

# Anne Clarke Associates Ltd

## Independent learning provider

<b>Inspection dates</b>		<b>29 October-12 December 2012</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- Outcomes are good for the vast majority of learners. Success rates have greatly increased in the last three years and the majority of learners develop good personal, social and employability skills.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good for most learners. A combination of teaching methods successfully develops learners' knowledge.
- The good support learners receive motivates them to learn resulting in an increased focus on improving their performance at work.
- Leaders and managers of the provision have high ambitions for learners and have promptly adapted their organisation to meet the needs of their learners and also those of the wider population, better.
- There is a strong focus on managing performance, including that of the subcontractors, in order to secure good quality of provision and high outcomes for learners.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- A small group of learners are making slow progress and do not develop sufficient new vocational skills.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment the business learners receive requires improvement.
- In the health and social care programmes, assessment does not always challenge learners sufficiently to develop their knowledge further.
- Assessors do not extend the learners' knowledge of equality and diversity topics throughout the learning programme.
- The newly revised system for observations of teaching and learning is not fully implemented.
- Data use is insufficient to agree measurable targets within the quality improvement plan.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Continue improving outcomes for all learners, closing the gap in progress and achievement in particular, amongst the business administration apprentices ensuring they develop new vocational skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the business administration programmes by ensuring learners benefit from regular and constructive assessor's visits, developing their understanding of the programme and obtaining the employer's involvement in their progress reviews.
- Improve the quality of assessment by using more stimulating questions and utilising all available ICT to extend learners' knowledge.
- Develop the learner's knowledge of equality and diversity by applying more challenging questioning on these topics during reviews and by exploring these further when the learners show insufficient understanding.
- Fully and consistently implement the revised arrangements to observe the quality of all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment to identify and promote more examples of best practice and to continue improving the quality of provision for all learners.
- Use data more critically to agree measurable success milestones for the actions identified in the quality improvement plan reflecting these accurately in the subsequent self-assessment reports.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. The vast majority of learners achieve well. Success rates have improved consistently in the last three years since the last inspection and are high and above the national average rates for 2010/11. This trend of improvement has continued into 2012 with rates increasing further.
- In particular, learners undertaking a qualification in health and social care experience very high levels of achievement. Learners in the business administration area achieve well but half of the small number of advanced apprentices does not progress sufficiently well, failing to complete their qualification in the planned time.
- In the last year, outcomes for those clients engaged in employability programmes have been very high, with many accessing employment or engaging in further training on completion of their course. Over 40% of them have gained work experience through temporary or permanent employment opportunities. Current learners are also making good progress with their learning programmes with the majority of learners being on track to complete their qualification within the expected planned end date.
- The provider has identified small differences of performance across specific groups of learners, such as male apprentices, however, their performance has shown an improvement over the last three years and the gap of achievement is narrowing when compared to the same group nationally. There are no meaningful differences in the progress and achievement made by groups of learners with recognised learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Learners develop good personal, social and employability skills. Mature learners in social care experience increased confidence, reflect on, and question the rationale for working in a particular way. Learners are more aware and ready to challenge poor practice, as highlighted by their employers. They apply confidently their English and mathematics functional skills with real

business benefits. Many learners research new initiatives whilst sharing this with their manager and working with their colleagues to raise standards of care effectively. Learners in business administration make appropriate progress in their skills development, sometimes with a positive impact on their job roles, but many do not learn sufficient new skills. All learners adhere to the relevant health and safety regulations in their workplace.

- Since the last inspection, the number of learners who have progressed from an intermediate onto an advanced qualification has continued to increase and, currently, thirty of the existing advanced apprentices have progressed from an intermediate apprenticeship. In the health and social care area of learning, in particular, many learners obtain secure a job promotion after having completed their qualification, progressing often into managerial roles or jobs with greater responsibilities.

