

INSPECTION REPORT

Access to Music

26 May 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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 aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** 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
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Access to Music Ltd (ATM) is an independent music company based in Leicester, whose services are training, the design of learning programmes leading to qualifications, events organisation, and consultancy. It was founded in 1992 by one of its current directors. The company offers a range of vocational music industry training programmes. In addition to the courses in the scope of this inspection, ATM assesses and supports 11 further education colleges running similar level 1 to level 3 programmes, offers courses at level 4 and is a music industry consultant for the New Deal for musicians programme. In 2001, ATM secured a national contract with the Learning and Skills Council for direct funding. ATM does not carry specialist institution status.

2. The executive management team is responsible to the executive director. Four directors from the team are responsible for directing training services and/or business operations. They are supported by nine senior managers. The company is managed, and key administrative functions are run, from its head office in Leicester. Centre managers and staff regionally are supported by managers and administrative staff at Leicester.

3. Approximately 1,000 learners attend ATM's courses each year in centres in London Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Lincoln, Norwich, Southend and York.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** More specifically, ATM's leadership and management are good as are its arrangements for quality improvement and equality of opportunity. The provision offered in arts, media and publishing is also good.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process is mostly consultative. Although managers do not actively seek learners' views as part of the process, they do refer to learner surveys. Each centre provides its own self-assessment, which provides a good basis for the main ATM report. The report is sufficiently self-critical. Inspectors agreed with the grades and most of the headlining judgements contained in the report.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** ATM takes good action to improve the quality of provision centrally, and to communicate strategies effectively to all its centres. Managers are aware of ATM's key weaknesses and have improved the quality of provision at all centres.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR ACCESS TO MUSIC:

- continue to develop current initiatives to improve the delivery and achievement of key skills
- further review and improve access to accommodation and resources

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- incorporate the monitoring of learners' progress into management information
- better manage the level of absenteeism
- continue to build on the quality improvement measures currently in place

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Grades awarded at inspection

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		2

Arts, media and publishing			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Music</i>			2
Other government-funded provision	868		2

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. This is the first time that Access to Music has been inspected. Only one area of learning, arts, media and publishing, was in scope.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	25
Number of learners interviewed	73
Number of staff interviewed	52
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	6

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

8. Learners attain **very high standards of practical and creative work**. They display good creative technical skills in music production. Their tracks are very well recorded, mixed and produced. They prepare outstanding practical performance pieces and develop strong vocal and instrumental technique.

9. Success rates are satisfactory. The overall success rate for all programmes in 2004-05 was 55 per cent, a significant improvement on previous years, and 60 per cent of learners progressed to further study or employment. Achievement rates for level 1 literacy and

numeracy programmes are very good. The achievement rate for key skills qualifications is poor but improving.

10. **Attendance is poor at some centres.** The failure of some learners to attend prevented their groups from effectively completing their creative projects, and led to tutors adapting their teaching plans. Centre managers have put systems and targets in place to resolve these issues.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Arts, media and publishing	4	6	4	2	16
Total	4	6	4	2	16

11. **Teaching and learning are good** at all ATM's centres. Tutors provide learners with good industry-related activities and background knowledge. They are supportive of learners' music career goals but give them a realistic understanding of the need to be flexible in their approach to gaining employment. Learners find the levels of courses and activities challenging and are pleased when they develop technical understanding and pass assignments. Teaching of key skills is satisfactory

12. ATM provides a **very good music industry enrichment programme**. This includes an exciting and extensive national events programme that gives learners the opportunity to promote their work. ATM provides very good guest speakers and masterclasses. These introduce learners to a variety of useful and interesting genres and styles, and to different perspectives on the industry.

13. Arrangements for additional learning support are satisfactory. Initial assessment is used to plan learning. Learning support tutors hold individual sessions with learners and focus on written and presentation skills, or on explaining assignments.

14. **Tutors do not keep sufficient records of learners' progress.** Learners cannot see the relevance of the booklets they are given to record their progress. The combination of paper-based and online systems makes it difficult to build a clear overview of the learners' progress over time.

Leadership and management

15. ATM has **strong and innovative strategic leaders and managers**, who have a very clear view of the strategic direction of the company. There is a good strategic and business plan supported by prudent allocation of resources. Planning responds well both to the needs of the company and to the national challenges facing music education. Senior staff have good and complementary skills to provide effective support to centre managers.

16. **Formal and informal communications are good between staff at all levels and at all centres.** Staff particularly value the regular visits to the centres by the senior management team and specialist staff who provide a wide range of support and information. Staff roles and responsibilities are well defined. A recent computer network installation provides an intranet where staff and learners can share information.

17. **ATM's external partnerships are good.** The company works closely with schools, colleges, awarding bodies and sector skills councils to promote access to music education. The staff's local knowledge and their up-to-date connections with the music industry keep learners involved in learning by helping them to arrange live performances and work with local musicians and writers. Learners' successes are celebrated at a prestigious annual awards ceremony.

18. **Management information systems are well used.** A wide range of data on recruitment, selection, attendance, retention and achievement rates is collected, recorded and analysed. A good range of reports is used effectively as a management tool, helping to set targets for individual centres. ATM's analysis shows a breakdown of data by gender and ethnicity across each of the reported areas. Learners' progress, however, is not well monitored at the centres.

19. There is skilful and innovative management and strong communication at all ATM centres. Data is used well, and a range of innovative projects provides good experience for learners. Centre managers pass on the ethos and culture of the company successfully at local level and are committed to improving the quality of the provision. Learners receive good training at all centres.

20. **ATM employs an outstanding range of industry-experienced staff** as tutors and managers. Many of the staff are currently working in the industry and also have strong backgrounds in different areas of the music industry. For example, some are performers, producers, managers, promoters and distributors, or are involved in software development and building and running recording and rehearsal studios.

21. ATM demonstrates **a strong culture and ethos of equality of opportunity.** Learners have a great chance to realise their potential and are helped particularly well to overcome some of their barriers to learning. There are excellent opportunities for learners to sell and promote their work, and good opportunities for them to progress from level 1 qualifications to level 4.

22. ATM demonstrates **strong commitment to, and action for, continuous improvement.** Rates of attendance and achievement have improved at all the centres over the past year, and learners now enjoy a better learning experience. ATM has introduced many common systems and procedures. Centre staff carry out observations of teaching and learning, and produce detailed records that give tutors clear feedback on their performance. Standards of teaching and learning have improved, and an increasing number of teaching sessions are graded as good.

23. The self-assessment process takes into account the opinions of centre and senior managers. Each centre produces its own self-assessment report, including a grade for its overall provision. This is used well in compiling the final self-assessment report, which is sufficiently self-critical. The overall grades match those given at inspection, but there is little evidence to substantiate the judgements.

24. There are **insufficient learning resources at some centres.** For example, some centres have too few computers, and, in some cases, learners are not working with the latest versions of software. Learners cannot always access rehearsal space, and timetable clashes

can cause disturbance. Lighting is poor in some of the studios used as teaching spaces.

25. ATM has been **slow to respond to the low success rate in key skills**. Although success rates improved in 2004-05, they remain poor. ATM has recognised this and implemented a range of measures to try to improve them. Staff at the centres have not all applied the training they have had in the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

26. **Some centres have poor access for people with restricted mobility**. ATM has worked hard to make reasonable adjustments to most centres, but some issues remain to be solved. Access to one centre is particularly poor, even with the adjustments that have been made there. The current accommodation strategy is the company's latest response to these remaining problems.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- strong and innovative strategic leadership and management
- good communication nationally
- good external partnerships
- good management of information systems
- good action to improve the quality of provision
- strong culture and ethos of equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- late response to improve key skills achievement rates
- poor access for people with restricted mobility at some centres

Arts, media and publishing

Music

Strengths

- very high standards of practical and creative work
- good teaching and learning
- very good enrichment programme
- skilful and innovative management
- outstanding range of industry expertise

Weaknesses

- poor attendance at some centres
- insufficient recording of learner progress
- insufficient learning resources

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT ACCESS TO MUSIC:

- a lively and professional place to learn
- the chance to meet and work with other musicians
- tutors who work in the industry
- 'the chance to use what we've been taught in our projects'
- the very approachable and friendly tutors
- 'it's not just what they teach, it's the way they encourage you'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK ACCESS TO MUSIC COULD IMPROVE:

- the access to rehearsal spaces
- the amount of space for relaxing and socialising with other learners
- the storage facilities for personal equipment
- the number of computers
- the chances to get professional feedback on work

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- strong and innovative strategic leadership and management
- good communication nationally
- good external partnerships
- good management of information systems
- good action to improve the quality of provision
- strong culture and ethos of equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- late response to improve key skills achievement rates
- poor access for people with restricted mobility at some centres

27. ATM has strong and innovative strategic leaders and managers who have a very clear view of the strategic direction of the company based on extensive research and industry experience. The company's good strategic and business planning has been supported by prudent allocation of resources. The three-year development plan contains a clear strategy for extending the current position and developing new activities. A detailed risk analysis clearly identifies future challenges. Planning responds well both to the needs of the company and to the national changes in music education. Senior staff have good and complementary skills, and provide effective support to centre managers. All staff have a passion for the music industry and fully understand the company's values and vision. Business planning incorporates individual staff performance targets and training and development requirements.

28. Formal and informal communications between staff at all levels and at all centres are good. Staff appreciate the open and consultative management style. Staff roles and responsibilities are well defined and the reporting structure is clear. Purposeful meetings are held throughout the company, both to discuss strategic issues and to stimulate new ideas. Useful publications notify staff and learners about new developments in the industry and the company. A recently installed computer network provides an intranet where staff and learners can share information. Additional meetings and training events are held each year to discuss and reinforce important information. Centres value the regular visits made by the senior management team and specialist staff, some of whom are based in the regions. They provide support and information to centre managers, staff and learners. A highly effective buddy system is in place to support new members of staff. ATM is currently piloting an interactive learning management system in one centre. Communication is identified as a strength in the self-assessment report.

29. ATM has good external partnerships that benefit the learners. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. The managing director belongs to many key strategic partnerships. ATM work closely with Music Manifesto, a government initiative to promote access to music education for young people through arrangements such as

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consortia that provide equipment to play, perform, record and market musical performances. ATM also has good partnerships with the awarding body and sector skills council, through which it is developing current and planned qualifications and industry-specific key skills. The staff's local knowledge and their connections with performance venues encourage learners by helping them to arrange live performances and work with local musicians and writers. A highly developed enrichment programme provides performance and development opportunities using professional venues. It also offers a range of industry-relevant masterclasses, summer schools and work experience for some learners. Learners' successes are celebrated at a prestigious annual awards ceremony.

30. Staff use management information systems well. They collect a wide range of data and record it on integrated centre databases. A central database is kept up to date with information sent from each of the centres. Managers have introduced a good range of reports that are distributed to the senior management team and centre managers, and incorporate planned and actual targets. Centre managers and programme leaders use the reports and targets to monitor the performance of individual centres and programmes, and further improve attendance, retention and achievement rates. Analysis shows a breakdown of data by gender and ethnicity across each of the reported areas. Centre managers are given targets for each key area, taking into account the local context of their centre. However, the management information systems are not used sufficiently to monitor learners' progress.

31. ATM has a satisfactory resource strategy. It has audited its premises and developed an action plan to resolve the problems identified. A similar plan is in place to ensure that resources meet industry requirements. There has been significant investment, and resources in some centres are now good, although in others, some chairs are inappropriate for use with computer workstations. Recently, a more detailed analysis has provided better information to identify specific training needs in teaching and learning. ATM promotes to learners the importance of operating equipment safely. Designated staff have taken recognised health and safety qualifications.

32. ATM has been slow to respond to the low achievement rate in key skills. In 2003-04 the achievement rate in communication was approximately 13 per cent and in application of number it was only 6 per cent. These figures improved in 2004-05 to 19 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, but remain poor. ATM has now recognised this and developed an action plan to try to improve the rates. They have extended tutor support systems and set more challenging targets for learners, although some practical measures such as online testing are still not in place. The attendance rate at paper-based key skills tests is low. Staff training in the teaching of literacy and numeracy has not been fully effective. For example, although recent training initiatives have worked on making key skills relevant to the music industry, they have not been effectively applied at all the centres. Some centres are not aware of the key skills strategy. This weakness was partially recognised in the self-assessment report.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

33. All ATM centres have a strong culture and ethos of equality of opportunity. Directors clearly communicate the policies and practice to all centre staff. All learners have good opportunities to develop their skills in a wide range of learning situations. ATM provides an excellent range of useful cultural music activities, and staff explore a variety of genres

intelligently with learners. All learners demonstrate their work publicly at events attended by employers. All staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity and use their industry knowledge skilfully to improve learners' knowledge and understanding. Good strategies exist to improve the quality of additional support. Staff are very good role models, and are aware of and sensitive to the barriers to learning that many learners bring to the classroom. An equality and diversity group meets routinely to improve existing practice and develop future strategies, and ATM has good strategies for implementing new initiatives. All staff have received some equality and diversity training, and the managers have an excellent regional understanding of the social and economic backgrounds of their learners. Learners have an adequate general knowledge of equality of opportunity and diversity, and their knowledge in relation to the music industry is good. Initial assessment is used satisfactorily to judge learners' individual support needs, and they are offered satisfactory and improving additional support at all centres.

34. ATM has good policies and procedures in place in response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Staff collect information on the participation and achievement rates of different learner groups and use it well. Senior managers are fully aware of the different demographic profiles of the regions around ATM's training centres. Where groups are under-represented, ATM has implemented good strategies for widening participation. Good working relationships between learners and staff are promoted well and learners' attitude and behaviour is good. ATM also promotes equality and diversity well in the community, and in its marketing and publicity, and it has good recruitment policies for staff and learners.

35. ATM has satisfactory arrangements in response to the Children Act (2004). These include a child protection policy, a designated person responsible for welfare, and procedures for carrying out Criminal Record Bureau checks. Learners understand their rights and responsibilities well. ATM has satisfactory policies and procedures to counter bullying and harassment, and for complaints. Some learners do not always apply safe practices. Parts of the policy do not incorporate the most recent child protection legislation.

36. There is poor access for people with restricted mobility at some centres. ATM has not responded sufficiently to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001). For example, at one building, access to studios and toilets would be impossible for wheelchair users. Some adjustment has been made but this is limited to one room on the ground floor. In other centres, access is better but some issues remain to be resolved. Good strategies are in place to improve accommodation, and reasonable adjustment has been applied in many centres. Additional learning support for learners with sensory impairments is satisfactory.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

37. ATM has a comprehensive, well-used and regularly updated quality improvement action plan, and has used it well to improve the provision. This was partially recognised in the self-assessment report. Attendance rates at all centres have improved over the past year by an average of 5 per cent. Overall success rates have improved by 17 per cent over the past few years, and are now satisfactory. A good range of improvements has enhanced learners' experiences. These include closer monitoring of learners' attendance at workshops and strong data management systems analysing performance trends. ATM has introduced many common systems and procedures, such as standard schemes of work and

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lesson plans, which allow activities to be planned around the differing needs of learners in the same session. There is an established system under which centre staff carry out observations of teaching and learning which are subject to moderation by members of the senior management team. Observation records are detailed and give tutors clear feedback on their performance. ATM provides good staff development. The company has recently gained approved status for the delivery of teaching qualifications and most staff have achieved such qualifications or are working towards them. Standards of teaching and learning have improved, with an increasing number of teaching sessions graded as good, although there are still some inadequate teaching sessions. ATM has also introduced a comprehensive buddy system for new members of staff.

38. ATM has a wide range of up-to-date, recently audited policies and procedures covering all aspects of training. All staff are fully aware of the quality assurance and internal audit procedures and of their role in improving quality. They are receptive to external ideas and willing to share good practice. Internal moderation is well planned and comprehensive. Detailed observation reports contain effective feedback to tutors on how their practices could continue to improve. They cover many key learning processes including moderation activities, induction and workshops.

39. ATM carries out learner surveys, and collects feedback well. There is a high response rate to the surveys, which are taken at three points during the year. Learners' views are also collected through an easily accessible centre suggestion scheme, and a system of class and learner representative bodies. ATM has made improvements in response to feedback and suggestions, for example in accommodation and the timetabling of sessions.

40. The self-assessment process takes account of the views of centre and senior managers, although some centre staff are unfamiliar with the process and resulting report. Learners' views are only included through references to learner surveys. Each centre produces its own self-assessment report, including a grade for its overall provision. The reports are used well in the final self-assessment report, which is sufficiently self-critical. A detailed and comprehensive development plan results from the self-assessment report. Inspectors gave the same grades as those in the self-assessment report, although the report did not differentiate between the area of learning and leadership and management, giving one grade for overall effectiveness.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Arts, media and publishing

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Music		2
Other government-funded provision	868	2

41. Currently, 868 learners attend courses at eight ATM centres. Learners take vocationally related courses at levels 2 and 3 in performing music, music practitioners, and for creative producers or vocal artists. Courses are 36 weeks long and run on three days a week. There are 114 part-time tutors, who report to the centre managers.

Music

Strengths

- very high standards of practical and creative work
- good teaching and learning
- very good enrichment programme
- skilful and innovative management
- outstanding range of industry expertise

Weaknesses

- poor attendance at some centres
- insufficient recording of learner progress
- insufficient learning resources

Achievement and standards

42. Learners attain very high standards of practical and creative work. They display good creative technical skills in music production. Their tracks are professionally very well recorded, mixed and produced. They prepare outstanding practical performance pieces and develop strong vocal and instrumental techniques. Production values are well developed and excellently shown in learners' creative products. Learners are clear about the reality of the music industry. In business development sessions, they build an accurate understanding of industry standards and expectations. Learners maintain a clear focus and serious attitude to succeed in learning sessions. They show good communication and presentation skills, hold debates about musical directions, and negotiate creative decisions in groups.

