access to the gym

## **KEY CHALLENGES FOR ARCHWAY ACADEMY LIMITED:**

- improve the identification of learners' personal and social needs
- develop a range of supportive work placements across appropriate vocational areas
- provide adequate accommodation for learning
- improve short-term target-setting for organisational development
- manage the quality improvement of the provision
- ensure that quality assurance arrangements include all key aspects of learning

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

#### Strengths

- good strategic leadership
- good staff development
- particularly effective measures to widen participation

#### Weaknesses

- inadequate target-setting
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- insufficient actions to improve learner progression and achievement

21. Strategic leadership is good. The executive director has effectively guided the provider to increase the number of learners on programmes, improve achievement rates and identify appropriate new premises to accommodate the increased demand. The provider is fully committed to promoting learning to under-represented groups and disaffected learners. It has a clearly stated intention to bring disaffected learners back into learning which is linked clearly to a key objective of the local LSC. The provider has successfully promoted learning to members of local minority ethnic communities. All staff are aware of these objectives and understand their own contributions and their individual responsibilities. These objectives are communicated effectively through staff induction, regular team meetings and appraisals. Staff receive information about provider issues through a range of informal group and individual meetings.

22. Staff development is good and clearly focused on the improvement of teaching and learning, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. All staff receive appraisals every six months. Staff are fully involved in identifying their own training needs through the appraisal system and understand that they have some responsibility for their own continuous professional development. Staff are very clear on what is required by the provider and how it will help them with their individual development needs. There is a policy for staff training and development that sets out priorities for training, including equal opportunities and diversity, drug awareness and health and safety, and teaching qualifications. All staff are encouraged to access appropriate training development opportunities and a wide range of development programmes is available. These include training in equality and diversity, health and safety, drug awareness and teaching qualifications. Five staff are currently working towards teaching qualifications.

23. The management information system is adequate and produces reliable information. The provider collects data on learners including their ethnicity, gender, age, literacy and numeracy skills level, achievement of additional qualifications and destination following the programme. Many meetings feature informal discussions on learners' progress.

Some meetings repeat issues already discussed at previous meetings. Insufficient formal records are taken of discussions and actions arising from these meetings. Until recently, management information has not been used well to help with decision-making. Data is now analysed and a small number of summary reports are produced for senior managers. However, these reports have not been used to implement improvements.

24. The strategy for providing literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed at initial assessment and individual support is provided by training staff. The provider has recently recruited a literacy and numeracy tutor and staff development has been agreed to train this member of staff further in the teaching of these skills.

25. Target-setting is inadequate. Targets for learner progression and achievement appraisals are not routinely set or reviewed during staff appraisals. Staff work towards a 100 per cent achievement rate for learners, but there are no realistic targets or detailed plans to show how the provider intends to achieve this. Development plans contain general objectives and identify responsible managers, but do not include details of actions to be taken with completion dates.

26. Archway Academy's management team has not focused sufficiently on actions to improve progression, retention and achievement rates. Staff meetings do not feature sufficient discussion of learners' progression and achievement. The company's performance against LSC profiles is discussed during these meetings but there is insufficient attention paid to the progress of individual learners or how their progress could be improved through focused action.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

27. Particularly effective measures have been introduced to widen participation, a strength not identified in the self-assessment report. Marketing materials are available in a number of languages used within the local community. All staff are fully involved in delivering leaflets and presentations to community groups. Fifty-five per cent of all current learners applied directly to Archway Academy. The executive director is very active within the local area, seeking out new contacts and promoting learning. Seventy per cent of current learners are from minority ethnic groups. The provider has arranged some provision to be delivered in single gender groups in response to the needs of the local population. A wide range of data is collected and has been recently analysed to create development plans to target under-represented groups. For example, 87 per cent of learners are men, and the current equal opportunities development plan includes an objective to recruit more women. However, no measurable targets with completion dates are set. There is no formal strategy to promote equality of opportunity and diversity.