<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, reflecting the good and improved outcomes for learners, with high overall success rates and increased skills development for the majority of learners.
- Support for learners is good. Employers provide good workplace support to help learners develop in their jobs and assessors provide effective individual support, building good working relationships with learners. A minority of learners in business administration and hospitality have been making slow progress, though recent action by the provider is beginning to improve this.
- Reviews of learners' progress are very effective in health and social care where the majority of learners are, with detailed recording, good involvement of employers and effective target setting. However, in business administration and hospitality there is insufficient employer involvement in reviewing progress.
- Teaching is good. A combination of useful off-the-job workshops and good workplace coaching by assessors is successful in developing learners' vocational knowledge and skills. Learners value the workshops to enhance learning and share their experiences with other learners, and employers provide good workplace training to help learners develop in their job role. For employability learners, the programme is comprehensive and learners are able to achieve additional certificates in aspects such as first aid and lift truck.
- On-the-job coaching by assessors is good and they make good use of their own substantial experience to help learners understand how learning can help improve their job skills. However, some assessors make insufficient use of technology to extend learning opportunities.
- Learning is good overall. Learners work to a good standard in their job roles and most make good progress in further developing skills and knowledge, leading to improved job performance. For example, care learners increase their understanding of how to identify and meet the needs of their clients. However, a minority of business administration learners are not adequately challenged by their qualification and do not sufficiently develop new skills and knowledge.
- Assessment overall is adequate and learners produce portfolios that are well organised and of good quality. Assessors plan assessment flexibly to meet the needs of learners and employers and provide clear and detailed feedback to learners on how to improve. However, in health and social care, assessors' questioning does not sufficiently challenge learners to further develop their knowledge, and for hospitality learners there is a lack of clarity between assessment and coaching practice.
- Learning and support for functional skills is good. Learners make good progress in developing their English and mathematics skills, both through effective off-the-job workshops and assessor support in the workplace. Learners are able to demonstrate application of higher-level functional skills to enhance their professional practice. Specialist staff support assessors and learners as required.

- Employability learners in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) lessons progress well, with good integration of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Good use is made of everyday life contexts and resources to support learning and there is good assessment of learners’ skills. However, there is insufficient use of the diagnostic assessment to better plan individualised learning programmes and sessions.
- Information, advice and guidance for learners and employers are good. Initial assessment is effective in ensuring learners are placed on the correct qualification and to identify any support needs. There is a good focus on progression opportunities at the end of the qualification.
- Most learners and employers have a good understanding of their learning programme. However, a few learners and employers in business administration and hospitality have an insufficient understanding of all aspects of the programme and how well learners are progressing.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is adequate, with learners generally having a good understanding of relevant topics and employers having good workplace policies. Information booklets given to learners contain useful information and clarification. However, the checking of learners’ understanding at reviews is too often only cursory, with insufficient exploratory questioning to develop the knowledge of broader issues and to challenge learners where they indicate shortfalls in their understanding.

<p><b>Health and Social care</b></p> <p><b>Other work based learning</b></p> <p><b>Apprenticeships</b></p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching learning and assessment are good as reflected in the improved outcomes for all learners, which are now good. Learners are well motivated, enjoy their studies and develop valuable employability skills.
- Employers support learners well. Most provide a wide range of in house training, which enhances good learner understanding of their job roles and responsibilities, and how these link to the requirements of their main qualification. The majority of learners gain additional useful qualifications, which improve their employability.
- Support for functional skills is good. Additional support from specialist tutors in English and mathematics is very effective. In the best examples, learners are able to demonstrate proficient application of higher level functional skills to enhance their professional practice.
- Assessors are appropriately qualified and vocationally experienced. All have or are working towards a teaching qualification whilst holding appropriate assessor and verifier awards and functional skills at level 2. Assessors utilise their understanding of the care sector very well to plan visits and assessments flexibly in order to meet the needs of employers and the expected workloads of learners.
- Learners’ work is good with evidence of wider research. Portfolios of evidence are well organised. Learners develop and enhance existing knowledge and skills well and have a good understanding of the core values of care working to identify and address the needs of individual clients.
- Teaching and individual coaching is very effective. Assessors make very good use of their own wide ranges of work experience to help learners understand the importance of their learning to their work practice, and how this improves the standards of care that they deliver. However, assessors make insufficient use of available ICT to extend learning.
- Assessment practice requires improvement. Assessors use their subject expertise effectively making good use of case studies and scenarios to clearly link theory to practice. Assessors

provide detailed verbal feedback on learner work enabling learners to improve. Professional discussions do not sufficiently challenge the more able learners to extend their learning.

