

Anderson Stockley Accredited Training Limited

Inspection date

24 October 2008

Inspection number

329928

Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	6
Effectiveness of provision.....	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	6
Key areas for improvement	6
Main findings.....	7
Achievement and standards	7
Quality of provision	7
Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	9
What learners like.....	11
What learners think could improve	11
Learners' achievements	12

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' monitoring 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:

- Business, administration and law

Description of the provider

1. Anderson Stockley Accredited Training Limited (ASAT) was established in early 2000 as an additional division of Anderson Stockley Telemarketing Associates which has been trading since 1993 as a commercial training, telemarketing and recruitment organisation. ASAT became a limited company in 2007 operating on a nationwide basis from its head offices in Northampton.
2. ASAT is owned and managed by three directors. The directors have responsibility for operations, finance and administration respectively. The company employs eight staff in the marketing department and one assistant administrator. The training team comprises 12 freelance consultants of whom two also carry out internal verification duties. They report to a technical delivery manager.
3. ASAT funds its training through the East of England LSC. It also provides training for commercial customers nationwide. The government funded training represents 90% of the total provision. ASAT delivers Train to Gain programmes in business, administration and law. At the time of inspection a total of 102 learners were in learning. Ninety learners are undertaking a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in customer service. A further 20 learners are completing programmes in business administration. Eight learners are on an NVQ at Level 2 and 12 on an NVQ at Level 3.
4. The provider was re-inspected in 2003. It was also inspected in 2007 as part of the regional European Social Fund (ESF) training provision.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Business, administration and law	Satisfactory: Grade 3
----------------------------------	-----------------------

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. The business, administration and law provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are good, while the quality of provision is satisfactory. ASAT's leadership and management are satisfactory, as is equality of opportunity.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. ASAT has satisfactory capacity to improve. Success rates have been improved or maintained since the reinspection. They were also good when the regional ESF programme was inspected last year. The inspection grade profile has remained stable when compared with previous published reports. The provider has addressed most areas for improvement identified in 2007; however, it is too early to assess the full impact. The self-assessment report and development planning are satisfactory overall.

Key strengths

- Very high success rates
- Good off-the-job training
- Good strategy to respond to employer needs

Key areas for improvement

- Inappropriate use of learning materials for assessment purposes
- Inadequate use of targets to promote progress
- Underdeveloped quality improvement systems

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

7. Achievement and standards are good. The provider began delivering the Train to Gain programme under its own contract in 2007 and success rates for that year were very high at 100% with all 18 learners on programme achieving their qualification. However, as recognised in the self-assessment report, timely achievement was lower at 83%.
8. Learners develop personal skills such as prioritising their own workload and communicating more effectively with patients in health practices. Learners gain good levels of technical knowledge and develop useful professional skills in managing patients' expectations and dealing with anxious patients.
9. The standard of learners work is satisfactory and appropriate to their level of programme. Some current learners are making slow progress.
10. Between 2005 and 2007, ASAT delivered NVQ programmes in business, administration and information technology to over 340 learners. Success rates for these learners were good at 89%. The provider also delivered Train to Gain programmes to 250 learners on behalf of the consortium led by East Midlands College. Success rates for this programme were good at 82%.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Off-the-job training is good, as identified correctly in the self-assessment report. ASAT has developed a well structured programme of off-the-job training which relates well to the job roles of medical and dental receptionists. Learners come together from different health practices to attend four half-day sessions. This gives them useful opportunities to explore their job roles, share best practice and exchange ideas. The best sessions are delivered by very knowledgeable trainers who have a good understanding of customer service within the health sector. They explore healthcare guidelines and learn new methods of monitoring customer service, such as how to measure patient satisfaction. Often sessions are inspirational, enjoyable and fun for most learners. Assessors provide good individual coaching for learners to develop their portfolios of evidence. They make appropriate arrangements to individually coach learners if they are unable to attend a training session.
12. On-the-job training is satisfactory. However, employers are insufficiently involved in the planning and monitoring of the learners' programmes. Workplace activities, off-the-job training and planning for assessment opportunities are not sufficiently integrated. Workplace supervisors have insufficient knowledge of programmes to facilitate opportunities for evidence collection and assessment.

