

Inspection of Access Training (East Midlands) Limited

Inspection dates:

20 to 23 May 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Access Training (East Midlands) Limited was established in 2005. It is owned by two housing associations and located in Nottingham. Most learners and apprentices are based in the Midlands.

At the time of the inspection, there were 450 apprentices including 88 level 2 early years practitioners, 102 level 3 early years educators, 80 level 3 business administrators, 54 level 3 housing and property management apprentices and 32 level 4 senior housing and property management apprentices.

Adult learning programmes help unemployed adults to develop their confidence and move into work or other meaningful activity. At the time of the inspection, there were 77 learners studying courses in adult care, childcare, construction, teaching assistance and employability skills.

Leaders provide study programmes for young people who predominantly come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Courses are in animal care, childcare, construction and customer service. At the time of the inspection, there were 53 learners.

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

Learners and apprentices are extremely satisfied with their experiences. They feel welcomed, supported and valued. They appreciate the clear feedback and guidance that they receive from trainers. In a few cases, they would prefer to have more training sessions in a face-to-face setting.

Trainers create calm and positive environments through reassuring interactions, especially with those learners who need extra help. Employability trainers, who work with adults who often lack confidence, move around classrooms and subtly check learners' understanding without drawing attention to them. Apprentices are encouraged to make mistakes and learn from their errors.

Leaders and managers work well with local employers and community groups when planning which courses they will provide. For adult learners, this includes working with charitable organisations, such as a women's refuge and a men's drugs and alcohol rehabilitation centre, to provide courses that help users to develop the skills and confidence they need to move forward in their lives. For apprenticeships, leaders have worked with a range of employers ranging from small businesses to large NHS trusts to select courses that address skills gaps in areas such as care, business administration, and property management and maintenance.

Most learners and apprentices develop their knowledge and skills well. Young learners improve their behaviours and become able to perform practical tasks competently. Adult learners gain the ability and confidence to attempt new tasks and respond to questions with growing fluency. Apprentices become valued employees who contribute well to their workplaces. The vast majority of learners and apprentices who complete their courses are well prepared for their next steps.

Most staff help learners and apprentices to develop their character and confidence. Apprentice business administrators improve their formal communication skills and apprentice early years practitioners become more confident when talking to parents and carers. Adult learners become more positive about gaining employment or overcoming the challenges in their lives. Young learners benefit from guidance on themes such as healthy living and positive relationships.

Learners feel safe. They value the communication they receive before they start their courses. They know whom to contact if they have any concerns about their well-being or that of others. They are confident that staff will take appropriate action if they raise a concern. Apprentices also have confidence in their employers.

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

Staff plan courses well. They consider carefully the specific skills and knowledge that learners and apprentices need. They adapt plans to take account of learners' and apprentices' starting points. Trainers often incorporate topics that extend beyond the minimum requirements of qualifications to help learners prepare for their next steps.

For example, functional skills mathematics trainers incorporate elements of the GCSE into their courses.

Trainers mostly select suitable teaching methods and use them well to help learners and apprentices understand key concepts. They provide clear practical demonstrations of skills and explain theoretical topics well. They make use of suitable examples to illustrate key points. Trainers usually choose appropriate learning resources, such as workbooks and videos, to support their teaching. Apprenticeship trainers mostly plan suitable further study activities for apprentices to complete outside of lessons, but occasionally these activities rely too much on apprentices' own independent research.

Most trainers use a range of assessment methods effectively in order to check that learners and apprentices understand topics. They provide ample opportunities during lessons for learners and apprentices to practise what they are taught and ensure that apprentices can develop their skills in the workplace. As a result, learners and apprentices usually develop a clear understanding of topics and develop their skills well. However, in a few cases, trainers do not identify enough opportunities for apprentices to practise their skills in the workplace, and this slows the progress of a small number of apprentices.

Leaders have established suitable processes for identifying learners who have special educational needs and/or disabilities at the start of their courses. Staff record these needs on an electronic system that trainers use to inform their planning. Trainers receive training to help learners who have a range of special educational needs. Due to the short duration of many adult learning courses, trainers must identify and meet learners' needs as they go along. Mostly, they do this well, despite the limited time they have with learners.

Most adult learners achieve their qualifications. For the few courses in which achievements have been lower, managers have taken sensible improvement actions. These have included adding extra lessons to courses and adjusting the way trainers prepare learners for their assessments. It is too early to judge the impact of these actions.

Apprentices achieve their qualifications in line with expectations. Managers have identified the reasons behind any variations between courses and have taken sensible improvement actions. In the current year, achievements have increased. Around half of successful apprentices achieve merit and distinction grades.

Young learners have low achievements in most subjects. This is at least partly a consequence of recruiting learners who have had poor previous educational experiences and outcomes, and who often face multiple barriers to learning. Staff work hard to motivate these learners, and this has led to more young learners remaining on their courses this year.

Leaders and managers focus appropriately on attendance and punctuality. Attendance is high for apprentices and adult learners. However, many young

learners face multiple challenges, and their attendance and punctuality are much lower. Staff work hard to improve this, but their success is mixed.

Most learners and apprentices who attend their lessons understand the benefits of their courses and are well motivated. They study hard and support each other well. Apprentices demonstrate mature, positive and professional attitudes.

Most learners and apprentices benefit from suitable careers advice and guidance. Staff capture learners' and apprentices' aspirations at the start of their courses and discuss these frequently with them. As a result, learners and apprentices can describe what they would like to do next and what they need to do to achieve it.

Leaders have implemented suitable quality assurance processes, such as course performance meetings, lesson observations, and internal audits, which focus on themes such as the use of off-the-job training hours. These processes have allowed them to implement actions that have improved the standard of teaching.

Leaders and managers carefully plan professional development activities that help trainers to improve their skills. They offer monthly training sessions on topics such as resilience, learning difficulties and conflict resolution. Managers support individual trainers to improve weaker aspects of their teaching, although they rely too much on trainers identifying these needs for themselves.

Leaders are very considerate of staff workload and well-being. They provide staff with suitable planning time and flexible working arrangements. Leaders do not expect staff to work beyond contracted hours. They provide help to staff who experience difficulties in their personal lives.

Governance is mostly effective. Governors provide effective oversight and challenge for most aspects of the business, including safeguarding. They support leaders well in making decisions about such things as investment in staffing resources. However, they do not focus enough on the quality of teaching.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that trainer-assessors provide all apprentices with enough well-planned learning and practice activities to develop their knowledge and skills outside of lessons.
- Improve the attendance of young learners so that more of them achieve their qualifications.
- Focus more on the quality of training during governance meetings.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50080
Address	Cawley House 96 Cliff Road Nottingham NG1 1GW
Contact number	01159 587 257
Website	www.atem.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Corrina Hembury
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Dates of previous inspection	21 to 24 January 2020
Main subcontractors	REAL Education Limited

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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