- Initial assessment, advice and guidance are very effective ensuring learners are placed on the right level of programme to meet learner and employer needs. Learners receive good advice and guidance from both employers and assessors to plan progression to the next level of study and career development.
- Formal reviews are used well to monitor learners’ progress and plan future assessment opportunities. Employers are invited to attend and all receive regular detailed written and verbal feedback to assist in learner achievement of targets. Agreed targets are predominantly identified and set by assessors rather than learners demonstrating more responsibility for planning their own learning.
- Learners’ understanding of relevant equality and diversity topics is good in relation to the groups of service users that they are currently working with. Assessors use a list of questions to test their understanding during formal progress reviews. However, these are not used sufficiently well to promote discussion and challenge learners’ preconceptions of broad diversity issues.
- Learners have particularly good understanding of safeguarding themselves and those vulnerable people for whom they care. Assessors and employers place a strong emphasis on safeguarding in coaching sessions and day-to-day supervision in the work place. Recent media reports and high profile cases are referred to in the course of professional discussions to help raise learners’ awareness of important issues.

<p><b>Business administration</b>  <b>Customer service</b>  <b>Team leading</b></p> <p><b>Other work based learning</b>  <b>Apprenticeships</b></p>	<p>Requires improvement</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory overall, but require improvement. This reflects the outcomes for learners, where overall success rates are good, but many learners do not complete their qualification on time and do not develop enough new skills.
- Support for learners is sufficient and improving, and assessors build good relationships with learners, providing good support at visits although a minority of learners have received too few and insufficiently constructive assessor visits, resulting in slow progress. The recent change of assessor is beginning to improve this effectively, with learners now showing better motivation to achieve.
- Workplace support for learners’ job roles from line-managers is good, with a good focus on job progression. Nevertheless, line-managers often have an insufficient involvement and understanding of the learners’ programme, with insufficient involvement in planning learning and reviewing progress.
- Learners make adequate progress in their skills development, sometimes with a positive impact on their job roles, for example learning new ways of completing job tasks. Learners enjoy attending off-the-job group workshops, and receive effective individual coaching by assessors, who use resources well to support learning, including a good range of workbooks. However, there is insufficient development of new vocational skills, due to lack of challenge in their qualifications.
- Assessment and the standard of learners’ work are good. Assessors use an appropriate variety of methods, including improved use of full assessment where there was previously slow progress. Assessors’ feedback to learners is clear and constructive, and short-term assessment

planning gives learners a clear understanding of what to do next. Some assessors use e-portfolios well, but others are reluctant to embrace this technology.

- Initial assessment is effective in identifying appropriate qualifications and diagnosing any English and mathematics support needs. However, in a few instances, initial assessment does not match the learners' job role to the appropriate qualification level.
- Learners value the off-the-job support sessions, and the good range of support materials. Additional specialist staff are used well to support learners and assessors where required.
- Information, advice and guidance are adequate. Induction has improved and is now good, covering all aspects of the learners programme well, giving learners a clear understanding of what they need to do, to achieve. However, the initial information, advice and guidance received by some learners and employers do not sufficiently consider the option of starting at advanced level. In addition, a minority of learners still lack sufficient understanding of aspects such as functional skills and technical certificate requirements.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is adequate. Most learners have a sufficient understanding of the issues, and employers have good workplace policies to support learners. Learners receive a booklet containing useful information and explanations that promotes equality and diversity. However, the checking of learners' understanding at reviews is too cursory and where learners indicate insufficient knowledge, this is not effectively challenged by assessors. Learners work in safe environments and they display a good understanding of the required health and safety regulations.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Good