28. The provider has a range of policies that cover multicultural education, anti-bullying, child protection and equal opportunities. These are regularly reviewed and updated in line with current legislation. Most policies are supported by a clear flow chart to help staff understand the appropriate procedures. There are also some useful guidelines for staff about challenging and dealing effectively with racial harassment.

29. Staff and learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity. All learners understand the complaints procedure. Equality of opportunity is clearly introduced at induction and learners are given useful information booklets on diversity. Learners' understanding of equal opportunities is reinforced throughout the programme in discussions and learning tasks. All staff have received recent training on equal opportunities and diversity issues. Some staff have received awareness training on additional learning needs such as dyslexia and dyscalculia. The staff training and development plan includes training in literacy and numeracy.

30. There are no aids or adaptations for learners with disabilities. Access to the training centre is poor for people with restricted mobility. However, there are no examples of any learners being unable to attend the E2E programmes.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 4**

31. The collection and use of learner feedback is satisfactory. Learners complete session evaluation questionnaires after each session. All learners leaving the programme complete a questionnaire. There is a noticeboard in the training centre where learners are asked to provide feedback on their programmes. A summary of the actions that have been taken in response to these comments is also displayed to keep learners up to date on progress against actions.

32. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. The quality assurance process does not cover all key aspects of the learning process, for example, initial assessment and formal reviews are not observed. There is too much use of the informal observation of off-the-job training sessions to measure the quality of the learners' experiences. In the six months before inspection, teaching observations was introduced. However, there are no specified criteria for grading the sessions. There is no agreed schedule for observing all trainers and not all trainers have been observed. The current system of session observations is not sufficient to bring improvements in practice. Some trainers have added self-critical, reflective statements to their lesson plans following sessions about what went well during and alternative strategies to use in future sessions. The provider does not routinely collect these, analyse them to identify trends, or refer to them during appraisals. Trainers have frequent, informal discussions about learner assessment and progression, but there are not enough records of these discussions.

33. A systems manual details a number of relevant staff procedures. However, many of the procedures refer to administration rather than to key learning activities. Monitoring of quality improvement actions is inadequate. For example, the minutes of meetings record identified actions at one meeting, but the minutes of the following meeting do not always relate to the same issues. There is some evidence of actions for improvement following feedback from learners, for example, a system has been recently introduced to identify learner absence and take appropriate action.

34. Inspectors identified many of the strengths that were in Archway Academy's self-

assessment report, particularly in leadership and management. However, the company had failed to recognise key weaknesses relating to target-setting and the availability and provision of work placements for learners. Some of the strengths identified by the provider were viewed by inspectors to be overstated. Inspectors found additional weaknesses to those identified in the self-assessment report.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Employability/employment training</i></b> - Entry to Employment	17	3

### ***Employability/employment training***

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement of additional qualifications
- good learner support
- clearly planned programme

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate accommodation
- insufficient identification of learners' personal and social needs at initial assessment
- insufficient work placements

### **Achievement and standards**

35. Retention and achievement are satisfactory. In 2003-04, 35 learners joined the programme, 15 of whom progressed into jobs or further education. In the current contract year, 35 learners joined the programme and to date three have progressed into either employment or training, with 16 still in learning.

36. Achievement of additional qualifications is good. Certificates confirming their participation in the range of induction activities are displayed and also recorded on a wall chart. Of the current learners, 13 have achieved certificates in fire safety provided by the local fire brigade, and 11 have achieved basic first-aid certificates. Staff maintain registers of attendance and routinely contact learners who are absent. However, there is no analysis of attendance averages or of patterns of non-attendance.



The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																
Entry to Employment																
	2004-05		2003-04													
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	33		35													
Progression <sup>1</sup>	12		4	11												
Achieved objectives <sup>2</sup>	3		15	43												
Still in learning	16		1	3												

1. Measured in terms of learners' movement to further training, education or employment, during or after their training

2. These being the key objectives identified for each learner while on E2E

## Quality of education and training

37. Learner support is good. Staff make arrangements for learners to undertake activities at venues some distance from the learning centre where a particular interest needs to be catered for. This has happened for college attendance and for sports activities. Staff accompany learners to venues if learners are uncertain about travelling alone. Staff ensure that relevant paperwork for learners is always available. Learner support is provided well beyond the minimal contractual requirement. Archway policy commits support to learners for up to nine months from when a learner leaves the programme. This support includes help with curriculum vitae, career advice and informal counselling if a learner experiences difficulty with a college course. Staff routinely involve parents where appropriate.