43. Success rates are satisfactory. The overall success rate in 2004-05 was 55 per cent, a significant improvement on previous years, and 60 per cent of learners progressed to further study or employment. Achievement rates for level 1 qualifications in literacy and numeracy are very good. The achievement rate for key skills qualifications is poor but improving.

44. Attendance is poor at some centres. The failure of some learners to attend has prevented their groups from completing their creative projects, and necessitated tutors adapting their teaching plans. Centre managers have put systems and targets to resolve these issues.

The quality of provision

45. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors provide a good balance of teaching styles that are challenging, discursive, encouraging and reflective. They give learners very good individual feedback, and use good questioning techniques to check that learners have understood. Tutors reinforce the importance of learning goals, and often link them to performance opportunities such as assessed learner showcases. Good peer discussion and collaboration is common and working relationships are fostered well between learners, staff and tutors. Learners recognise the credibility of the tutors and appreciate the industry examples the tutors bring to illustrate their sessions.

46. Tutors carefully increase the sophistication of the technical language they use in classes. They provide a good balance of background knowledge and practical teaching, and produce some very good handouts to support the practical elements of the sessions. Tutors are particularly good at teaching complex technical points and the stages of music production.

47. Arrangements for teaching key skills are satisfactory. ATM produces key skills guides for tutors, which indicate links to the curriculum. These emphasise the importance of making key skills relevant to the musical aspects of the programme. In some centres there is no key skills strategy. Some learners come to sessions unprepared.

48. ATM provides a very good music industry enrichment programme. Managers invite prominent musicians and industry representatives to give valuable guest lectures on specific topics. As part of the provider's national events programme, there is a series of masterclasses from acclaimed professional artists, some of whom have international reputations for their achievements in music. All learners have opportunities to perform in live venues and create specific projects that can be professionally recorded, produced and distributed. ATM creates projects linked to radio stations, nightclubs and community venues, which extend the learners' professional operational experience. The College Circuit CD initiative gives learners the opportunity to promote their work to industry representatives.

49. Arrangements for additional learning support are satisfactory. Initial assessment is used satisfactorily to plan learning. Learning support tutors hold individual sessions with learners and focus on written and presentation skills, or on explaining assignments. Some centres use 'at risk' assessments well to support learners who are falling behind with work. Learners receive satisfactory tutorials and contact with staff, and there is an adequate level of career advice and planning for progress into further training, employment or self-employment.

50. Tutors do not record learners' progress in enough detail. There is insufficient recording of formative assessment and use of individual learning plans. Learners and tutors do not take sufficient responsibility for the records system. Learners cannot see the relevance of

the booklets designed to record their progress. The combination of paper-based and online systems makes it difficult to build a clear overview of the learners' progress over time. The online assessment and progress monitoring system has technical problems, and learners and tutors seldom use it.

Leadership and management

51. ATM benefits from skilful and innovative management. The centres are well led and communication between them is strong. Managers have a real desire to see the learners flourish. Good problem solving is a key feature in several centres, and all use data well. All the centres have a good range of partnerships with the music industry. Centre managers use local contacts to develop good learning resources through deals and sponsorship from local businesses. Some managers organise work experience at the city's major annual festival, working alongside major DJs and bands. Most managers satisfactorily promote and follow health and safety procedures. However, some learners do not remember or regard key health and safety messages.

52. ATM employs an outstanding range of industry-experienced staff as tutors and managers. Many of the staff work in the industry and also have strong backgrounds in different areas of the music industry. Learners are especially interested in hearing how their tutors deal with record labels and the corporate element of music, and appreciate guidance in how to get their music heard by the most influential people. Tutors bring the latest techniques and technological advances to teaching sessions.

53. Accommodation is satisfactory. There is a range of different spaces for teaching aspects of music, including rehearsal rooms, recording studios, seminar rooms, computer suite rooms and specialist rooms for instrumental and vocal recording. Some sessions are disrupted by noise from adjacent rooms. Few centres provide a common room for learners.

54. There are insufficient learning resources at some centres, and some have too few computers. Transferring work is sometimes problematic as software is incompatible between computers. In some cases, learners are not working with the latest versions of software. Some devices given to learners to transfer work between machines are unreliable. Learners cannot always access rehearsal space and timetable clashes can cause sound disturbances. Lighting is poor in some studios used as teaching spaces.

