

# Anne Clarke Associates Limited

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

8–9 March 2017

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>	Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>	Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>		
Outcomes for learners	<b>Requires improvement</b>		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Tutors and assessors do not plan sufficiently challenging activities to enable the more able to achieve their full potential.
- Tutors and assessors do not set targets with their apprentices that challenge them to make good progress and excel.
- Too few apprentices achieve their functional skills qualifications and, as a result, too many do not complete their programmes in the planned timescale.
- The quality of English and mathematics teaching requires improvement because too few tutors and assessors make this learning relevant to the workplace and not enough apprentices and learners improve these skills.
- Too many employers do not provide their apprentices with sufficient time to attend their off-the-job training.
- Leaders' self-assessment of the quality of provision is too generous and fails to identify sufficiently areas for improvement.
- Leaders and managers do not collect and use pertinent data to help them identify weaknesses and take swift actions to secure improvement.
- Too many destinations of learners and apprentices remain unknown and, as a result, leaders do not know the impact of their provision.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Most adult learners benefit from courses suited to their needs and receive effective training to enhance their chances to enter into meaningful employment.
- Most learners and apprentices develop good practical skills as a result of good-quality vocational teaching and coaching.
- Tutors and assessors develop learners' and apprentices' confidence to enable them to improve their skills at work.
- Leaders and managers work productively with external agencies and voluntary organisations to provide good adult learning provision.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Anne Clarke Associates Limited (ACA Ltd) is a private learning provider located in Downham Market, Norfolk. ACA Ltd provides training across a wide range of settings across the east of England. The provider recruits apprentices and adult learners from many localities in the east and south-east of England.
- ACA Ltd currently provides around 500 apprenticeships, mainly in the health and social care sector in hospitals, domiciliary care settings and care homes. ACA Ltd also provides apprenticeships in business administration and business management. ACA Ltd offers short employability courses for 1,323 learners, the very large majority of which are unemployed, in partnership with external agencies such as Jobcentre Plus.

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

- Ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment improves to enable apprentices and learners to fulfil their potential.
- Make sure that tutors and assessors set targets with their apprentices that challenge them to make good progress and excel.
- Take swift and sustainable actions to improve the quality of the teaching of English and mathematics functional skills.
- Make sure that employers provide apprentices with sufficient time to fulfil their off-the-job training needs.
- Work closely with employers to ensure that they are involved in planning apprentices' programmes, reviewing apprentices' skills development and monitoring their progress.
- Collect and use relevant data to identify weaknesses and take swift actions to secure improvement. Ensure that the self-assessment process is appropriately self-critical and robust and that it focuses on the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on outcomes of learners and apprentices, and that action planning enables tutors and assessors to improve swiftly their practice.
- Ensure that the recording and monitoring of learners' and apprentices' destinations are rigorous and inform leaders' understanding and planning of provision.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have faced considerable organisational instability and high levels of staff turnover in the previous two years. These have impacted negatively on the performance of the apprenticeships and functional skills provision; as a result, too many apprentices do not achieve their qualifications within the allocated timeframe. Leaders have recently identified the key areas for improvement; however, they have not prioritised sufficiently the actions needed nor placed suitably comprehensive measures to secure rapid and sustained improvement.
- Leaders and managers do not collect and use relevant information and data to identify weaknesses and take swift actions to secure improvement. Managers lack the required expertise to analyse trends in performance, gaps in the progress of different learners and achievement. As a consequence, leaders do not have sufficient information to enable them to take prompt actions to bring about improvement. Leaders' judgements about the quality of the provision are over-ambitious.
- Leaders have recruited new staff with appropriate expertise to teach English and mathematics functional skills. However, this has yet to ensure that apprentices improve these essential skills; too many apprentices do not achieve their English and mathematics functional skills.
- Leaders and managers regularly meet staff and involve them in the self-assessment process. However, self-assessment of the quality of provision is too generous and fails to identify sufficiently areas for improvement. Leaders and managers do not review the quality of teaching, learning and assessment robustly; as a result, their judgements of tutors' and assessors' practice are often over-optimistic. Managers do not set sufficient specific actions for tutors and assessors to develop and improve their performance and, as a consequence, too much teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement.
- Leaders and managers are now deploying their high levels of experience to improve the organisation's capacity to secure improvement. For example, newly established online communication, tracking and monitoring systems now enable managers to provide good challenge and support to tutors and assessors to promote learners' and apprentices' progress. However, the impact of these systems is at an embryonic stage and yet to secure the required sustainable improvement.
- Leaders and managers ensure that assessors and tutors promote equality and celebrate diversity effectively with their learners and apprentices. For example, the majority of assessors and tutors regularly develop learners' and apprentices' understanding of topics such as respecting the diverse needs of clients and patients in the care sector and the importance of British values in everyday life at work and at home. However, a few tutors and assessors do not tackle apprentices' use of stereotypes in their work and, as a consequence, a few apprentices do not develop the attributes required to live and work in modern, multicultural Britain.
- Leaders and staff are responsive to employers' business needs, and assessors regularly inform employers of apprentices' progress. However, too many employers particularly in domiciliary care settings do not abide by the provider's contractual terms and requirements. They do not allow their apprentices sufficient time to attend their off-the-

