

asphaleia Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

21–23 November 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Managers and staff have responded well to the findings of the previous inspection and made significant improvements to the quality of study programmes.
- The leader, managers and staff have high expectations for their learners and are determined to support them to develop the skills needed to study further or gain employment.
- Effective partnerships ensure that learners receive the support and guidance they need to succeed.
- Most learners progress to further education colleges to study at a higher level and realise their aspirations.
- Most learners make good progress, including in their English and mathematics, and gain their qualifications. They improve their communication skills, and become confident in their own abilities and in social situations.
- Tutors and staff successfully create a safe and supportive environment for learners, some of whom are particularly vulnerable.
- Learners are particularly well supported and guided throughout their programmes, overcoming often complex personal and social circumstances that limited their previous progress.
- Attendance and punctuality remain low for a minority of learners.
- Teachers do not plan all lessons sufficiently well to meet the widely differing abilities and backgrounds of learners.
- A minority of teachers do not match the level of their own language to learners' abilities, leaving learners confused about instructions they receive.

Full report

Information about the provider

- asphaleia is a registered charity and a limited company. Its head office is in Worthing, with learning centres in Worthing and Uxbridge. The managing director and a small senior management team run the company.
- The majority of learners study at the Worthing centre. They have complex personal needs and have often had disrupted education, resulting in low levels of attainment. Learners studying at the Uxbridge centre are newly arrived, unaccompanied asylum seekers. Many of these learners have very low-level English skills and very mixed standards of education in their home country. Learners enrol on study programmes throughout the year. The programmes develop learners' skills in English and mathematics and lead to functional skills qualifications, mainly at entry level. Learners also study accredited programmes relating to their personal development and well-being.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Managers and staff should improve attendance at the Worthing centre to ensure that all learners benefit fully from the teaching and learning provided in lessons.
- Teachers should take better account of the starting points and abilities of learners to plan lessons that will meet their diverse needs.
- Teachers should carefully match the level of their own language to the abilities of their learners so that learners better understand instructions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Managers and staff have responded well to the findings of the previous inspection and made progress in most of the areas identified as requiring improvement. Managers now have reliable, accurate information about the quality of programmes, have implemented an appropriate programme of work experience and improved the effectiveness of their observations of teaching and learning. Managers provide strong and effective leadership.
- The leader, managers and staff share a strong commitment to support their learners and help them to improve their lives. They have high aspirations for learners and are determined to help them develop the skills needed for further study or to gain employment. They have very effective partnerships with external agencies and charities to make sure that learners are safe and well supported.
- Staff are actively involved in a wider range of improvement and operational activities through 'leadership hubs'. These allow them to contribute to decision-making, share information and influence developments, which helps develop a culture of shared leadership and involvement that they value.
- Managers' observations of teaching and learning help them to have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. Tutors receive clear development targets, which managers monitor through regular supervision meetings. As a result, tutors are improving the quality of their teaching and their skills in managing learners with diverse needs and abilities.
- Staff have introduced a carefully structured work experience programme to increase learners' understanding of the world of work. At each stage, teachers carefully match the learners' language and social skills to appropriate work-related experience. Teachers and learners agree specific learning targets for each visit to an employer. For example, the targets set for a learner on an initial visit focused on behaving appropriately and safely in a professional or commercial working environment. Subsequent visits progressively increased the participation of the learner in the day-to-day activities of the employer. However, this is a new process and few learners have made more than simple tours and visits.
- Managers use a wide range of information to help them monitor and manage the study programme. Monthly data reports include useful information on learners' attendance, achievements, and the quality of teaching and learning. Managers make good use of this information to plan improvements.
- Managers' assessment of the quality of the study programme is accurate and based on a wide range of evidence. Staff contribute to the self-assessment process well, and managers use learners' views to understand what works and what needs to improve. As a result, the most recent self-assessment report is an accurate and incisive reflection on the quality and effectiveness of the programme.

The governance of the provider

- The managing director and a small group of senior managers monitor the performance of asphaleia. They scrutinise data well and provide effective challenge and support to staff so that learners' experience and the quality of the programme are at least good. They set challenging targets for performance and monitor these closely.