- The leadership and management of the provision are good. Directors, senior managers and sub-contractors have high ambitions for learners and have successfully improved success rates for learners throughout the last three years; outcomes for learners are now good. The directors have recently revised the management structure of ACA to reflect the changing provision.
- ACA applies effective screening procedures when recruiting new subcontractors. Site visits and process audits are carried out to give the directors a reasonable degree of confidence in the working procedures and capacity within each subcontractor to meet the requirements of the contract. In the course of regular meetings, ACA offers useful support and guidance to the subcontractors and share examples of better practice.
- ACA works well with a good range of external partners to develop the range and quality of the provision. Close work with employers has led to the design of programmes that closely meet their work demands. ACA is also responsive to the needs of the wider population and has begun to offer employability programmes linked to jobs in healthcare and business administration because of the increased rates of unemployment in the country.
- ACA offers provision that successfully meets the needs of the learners and employers with whom they work. Employers value the high standards expected of learners by ACA and most respond accordingly by delivering high standards of additional training and support for learners. ACA has a good understanding of employers' needs.
- Data collection, analysis and use have improved since the previous inspection. ACA has purchased a commercial database system to support contract compliance; managers now have access to a range of useful reports. In addition, provider staff have also designed and implemented a customised database, which is used well to monitor the quality of the provision and support performance management.
- Performance management of staff and sub-contractors focuses well on the learners' outcomes as well as the quality of provision. ACA staff appraisal arrangements are effective in supporting improvements and implementing plans for staff training and development. Managers have

successfully managed instances of poor performance and current learners are making good progress.

- Tracking of learner progress is accurate and provides useful information to monitor the performance of sub-contractors and individual assessors. Vocational coordinators meet assessors each month to review their workload and the current progress of each learner. Early identification of learners at risk of making slow progress effectively supports the agreement of additional support strategies and resources.
- Directors and managers are strongly focused on improving the quality of the provision and have successfully implemented significant improvement since the previous inspection. Managers have comprehensively reviewed the quality procedures and have designed a range of new policies and procedures in response to identified areas for development. However, it is too early to judge the impact of all of these on the quality of training.
- Useful observations of training, learning and assessment are carried out across the provision. There is an appropriate emphasis on learning and learners' progress but the outcomes from observations are not used to identify trends and examples of best practice. The quality of individual coaching in the work place is generally good, as is the support from employers for learning, but varies across subject areas.
- ACA use comments from learners, staff and employers well to understand the quality of the provision. The current self-assessment report accurately reflects many of the key aspects of the provision and the associated quality improvement plan appropriately prioritises necessary actions, but the accompanying improvement milestones are insufficiently well defined against measurable success criteria related to the intended impact on learners.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet current legislative requirements. Regular risk assessments are carried out of employers' premises. Staff demonstrate good care and concern for learners and respond well to issues that arise. Managers have carried out a recent review of health and safety systems, agreed improved risk assessments, and staff lone working policies. However, it is too early to judge the full impact of these measures for learners.
- ACA promotes learning well to learners from areas of socio-economic deprivation and ex-offenders. The achievement gaps between different groups of learners are narrowing. ACA promotes equality and diversity well during learners' induction and learners' understanding of related topics is at least satisfactory. However, the range of equality and diversity issues discussed and reinforced with learners during formal progress reviews is narrow.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

<b>Anne Clarke Associates Ltd</b>									
<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b>  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work-based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	2				2	2			
Outcomes for learners	2				2	2			
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2				2	2			
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2				2	2			

<b>Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Health and social care</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Business administration</b>	<b>3</b>



## Provider details

Anne Clarke Associates Ltd	
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0
	Part-time: 1313
Principal/CEO	Mrs Anne Clarke
Date of previous inspection	July 2009
Website address	<a href="http://www.anneclarkeltd.co.uk">www.anneclarkeltd.co.uk</a>

### Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>								
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A	105	N/A	615	N/A	164	N/A	11
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	60	243	1	113	0	0		
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	66							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ NTG Training</li> <li>■ Nulli Secundus Care.</li> </ul>							

## Additional socio-economic information

Anne Clarke Associates Limited (ACA Ltd.) has its head office in Downham Market, in Norfolk and it delivers training in several geographical areas in England. The Contracts Director manages the programme reporting directly to the Managing director and is supported by other directors, middle managers and a team of 15 assessors and three tutors.

ACA Ltd. delivers training under a variety of contracting arrangements in the areas of health and social care, business administration, retail and ICT. It also offers employability programmes in the locality. Learners are employed in roles such as health and social care and clinical support workers, office assistants and team leaders in warehousing and sales areas. The impact of socio-economic factors affects some learners more than others.

## Information about this inspection

### Lead inspector

Maria Navarro HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Contracts Director as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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