job training, particularly their English and mathematics functional skills lessons. As a result, too many apprentices make slow progress in these subjects. Leaders and managers do not challenge effectively employers to be sufficiently involved in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of their apprentices.

- Leaders and managers work collaboratively with external agencies to devise well-planned adult learning programmes to provide learners with courses which prepare them effectively with skills for employment.
- Managers have good and productive working relationships with external agencies such as Jobcentre Plus and voluntary organisations to support employability programmes. These agencies regularly refer learners to programmes, and managers work alongside them to devise suitable programmes designed to meet the local needs of the community.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Governance arrangements require improvement because the chief executive officer (CEO) and the managing director do not challenge or hold managers effectively to account for the organisation's performance.
- Managers do not provide the CEO and managing director with sufficiently comprehensive reports regarding the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders and managers do not monitor and evaluate the achievement of different groups of learners and, as a result, the CEO and managing director are not aware of the progress these groups make.
- The CEO and managing director have recently taken actions to improve the progress and achievement of apprentices in their English and mathematics functional skills, but are yet to secure the required improvement.
- The CEO and managing director now work more closely with managers than previously and plans are now in place to ensure that assessors and tutors meet their performance targets. However, this is at an early stage of development and is yet to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are good or better.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers conduct thorough recruitment checks to ensure the suitability of all staff and regularly update their records.
- Leaders work collaboratively with a relevant range of external agencies to mitigate against any potential risks to learners and apprentices. For example, they involve successfully the Norfolk safeguarding children board in reviewing their policies and procedures to ensure that they are up to date and appropriate for learners and staff. As a result, staff are provided with precise guidance regarding the appropriate actions to take if they have any concerns.
- Staff are suitably trained and feel confident in raising concerns with accountable safeguarding leads. Designated safeguarding staff are qualified appropriately and work closely with the local authority should any concerns arise. Assessors and tutors assess effectively all health and safety practices in workshops and learners' and apprentices'

safety in the workplace. Learners and apprentices feel safe and are aware of whom to contact if they do not.

- Leaders and managers take their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty seriously and provide training to all staff to ensure that their learners' and apprentices' understanding of radicalisation and extremism is good. Staff receive regular updates on safeguarding matters and receive specific training such as 'The prevention of extremist views', online safety and safeguarding vulnerable learners. However, too many learners and a few apprentices are not able to articulate the importance of such topics and how they may relate to them or their future roles at work.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Tutors and assessors do not set sufficiently challenging learning activities to enable learners and apprentices to achieve their full potential. As a result, too many learners, particularly those studying on intermediate apprenticeship programmes, find the tasks too easy, complete them quickly and do not extend their existing skills and knowledge. Adult learners enrolled on employability courses complete learning activities that are too narrowly focused on tasks or units and consequently do not develop their wider skills effectively.
- The majority of assessors and tutors do not provide learners and apprentices with specific feedback to enable them to improve the standards of their work and skills. Assessors do not correct routinely apprentices' grammatical and spelling errors or enable apprentices to structure their writing appropriately, resulting in repeated mistakes in their written work. A few assessors develop apprentices' communication skills well; for example, apprentices in health and social care adjust adeptly their tone and pace of speech and demonstrate a good awareness of the importance of their body language when communicating effectively with services users who suffer with dementia, Parkinson's disease and diabetes.
- The teaching of English and mathematics functional skills with apprentices requires improvement. Too many assessors do not promote the value of English and mathematics in apprentices' vocational areas and world of work. The majority of assessors do not ensure that apprentices improve their English and mathematics skills. Not enough assessors provide apprentices with enough time to consolidate their learning and ensure that they are able to apply proficiently problem-solving techniques or write fluently. Too much teaching is 'to the test' and does not focus on reinforcing apprentices' mathematical understanding and skills.
- The majority of adult learning tutors teaching employability skills courses promote English and mathematics well within learning activities. For example, learners develop good mathematics skills during forklift driving courses and learn how to counterbalance practical tasks.
- Most assessors do not involve employers sufficiently when planning, monitoring and evaluating apprentices' learning; as a consequence, apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable. A few assessors make good use of accredited qualifications offered by employers, such as those for infection control, to bolster apprentices' value to the workplace. Too many employers do not release their apprentices to attend off-the-job training, particularly to attend English and mathematics lessons. As a result, a minority of

apprentices lack the motivation to attend and achieve; too many cancel their sessions at short notice.

- A few assessors deploy questioning techniques skilfully to check and extend apprentices' understanding of vocational subject theory; they motivate apprentices to relate underpinning theory to practice in the workplace. For example, a few health and social care assessors use probing questions to ascertain successfully their apprentices' understanding of 'reflective practice' and enable them to understand how they can apply this to improve their contribution at work.
- Tutors and assessors are very flexible in offering a broad range of flexibly provided coaching sessions through workshops, online learning and remote support via the telephone or over the internet. This flexibility enables the majority of learners and apprentices to make progress in their vocational subject.
- Most tutors of adult employability courses use their high levels of expertise to plan lessons well to enable most learners to improve effectively their vocational practical skills and bolster their chances of finding suitable employment. Most tutors utilise a broad range of activities to motivate their learners to understand fully what steps they need to take to improve their employment prospects.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Most assessors and tutors develop learners' and apprentices' self-confidence and work-ready skills through the use of effective coaching and mentoring techniques. As a result, most learners and apprentices are able to identify how they have improved their vocational skills. For example, apprentices enrolled on business administration programmes were able to articulate how they have improved their customer service skills by managing customer service relations and communicating effectively with clients by telephone.
- Most apprentices and adult learners develop good practical vocational skills which bolster their value at work or enhance their chances of finding suitable employment. For example, apprentices following health and social care programmes communicate effectively with service users suffering from Parkinson's disease by adopting successfully appropriate techniques involving their vocal tone and pace of speech. The majority of apprentices improve their value to their employers by gaining additional qualifications such as dementia awareness, equality and diversity, and infection control.
- Most adult learners develop good mathematics skills in warehousing and forklifting courses. However, in a minority of learning activities, tutors do not enhance adult learners' development of English skills sufficiently.
- Assessors and tutors provide informal, but effective, impartial information, advice and guidance throughout their programme, which ensures that the large majority of apprentices are aware fully of career opportunities and the different pathways available to them.
- Most unemployed adults enrolled on employability courses develop appropriate skills to enhance their chances of securing purposeful employment. Most tutors ensure that their learners develop a good level of self-confidence and understand how to access further learning and study qualifications to bolster their career opportunities. For example,

learners following construction courses develop pertinent work-ready skills to help them find employment within the construction industry.

