

Archway Academy Limited

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Entry to Employment (E2E)

Description of the provider

1. Archway Academy Limited (Archway) is a private education and training organisation based in Bordesley, East Birmingham. Archway has provided Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes since February 2004. Its training provision is funded through the Birmingham and Solihull LSC and recruit their learners from the local community. The executive director is supported by a deputy director who is also the head of department. There are 20 staff in total, two of whom are directly involved in training and assessment of the E2E programme.
2. At the time of the inspection, there were 19 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. All learners undertake a 13 week programme in which they work to improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Learners can work towards qualifications in information and communication technology (ICT), lift-truck driving and citizenship.
3. Since the previous inspection, the provider has begun to deliver pre-16 vocational training, foundation craft awards and youth achievement awards. They also provide educational and emotional support for disaffected young learners on behalf of Worcestershire County Council.
4. The 2001 census identified that Birmingham's minority ethnic groups represented 29.6% of the local population, compared with 20% in the West Midlands and 9.1% nationally. In March 2007, the unemployment rate in Birmingham was 9%, compared with 5.6% in the West Midlands and 5.5% nationally.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Entry to Employment (E2E)	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. The E2E provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards and the quality of provision are satisfactory. Archway's leadership and management are satisfactory as is their equality of opportunity.

CAPACITY TO IMPROVE

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. Archway has satisfactory capacity to improve its provision. The number of learners with additional and social needs in the provision has increased greatly in the last two years. The trends on learner progression rates and achievement of objectives are positive and have considerably improved since the previous inspection in 2005. The inspection grade profile has been maintained and the provider has successfully addressed, with the exception of one, all of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The self-assessment report does not sufficiently recognise the areas for improvement identified during this inspection.

Key strengths

- Good progression
- Good support and guidance for learners
- Good strategic leadership
- Particularly good networking links in the community

Key areas for improvement

- Learners' poor attendance
- Insufficient opportunities for learners to access work experience
- Not enough use of management information systems
- Weak self-assessment process

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Progression is good and has remained consistently high for the past three years. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. In 2005/06, 70% of learners progressed and in 2006/07, 71% of learners progressed. At the time of the inspection, progression rates for 2007/08 were 77%. Between 2005 and the current year, 27% of those progressing moved into employment and 45% accessed further training at a local FE college. However, the destination of 28% of leavers remains unknown.
8. Achievement of key learning objectives is satisfactory. Fifty per cent of learners in 2006/07 attained all of their goals. Since 2005, 68% of learners gained a work-related qualification and 32% were awarded a literacy or numeracy certificate. The standard of work in learners' portfolios and the quality of their communication skills is satisfactory. The work produced in the painting and decorating workshop is particularly good.
9. Learner attendance on employability training is poor. In 2006, attendance averaged 76% and in 2007 it declined to 74%. Many learners are therefore missing a significant amount of their 13 week programme. Absent learners miss opportunities to develop their skills and to benefit from the effectiveness of individual training. This area for improvement was not correctly identified in the self-assessment report.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

10. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good practical skills training is provided in well-equipped workshops for learners in painting and decorating, trowel skills and carpentry and joinery. Learners gain useful team-working skills and confidence through stimulating projects in personal and social development sessions.
11. Literacy and numeracy is well integrated with practical vocational workshops and team projects. However, separate sessions for literacy and numeracy skills are less effective. Learners are given insufficient direct coaching on the skills needed to improve reading, writing and numeracy skills. Staff delivering literacy and numeracy training are inexperienced and not yet qualified in this specialism.
12. Initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills, preferred learning style and career options is covered satisfactorily at induction and used to set realistic targets. Overall individual learning objectives are sometimes too vague and hard to measure, however, targets set at monthly reviews are more specific. They include behaviour and attendance as well as skill development. However, staff do not always specify what strategies learners might use to make improvements. There is some inconsistency in the standard of recording in individual learning plans and reviews.
13. The programme is satisfactory to meet the needs and interests of learners and covers all the main strands of E2E in a suitable balance. The induction training over the first four

weeks is comprehensive, welcoming and stimulating as learners settle in. Learners enjoy a good range of trips and sporting activities throughout their time at Archway.