Safeguarding

- Arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Learners work in a safe and caring environment where their well-being is a priority for all staff. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns they have promptly. Managers respond effectively to reported incidents and make referrals to external agencies when required. Managers carry out appropriate background recruitment checks on new staff.
- Managers know that learners with low levels of English find information about the risks of extremism and radicalisation difficult to understand, and are developing new ways to help them understand. Over time, staff do help learners to develop the skills and knowledge to safely live and work in modern Britain.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know their learners particularly well. They carefully assess learners' abilities and needs and use the results effectively to plan well-structured, individual programmes for each learner. They carefully plan lessons that interest and motivate learners and help them make progress towards their goals and qualifications.
- Tutors use a good range of approaches and contemporary resources to make sure that learning is relevant for all learners. For example, in one session a teacher used extracts from magazine articles and television advertisements to make learners aware of how the media reinforce stereotypes of men and women. This encouraged the learners to challenge their existing views of their roles and future place in society.
- Teachers and staff successfully create a safe and supportive environment for learners. From induction, they set out clear rules for learners' behaviour, and encourage them to take increasing responsibility for their learning and direction in life. As a result, many learners realise for the first time that they can make progress and be successful in their lives.
- Learners are particularly well supported and guided throughout their programmes to overcome their often-complex personal and social difficulties. These include circumstances such as disrupted education that may have limited their previous progress.
- Teachers set well-defined and appropriate targets that help learners progress, achieve their goals and gain their qualifications. For example, learners in English have specific language targets, such as demonstrating turn taking in a conversation, or asking another student a minimum number of questions about their personal interests.

- As well as their academic targets, learners agree with their teachers a range of well-defined personal targets. Teachers skilfully direct these to build learners' self-confidence and their personal, social and work-related skills. For example, teachers challenged one learner to improve their body language in work-related situations during a visit to an employer.
- Teachers carefully monitor learners' progress towards their individual targets. They quickly identify where a learner is at risk of falling behind, for example through poor attendance. They then work hard, often in discussion with external agencies, to overcome the factors that prevent the learner from achieving. Learners receive frequent, constructive feedback on their academic and personal progress, so that they understand where they need to make further effort.
- A minority of teachers do not respond sufficiently in lessons to the widely differing abilities and backgrounds of learners. They do not manage classroom or the learning activities sufficiently well to allow all learners to make the progress they should.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers do not use language that all learners can understand. For example, when explaining a relatively simple task for learners to complete, they use structures and vocabulary that are too abstract or complex. As a result, learners become confused about what they are to do.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners are well behaved, polite, work well together and support each other. They demonstrate the fundamental British values of tolerance and respect in their relationships with their peers, many of whom are from widely different cultures and language backgrounds. They value the safe and supportive learning environment, which helps them to make good progress, including with English and mathematics skills.
- Learners become more confident in their own abilities, develop independence and grow in their determination to succeed and change their lives. Many develop greater social skills, communicating effectively with others. For example, one learner who would only communicate with one person at a time now confidently presents views and ideas to others in class and participates fully in class discussions. Learners who speak English as an additional language enjoy using their new language skills outside the classroom.
- As learners gain confidence, they take increasing pride in their work. They gain new skills and qualifications, often for the first time. They become better motivated to continue their studies, and the great majority progress to further study after the course.
- Learners who have recently arrived in Britain gain important personal living skills and practical English skills. These help them to make a more rapid transition into the cultural and linguistic environment of modern-day Britain.
- Learners know how to keep themselves safe. They understand the dangers that they may come across using the internet and social media, and recognise the dangers associated with extremism. They learn to understand the importance of looking after their physical and mental health.

- Learners improve their work-related skills, including team working, conduct and punctuality. Those who have taken part in work-related experience and visits become more aware of the workplace and the potential career choices open to them. This motivates them to continue their studies and progress.
- Attendance and punctuality require improvement for a minority of learners.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Following the previous inspection, managers have improved the range of opportunities for learners to gain recognition for the skills they develop. Learners are able to gain accredited qualifications along with their qualifications in English and mathematics.
- Learners' achievement of qualifications in English and mathematics has improved significantly since the previous inspection, and is now high. Learners who speak English as an additional language make particularly good progress and achieve well.
- Achievement rates are particularly high in mathematics at entry level 2 and entry level 3, and in English at entry level 3. The small number of learners taking English at level 2 and mathematics at level 1 are less successful. Almost all learners who pass their examination do so at their first attempt.
- There are no significant variations in achievement between groups of learners, although achievement rates for the small number of learners at the Uxbridge centre are higher than for those in Worthing.
- Most successful learners progress to a local further education college when they finish their programme. However, the destinations of around a fifth of learners are unknown. A significant number of these are asylum seekers who move away from the area and are not contactable.
- Current learners are making good progress towards their qualifications and individual targets. They have developed good communication skills, and are more confident in social situations and in their own abilities. They have become more independent and ambitious for their futures.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58385
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	160
Principal/CEO	Mrs Laura Thorpe
Telephone number	01903 522966
Website	www.asphaleia.co.uk

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+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	24	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	N/A							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	N/A							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

Information about this inspection

The development manager, as nominee, assisted the inspection team. 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; 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

Phil Romain, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Griffin	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Winchcombe	Ofsted Inspector

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