38. Training is satisfactory. Learners respond well to questions and have good working relationships with tutors. They confidently question their tutors where their understanding is not clear or where they wish to make a point about their own experience of the topic. Most sessions are planned to meet individual learners' needs. For example, a topic on percentages involved learners working out the price of discounted CDs and the allocation of the total price of a CD to the various parties involved in its production. Another topic, on vocational preparation, involved effective decision-making through group discussion. Tutors work very well to involve learners in discussions and other activities. Some session planning is not appropriately detailed. There is insufficient identification of individual learners' needs in session plans and not all learners' needs are met. Some whole-group activities are not sufficiently planned to ensure all learners are adequately involved in specific topics.

39. Accommodation is inadequate. Some rooms are too small for the number of learners or certain learning activities. This weakness has been identified by the provider and arrangements for new premises are now in place. Other learning resources are satisfactory. In most cases, worksheets and handouts are well prepared, and appropriate for learners with poor literacy skills. Calculators are available and learning resources such

as dominoes are used effectively. Staff have appropriate experience and hold either teaching and training qualifications or are working towards them. Tutors' personal experience is used well with learners. For example, one tutor makes good use of media experience in relevant learning sessions.

40. Learners' personal and social needs are not sufficiently identified at initial assessment. Tutors collect learner information from application forms, referral agencies, individual interviews and from formal, standardised assessments. There is too much reliance on learners identifying their own strengths and weaknesses and not enough structure to the process of gaining information through the observation of learners in group activities. The collection of learner information is informal and does not clearly influence learning plans. Initial assessment includes the identification of literacy and numeracy skills through the use of standardised tests and assessments of career suitability and learning styles. More specialised assessments of additional needs such as dyslexia, are used when necessary. Learners' targets and goals are identified and recorded at the end of the six-week induction period. Where this is done well, it is clear what the learner expects to achieve and at what accredited level. However, some targets are not sufficiently detailed and do not have completion dates. Progress reviews are conducted regularly, but learner involvement is not adequate. Learners do not get a copy of what is agreed at the review.

41. There are insufficient work placements. Until the appointment of a dedicated work-placement officer three months ago, no work placements were available. Following this appointment, three learners have completed a work placement. The provider has identified this weakness and the work-placement officer is working effectively to increase the number of work placements available.

## **Leadership and management**

42. The programme is clearly planned. Appropriate and comprehensive schemes of work are used for citizenship, jobsearch, and literacy and numeracy. Written procedures are in place to cover the main programme areas such as learner enrolment and induction. Clear flow diagrams are used to chart the main activities from initial application or referral to learners leaving the programme. There is very frequent informal contact and discussion between the programme coordinator and the key workers. Each key worker is responsible for a small number of learners and each has assumed particular responsibility for areas of the programme. For example, one key worker is taking the lead on the vocational preparation aspect of the programme. Another has been designated as the subject learning coach. This will initially involve a review of the provider's approach to learners' personal and social development and improving practice in other areas such as progress reviews.

43. Literacy and numeracy training is satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy provision is an integral part of the E2E programme and all learners are working on suitable activities to raise their attainment. Clear and detailed schemes of work are in place but there are insufficient quality measures to ensure a uniform approach to the preparation of suitable learning materials. Most resources are satisfactory but some of the materials produced

for learners are not at an appropriate level or presented in a suitable font. Literacy and numeracy training is not given a high profile at Archway Academy. Learners are not aware of its importance or how the development of their literacy and numeracy skills can help their understanding of other aspects of their programme.

44. The self-assessment report did not adequately identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programme. Weaknesses relating work-experience opportunities to the initial assessment of personal and social development were not identified and strengths were overstated.