

Aspect Training Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

11–13 February 2019

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders have not established adult learning provision of a consistently high quality.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not of a consistently high standard; assessors do not use information about learners' starting points well enough to provide challenging work or to enable learners to develop their skills fully and achieve their potential.
- Learners do not develop their written English skills to a sufficiently high quality, particularly on level 4 programmes.
- Too many learners do not achieve their qualification on time.
- Leaders and staff do not use management information and data well enough to evaluate the impact of their actions. They do not have a clear view of the quality of provision or the progress that learners make.
- Arrangements to improve the quality of the provision are not rigorous or critical enough to enable leaders to improve aspects of performance rapidly.
- No formal arrangements are in place to support and challenge leaders to improve the quality of education and training.

The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders work successfully with employers in the health and care sector and ensure that adult programmes meet the employment needs of the local community.
- Learners receive useful advice and guidance that help them to develop realistic plans for their futures. Most achieve their aims for work and retain secure employment or gain promotion at the end of their programme.
- Learners make good progress in developing their communication and organisational skills and apply them well at work.
- Learners receive good support and additional training from employers and develop positive attitudes to work; many develop good vocational and employability skills and make valuable contributions to their employers' businesses.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Aspect Training Ltd is a small private training provider based in Sheffield. Formed in 2000, it provides adult learning programmes for the adult care sector from levels 3 to 5. All learners receive advanced learner loan funding. This is the first inspection since the provider became a main contract holder in 2015 and had a change in senior leadership at the end of 2017. Aspect Training Ltd does not use subcontractors but provides training under a subcontract with a local college.
- The Sheffield district covers a mix of urban and rural communities and has a resident population of approximately 578,000. Over one fifth of households are living in poverty. Sheffield has geographical inequalities; the south and west areas of the city are in the least deprived 20% of the country, while over 30% of Sheffield's residents live in areas that fall within the most deprived 20% in England. The proportion of residents who have gained qualifications at level 1 or higher is above regional and national averages. Unemployment in Sheffield is above regional and national averages.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rigour of self-assessment and quality improvement planning, and the use of accurate performance data. Ensure that the focus of quality improvement arrangements is on evaluating learners' progress and the impact of leaders' and staff's actions on outcomes for learners. Closely monitor and evaluate the impact of recently implemented improvement strategies and take any further necessary action quickly.
- Implement effective governance and oversight arrangements so that leaders receive support and challenge to improve the quality of the provision swiftly.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that assessors:
 - collect and use the information about learners' achievements and abilities to plan their next steps and use activities that provide sufficient support and challenge for learners to achieve their potential
 - support learners to develop their English and mathematics skills further
 - closely monitor the progress of learners to ensure that they provide effective support to those at risk of falling behind
 - set high expectations of what learners can achieve and support learners to make at least good progress.
- Ensure that a greater proportion of learners successfully achieve their qualification by the planned end date.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since becoming a main contract holder, leaders have not established adult learning provision of a consistently high quality.
- Leaders and staff do not have a secure enough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. Self-assessment and quality improvement plans do not focus clearly enough on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment or the progress that learners make. Leaders and staff do not use data on learners' progress and achievements well enough. Consequently, they do not have a clear and challenging improvement plan that is sufficiently critical to address the weaknesses and improve aspects of performance rapidly.
- Arrangements to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are not effective enough. Leaders focus on whether staff implement recently introduced procedures rather than on whether their actions have led to learners achieving their potential. Following observations of teaching and learning, leaders do not provide assessors with sufficiently helpful feedback on aspects of their teaching practice that require improvement. As a result, assessors continue to concentrate on meeting awarding organisation assessment criteria and do not focus sufficiently on improving their teaching practice and developing learners' wider skills.
- Leaders have been too slow in providing opportunities for learners to improve their practical English and mathematics skills. Leaders' priority for improvement has been to address the low number of learners who achieve their qualification before the planned end date. They have focused on ensuring that programme design and delivery meet awarding organisation scrutiny. However, learners who require support to improve their writing skills do not develop these skills sufficiently to enable them to study at a higher level.
- Leaders have taken action recently to improve the quality of the learners' experience. They have strengthened the process for reviewing the performance of staff. They now use progress reviews and observations of teaching, learning and assessment more effectively to identify weak practice and training needs and manage changes in staffing. This has led to an improvement in the proportion of current learners remaining on their courses and achieving. However, actions have not yet led to teaching, learning and assessment of a consistently good quality.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the company as a specialist provider for the care sector. They collaborate well with employers and learners. They use regulatory information effectively to ensure that the provision meets local employers' and learners' needs. Employers articulate how they work effectively with the provider's staff to ensure that learners develop the skills they need to do their job well.
- Leaders and staff ensure that initial information, advice and guidance result in a clear match between learners' job roles, employers' future business needs and the programme of study. Learners understand that they are taking out a loan to fund their course.