- The majority of learners produce standards of work that are appropriate for their vocational qualification. A few apprentices' and learners' theory work is of high quality; for example, health and social care apprentices are able to critically analyse proficiently the relevance of different management concepts in the workplace. Employers value the contributions apprentices make, and the practical vocational work they produce is often at industry standard. However, too few assessors and tutors develop skills that develop and extend apprentices' and learners' skills beyond the minimum requirements of their qualification.
- Most learners on employability courses demonstrate a good knowledge of health and safety. For example, most learners pay good consideration to a range of potential hazards in working environments, such as cordoning off risk areas, completing suitable risk assessments and the requirement of using appropriate personal protective equipment to keep them safe from harm. Assessors ensure that their apprentices pay careful attention to health and safety practices within the workplace; for example, they assess frequently arising potential health and safety risks assiduously with their apprentices.
- The level of learners' attendance at employability sessions is high. However, apprentices' attendance at English and mathematics sessions is too low. As a result, too many apprentices make slow progress in improving their English and mathematics skills or achieving their qualifications.
- Assessors and tutors do not set targets that challenge apprentices to excel. Targets set for apprentices during their reviews are not specific enough to enable them to understand what they need to do to make good progress. Assessors' targets focus too narrowly on the achievement of units and tasks; they do not set targets for further study or research to enhance apprentices' understanding of wider topics which relate to their vocational learning or improve their English and mathematics skills.

## Outcomes for learners

## Requires improvement

- Although most apprentices achieved their qualifications, too many apprentices did not achieve their programme within the planned timescale in 2015/16. Leaders and managers have taken recent actions to secure improvements. However, too many current apprentices are making slow progress in achieving their qualifications.
- Too few apprentices make good progress in achieving their English and mathematics functional skills qualifications. Although most current apprentices in health and social care have achieved their vocational subject qualifications, too few complete their programme on time because they do not achieve their functional skills qualifications.
- Despite leaders' efforts, too many learners' and apprentices' destinations remain unknown. Managers do not know the destinations of three quarters of apprentices. Approximately one third of apprentices who achieved in 2015/16 are known to have progressed to permanent employment, enhanced responsibilities and higher-level qualifications. The proportion of adult learners on employability courses whose destinations are known to leaders is too low. Approximately a quarter of learners who achieved in 2015/16 gained full-time employment.

- In 2015/16, the most recently published and validated data indicates that there were few significant differences in the achievement of different groups of apprentices and learners. Leaders' data indicates that there are no learners or apprentices who are in receipt of a bursary or who are in local authority care. In the previous year, a greater proportion of learners and apprentices who received additional learning support achieved than those who did not. However, leaders do not monitor and track routinely the progress and achievement of different groups of learners and apprentices and, as a result, were not aware of the reasons why female apprentices fared far better than their male peers in 2015/16.
- The vast majority of adult learners who enrolled on employability courses achieved their qualifications in 2015/16; a greater proportion did so than with similar providers nationally. In the current year, learners enrolled on courses including forklift driving, warehousing and health and social care make good progress in achieving their qualifications and develop appropriate skills to enhance their opportunities to gain employment. However, tutors do not challenge learners sufficiently to develop skills beyond their qualifications and excel.