14. Support and guidance for learners is good. Staff provide individual tutorial support and handle personal and practical issues sensitively. Over 80% of the learners have additional learning and/or social needs. Good links with Connexions advisors ensure adequate housing and benefits advice and specialist counselling. Learners whose first language is not English, are referred to other agencies for support. Most learners appreciate the incentive that an imaginative points system for improving their behaviour and conduct gives, with rewards or sanctions each month.
15. Archway employs a well-qualified specialist adviser on dyslexia for its pre-16 learners, however, this service has only recently been implemented and has had little impact on the E2E programme. No E2E learners have been identified as having dyslexia and staff have only a rudimentary knowledge of the impact of dyslexia awareness on effective approaches to teaching and learning.
16. Opportunities for work experience are insufficient and fail to provide learners with the chance to reflect on their career choices and to try out different options. Only one learner currently on programme is on a work placement. This is within Archway itself, with the learner helping trainers prepare construction workshop resources and guide younger learners. The provider has set up a new scheme to offer employment to up to four learners a year after they finish their programme to help them become more prepared for open employment. This area for improvement was not identified in the self-assessment report although it was highlighted in the development plan.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The provider displays good strategic leadership in directing the provision. Since the previous inspection in 2005, the provider has effectively maintained their achievement rates and increased the provision to pre-16 year olds and disaffected young learners and moved to bigger premises. The strategy plan clearly highlights the objectives for Archway and these are aligned to the local and regional LSC priorities. Staff are very committed to the organisation's mission which puts hard to reach learners at the centre of its operations.
18. Archway has developed particularly good networking links in the community. The provider has worked hard to establish useful links with many stakeholders in the community, including religious leaders and external support agencies. In the last year, Archway has benefited from the experience of the Federation of Master Builders who advised the provider on the creation of its construction and bricklaying training unit. Retailers across the city consistently donate paints and decorating tools for the use of the learners. Connexions advisers are fully involved in the developments of learners individual learning plans. This strength was recognised in the self-assessment report.
19. The provider sets staff clear and appropriate targets on learner progression and achievement. Targets are communicated and reviewed at many of the regular meetings.

However, other targets such as those related to improving learner attendance are not always sufficiently specific or realistic.

20. External communications are satisfactory. The provider issues regular newsletters to ensure learners, parents and support agencies are appropriately informed of any relevant updates.
21. Arrangements for annual staff appraisal are adequate. Staff self-assess their performance which is then reviewed with the executive director. Objectives are set for the forthcoming year, although these are not always challenging and often focus on the short term outcomes. Development needs are highlighted during their appraisals and the necessary training is planned for each member of staff. All staff are qualified or working towards the appropriate qualifications.
22. Accommodation is much improved since the previous inspection, although some rooms have poor lighting and ventilation. Vocational workshops are well-equipped and spacious, and there is reasonable access for learners with restricted mobility.
23. The provider makes insufficient use of management information systems to analyse the quality of the provision. Archway centrally gathers an extensive amount of information, however, this is not always analysed to evaluate performance and inform managerial decisions. Currently, the provider is only able to analyse information on progression and achievement of learner objectives. Its management information system is inadequate to analyse complex sets of data. This area for improvement was not identified in the self-assessment report.
24. Quality assurance arrangements overall are satisfactory. The provider has established a comprehensive quality procedures manual which is reflected in a framework of yearly activities involving all staff in the organisation. The system for teaching and learning observations is appropriate, although the provider only observes the formal class room teaching sessions. The provider verifies the quality of the learners' portfolios appropriately. Internal verification meetings take place regularly and best practice is shared amongst tutors on an informal basis. The provider gathers learner feedback extensively, however, it has only recently started to analyse this and monitor any trends. The provider lacks a formalised and centralised plan reflecting the identified priorities for the improvement of the quality of the provision.
25. The promotion of equality of opportunity at Archway is satisfactory. The provider has continued to develop measures to widen participation amongst learners in the community. Staff have been regularly involved in promoting the organisation to the different groups in the community, although the provider has not been able to increase the number of females recruited. Archway recognises this as a key objective, however, there is no formal strategy or targets to achieve this increased participation.
26. Archway has developed a broad equality of opportunity policy which includes all current legislation and some useful information on the diverse cultural elements present in the community. The provider has carried out effective promotion of anti-bullying and harassment procedures amongst its learners and adequately safeguards vulnerable young learners.
27. Learners' awareness of equality and diversity issues are satisfactory. They appreciate a culture of respect and tolerance. One female learner works confidently in a male-

dominated construction workshop. Learners are aware of who to contact with issues or complaints. Equality of opportunity is adequately covered in induction and monthly reviews.

28. Although the provider gathers information on achievement by gender and ethnicity, it has only recently started to analyse it and no priorities have yet been identified. Staff have received very little training on equality of opportunity and this is not appropriately recorded within their personal training plans. Equality of opportunity seldom figures as a meaningful point in the recorded minutes of meetings in the organisation.
29. The self-assessment process and resulting report is weak. All staff are included in the process. However, the current report is insufficiently comprehensive and lacks evaluative judgements. Data was not used effectively to make the appropriate judgements on job outcomes and achieved objectives. Equality of opportunity is not included in the current report and there is not enough narrative to explain the identified strengths and areas for improvement. The provider failed to produce a self-assessment report for 2006 and the development plan was ineffective in addressing all identified weaknesses. The provider failed to identify this area for improvement in their self-assessment report.

What learners like:

- 'Staff are not too strict'
- 'Lots of help'
- 'I thought I couldn't do bricklaying, but now I can'

What learners think could improve:

- 'The programme is too short'
- 'Better qualifications'
- 'For the academy to be more like a college'

Learners' achievements

Outcomes on **Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes** managed by Archway Academy **2005 to 2008**

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
2005-06	61	33%	70%
2006-07	68	53%	71%
2007-08 (4 months)	26	50%	77%

Note: 2007-08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the three months or greater of the LSC contract year

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period