The governance of the provider

- No formal arrangements are in place to support and challenge leaders to improve the quality of education and training. Leaders meet monthly with staff to discuss learners' progress and other operational issues. However, they do not use these discussions or any external input to ensure that they are appropriately challenged in relation to the quality of education and learners' progress, or to inform curriculum planning and design.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff promote the safety and welfare of learners. Learners demonstrate safe working practices at work. They can articulate how they apply safeguarding principles within their roles in the care setting. For example, they ensure that they provide personal care for older clients who are vulnerable in a safe and sensitive manner.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures for staff and learners are appropriate. Leaders and staff follow appropriate safeguarding and safe recruitment practice.
- Leaders implement the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty and ensure that learners receive information at the start of their programme about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. However, they do not develop this work further to ensure that learners develop a sufficient understanding of risks to their personal safety from these issues.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Assessors do not challenge learners to achieve beyond the minimum requirements of the qualification. Too often, sessions are based on identifying what assessment learners need to complete to achieve the qualification rather than developing their broader knowledge and skills. As a result, learners do not aim for, or gain, the high-level industry skills and knowledge of which they are capable.
- Assessors do not provide learners, particularly those studying on programmes at level 4, with challenging and high-quality work. They rely on the use of workbooks or presentations to deliver theoretical knowledge of the care sector. Learners do not benefit from engaging in independent learning activities that allow them to apply theoretical principles to their practical job role. As a result, they do not develop their understanding of topics to a sufficiently high level.
- Assessors do not use assessment information effectively to track all aspects of learners' progress. They do not provide helpful feedback following assessment to support learners to improve their work. They do not use effective questioning to consolidate learners' knowledge or encourage more challenging responses. A high proportion of learners make expected progress but do not develop high-level study skills, such as analysis or academic writing, as well as they could.
- Assessors work flexibly to accommodate learners' work patterns and personal circumstances. They are appropriately qualified in health and care settings and use their expertise well to help learners to develop their range and use of vocational language. Learners develop useful technical language and, as a result, improve the level of care for clients at work. For example, learners use supervision meetings to discuss breaches in

confidentiality and investigate ways of preventing dehydration.

- Employers provide work tasks and additional training that enable learners to develop the technical skills that benefit their business. For example, learners develop strategies to deal with challenging behaviour more effectively and become more skilful in dealing sensitively with clients with a range of challenging conditions, such as dementia.
- Assessors promote equality of opportunity and effectively raise learners' awareness of diversity. Learners, through their study and employment, demonstrate a good awareness of living in a democratic society. They articulate the importance of demonstrating respect and values in their practice when providing care, particularly for older people and for residents who have poor health. Learners use their understanding well and develop appropriate person-centred care plans for their colleagues to use.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Too many learners do not develop their skills in English and mathematics well enough. Assessors do not use the results of assessments of learners' starting points to provide sufficient support to help them to develop these skills. Learners who have not already achieved an English or mathematics qualification at level 2 do not benefit from the opportunity to gain these qualifications as part of their programme. Assessors do not challenge learners to extend their writing skills and, as a result, learners continue to make the same errors in their work. Learners moving on to programmes at level 4 do not improve their written English skills quickly enough.
- Attendance for a very small proportion of learners is too low. Assessors now provide good support for learners who fall behind to catch up with their work and get back on track.
- Learners receive initial advice and guidance that help them to enrol on an appropriate programme based on their job role and the qualifications and experience that they have when they start. This supports learners to make clear and realistic work plans. However, during the programme, learners do not receive further helpful information so that they have a clear view about the expectations and the demands of the course or options open to them when they finish.
- Learners receive good support from employers and effective on-the-job training that develop the specialist vocational skills and knowledge that they require for their role. Most learners remain in employment at the end of their programme or develop skills as new managers and gain promotion.
- Learners develop their confidence and communication skills effectively and apply these skills in the workplace well. Employers recognise the positive contributions that learners make towards workplace practice, such as developing new menu cards to promote healthy living and nutritional choices.
- Learners demonstrate an understanding of their own and their residents' safety when at work. They understand the importance of online safety and safe storage of personal information. They follow safety guidelines and work in a safe manner when providing personal care for residents.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Learners' achievements on programmes leading to qualifications require improvement. In 2017/18, approximately three quarters of learners achieved their qualifications; this is below that for similar providers.
- Achievement within planned timescales is too low. In 2017/18, fewer than half of all learners achieved their qualification by the planned end date.
- Learners on programmes at level 4 do not develop their skills sufficiently to fulfil their potential.
- A high proportion of current learners are making expected progress towards achieving their qualification within the planned timeframe. Learners who have not completed their qualification before their planned end date are now making better progress towards achieving their qualification than they did in the previous year.
- Learners have a positive attitude to their learning and take pride in their work. Most learners retain relevant and sustainable employment or gain additional responsibilities and promotion at work at the end of their programme.
- The proportion learners who remain on their programme during the current year is improving and is high to date.
- Most learners demonstrate skills and produce work that meet industry and awarding organisation expectations.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50537
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	57
Principal/CEO	David Shaw
Telephone number	0114 247 2772
Website	www.aspect-training.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)	-	-	-	-	-	32	-	20
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	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors used 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. They reviewed learners' progress by using a case-study approach. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Tracey Mace-Akroyd, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alastair Mollon	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kathryn Townsley	Ofsted Inspector

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