## Types of provision

### Adult learning programmes

**Good**

- The vast majority of adult learning courses comprise short one- or two-week employability courses; around 1,232 learners had completed these courses during the academic year at the time of the inspection. Managers work alongside staff at Jobcentre Plus offices to plan bespoke employment programmes that aim to meet the regional skills shortages and workforce priorities. The majority of courses comprise forklift driving, short health and social care accredited programmes, warehousing and construction.
- Managers ensure that learners benefit from employability courses that meet their personal and work-related needs. For example, an informative induction process includes information on the vacancies available within their chosen vocational sectors. As a result, learners feel confident that they are on the right course and are aware fully of the expectations of the course, its content and outcomes.
- Tutors develop well-planned employability sessions and make use of a range of industry-relevant resources, which they deploy to enable learners to gain relevant personal skills and skills related to employment. For example, nearly all employability programmes include accredited 'job search and job application' components. Learners develop skills such as writing correctly letters of application and how to produce a well-written curriculum vitae. Tutors mentor learners sensitively, to match their skills carefully to existing job vacancies and support them effectively in applying for employment
- Most tutors set specific objectives and targets for learners which enable them to know the progress they make and what they need to achieve during their lessons. Tutors use coaching and mentoring to provide learners with good instructions and guidance to achieve tasks. As a result, most learners enjoy their courses and make good progress in their lessons.
- Tutors skilfully enable learners to develop practical skills quickly as a result of good-

quality explanation techniques and practical tuition. Learners value the importance of developing their practical skills and feel that they can apply them quickly in their work. Tutors are adept at developing learners' confidence in completing practical tasks to improve their self-esteem and sense of worth.

- Most adult learners gain successfully the practical skills required for their courses. However, too many tutors teach narrowly to the task or unit and do not set challenging tasks to enable learners to explore wider topics or master higher-order skills. As a consequence, a minority of adult learners do not accelerate their skills and reach their potential.
- Adult learners' understanding of radicalisation and extremism is limited. Most learners can recall covering such topics during their inductions but they do not recognise the relevance it has to them or their work.

## Apprenticeships

## Requires improvement

- The apprenticeships provision comprises around 650 apprentices with around nine tenths of apprentices aged 19 and over. Most apprentices are enrolled onto health and social care programmes, with a minority following business administration and business management programmes.
- Too few employers are involved in the planning of learning with their apprentices; assessors do not regularly involve employers in reviewing apprentices' acquisition of skills and knowledge to assess what apprentices need to develop further. As a result, too many apprentices make pedestrian progress.
- Not enough employers offer apprentices additional training and qualifications to enhance their industry skills and knowledge. Where employers do provide such opportunities, apprentices become more confident and self-assured in their job roles; however, too few assessors incorporate these into apprentices' reviews or learning plans, resulting in apprentices often repeating tasks or units which they have completed with their employers.
- Managers do not challenge employers sufficiently to ensure that they release apprentices from their work to attend English, mathematics and ICT functional skills sessions. As a result, attendance at these sessions is poor and too many apprentices fail to achieve their qualifications in these subjects.
- Too few assessors set challenging targets for apprentices to excel in their learning and develop skills and knowledge beyond the requirements of the qualification. Too many assessors limit their feedback on apprentices' work to the evidence required to achieve a particular task or unit. As a result, apprentices do not deepen their knowledge of wider topics to enhance their understanding of the vocational sector in which they study.
- A few assessors utilise their high levels of skills and expertise to enable apprentices to develop good, practical, work-related skills. As a result, a few employers value the contributions apprentices make to their work. For example, employers value the contributions that health and social care apprentices make when conducting minor medical procedures, including administering fluids to diabetic patients correctly.
- Not enough assessors use coaching and mentoring techniques adeptly to enhance apprentices' understanding of theoretical concepts. Where practice is more effective,

assessors ask apprentices probing questions to encourage them to relate these concepts to their everyday work. As a result, these apprentices develop high standards of professional behaviour and practice. A few assessors do not ensure that apprentices have a good understanding of British values and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	58148
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,532
Principal/CEO	Anne Clarke
Telephone number	01366 389900
Website	<a href="http://anneclarkeltd.co.uk">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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	0	444	0	424	0	14	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	42	434	3	124	0	47		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency/Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	0							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

## Inspection team

Harpreet Nagra, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rosy Belton	Ofsted Inspector
Nicholas Sanders	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Young	Ofsted Inspector

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