13. Assessment practice is satisfactory overall, and assessment judgements are fair and valid. Assessment plans are adequate, although assessors often use a limited range of assessment methods, particularly in customer service. Assessors carry out, record and reference professional discussions and observed assessments appropriately. However, they sometimes make insufficient use of learners' prior knowledge and experience. They do not identify assessment opportunities for more able learners early enough in their programmes.
14. Initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, although learners are only made aware of the outcome if they require support. Learners receive appropriate support when a need is identified. Learners receive a satisfactory induction as part of the first workshop they attend. This offers them appropriate information and advice about the qualification they are about to undertake. The provider has introduced changes to the learners' induction process to ensure that learners receive clear information on the choice of units available for the customer service NVQ.
15. ASAT responds well to the needs of employers in the sector. The customer service NVQ is contextualised well to the needs of health service employers. Additional modules are offered to meet the needs of specific health practitioners. ASAT is flexible in delivering training on employers' premises when a need is identified.
16. Information, advice and guidance are adequate. Employers and learners are given clear information about the courses on offer from ASAT. However, learners are not made aware of the wider opportunities available.
17. Inappropriate use is made of some learning materials for assessment purposes. During training sessions, learners complete worksheets covering a range of units by taking notes during group discussions. However, individual learners' knowledge and understanding is not subsequently tested, and the worksheets do not demonstrate the learners' own work adequately. This area for improvement is not recognised in the self-assessment report.
18. Assessors do not make adequate use of targets to promote learners' progress effectively. Assessors complete individual learning plans and record units to be completed, but they do not always agree appropriate long-term milestone targets with learners. Learners and assessors cannot measure progress towards achievement accurately. Progress reviews are often carried out too late in learners' programmes. Short-term targets set between meetings are not always sufficiently challenging and some are insufficiently specific. This area for improvement is not correctly identified in the self-assessment report.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

19. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The provider has developed a good strategy to respond to employers' needs. ASAT has developed highly effective relationships with employers in the health sector. The provider has a very good understanding of the medical practitioner industry and the sector's needs. ASAT has worked very effectively with employers to create a tailored training programme that meets the newly introduced customer service requirements within general practitioners' and dentists' surgeries. The delivery of training is highly contextualised, containing relevant health case studies and developing the learners' knowledge of medical terminology. ASAT is working towards developing a qualification on customer service at Level 3 to meet the demands of employers who wish to promote their staff to supervisory roles. A practice manager programme at Level 3 has already been developed aiming at further developing the leadership and management skills of surgery managers.
20. Since the reinspection in 2003, ASAT has experienced substantial growth in the number of its learners, and has increased its training and assessment team. The provider has also moved to bigger premises and introduced a computerised management information system. Learner progress is now easily identified, and the technical manager follows up individual learners' performance at the monthly reviews with assessors introduced recently.
21. Communications are very frequent and trainers and assessors are very well informed of any relevant operational issues. Staff attend regular standardisation meetings where issues, such as new requirements by the awarding body, are discussed.
22. Staff appraisal and development are satisfactory. Appraisals are carried out once a year and include self-assessment by staff of their own performance. The contribution of staff towards the development of the business and their skills and competencies are thoroughly reviewed. However, appraisal does not measure their performance in relation to the achievement of learner success rates. Any identified development needs are appropriately followed up throughout the year.
23. The quality improvement systems are underdeveloped. ASAT gathers employer and learner feedback regularly, and timely action has been taken in some of the areas identified for improvement. It has only recently begun to analyse the feedback collected to monitor and identify improvement trends over time. The teaching and learning observation system is ineffective in measuring learning outcomes and highlighting areas for improvement. Observations are not graded and staff have not been trained appropriately to carry them out. The provider carries out insufficient internal verification throughout the learners' programmes. Although recent measures have been taken to rectify this area for improvement,

it is too early to assess their effectiveness. This area for improvement is partly identified in the self-assessment report.

24. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. ASAT has an appropriate equal opportunities policy and it monitors that all employers and subcontractors with which it works have an equal opportunities policy. Learners are given a shortened version of the equal opportunities policy, and arrangements are in place to produce a more readable booklet for them.
25. Systems to monitor learner progress by gender, age, disability and ethnicity are underdeveloped. Strategies to widen participation by under-represented groups are also underdeveloped. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Newly appointed staff are checked for their suitability to work with young people and vulnerable adults. However, existing staff have not had appropriate checks. Equality of opportunity is not discussed during meetings in a meaningful way.
26. Learners receive adequate information on equality and diversity issues during their induction however, it is insufficiently re-enforced throughout their programme. Complaints are dealt with promptly and in a satisfactory manner. Learners have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities and the wider implications of equality and diversity as these aspects are well promoted in their workplace.
27. The self-assessment process is satisfactory overall. Staff are adequately involved in the process and the report effectively gathers evaluative views from other stakeholders. The quality improvement plan effectively gathers specific actions and timelines to address improvement areas. However, the process is insufficiently critical and the report was not sufficiently comprehensive in assessing the quality of provision. Inspectors found further areas for improvement during the inspection.

What learners like:

- Gaining an accredited qualification
- Attending the off-the-job training and meeting other colleague learners
- The training programme – 'It is very straightforward and to the point'
- Their increased assertiveness

What learners think could improve:

- The feedback obtained on their results from their mathematics and English tests
- The amount of information received before starting the course
- The amount of homework
- The clarity of information about what they need to do

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ in Business, administration and law programmes managed by ASAT 2007 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2007/08	overall	18	100%
		timely	15	83%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection