

# Ashton, Wigan and District YMCA

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**Inspection date**

30 November 2007

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**Inspection number**

316798

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## Background information

### Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

#### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Early years and playwork

## Description of the provider

1. Ashton, Wigan and District YMCA (Ashton YMCA) is a Christian organisation, and an independent charity affiliated to the national YMCA. It is a community focused company. In addition to purpose-built training accommodation in Ashton and Makerfield, a nearby building houses administrative offices, a resource library, nursery facilities and rooms for a wide range of community activities, such as self-defence, health and fitness. The organisation also offers after school clubs, holiday clubs and Surestart initiatives, and has its own nursery. Work-based learning programmes in early years and playwork are funded by the Greater Manchester LSC. Government funded work-based learning provision accounts for approximately 40% of the company's business. The company has a board of trustees. The chief executive oversees all of Ashton YMCA's activities.
2. Currently 83 learners are undertaking apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes. Some 51 learners are on the apprentice programme of whom six are employed and the others are on work placements. All 32 of the advanced apprentices are employed. Currently two male learners are enrolled. Weekly off-the-job training takes place in a well appointed training facility. Two tutors, two assessors, one key skills deliverer and one placement officer make up the team of staff directly responsible for delivering the programme. The staff are co-ordinated by a team leader and managed by a training manager.
3. Ashton YMCA attracts learners from all the Wigan wards. It covers an area of 77 square miles with a population of 310,000. Wigan has a minority ethnic population of 2.4%, and for Ashton this figure is 0.8%. The unemployment rate is 2.7%, and 3.5% of the population are in post-16 education.

## Summary of grades awarded

<b>Effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Achievement and standards</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Equality of opportunity</b>	<b>Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2</b>

## Sector subject area

<b>Early years and playwork</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
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## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Ashton YMCA's leadership and management are good, as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity and social inclusion. In early years and playwork, achievement and standards and the quality of provision are both good.

#### Capacity to improve

#### Good: Grade 2

5. Ashton YMCA demonstrates a good capacity to improve. Ashton YMCA has a clear and strong commitment to continuously improve the quality of provision. The effectiveness of steps taken to improve is good. Since the previous inspection and quality monitoring visit, the company has taken effective action to address the weaknesses, and further improve those aspects of provision which were judged to be satisfactory or better. For example, target-setting for both staff and learners has effectively focused the company on performance. Managers attend board meetings and contribute to a more consultative process for bringing about change and improvements. Staff have taken ownership of quality assurance arrangements and make a positive contribution to improvements. Further, significant investment has been made to refurbish the training facilities and accommodate training, assessment and support staff in one location, and additional resources have been introduced to support learning.
6. Many of these measures have already had a positive impact on success rates. Overall success rates for both apprentices and advanced apprentices in early years and playwork are good. Good progress is being made by most learners who are retained on the programme.
7. Self-assessment is good. It is regarded throughout the organisation as an important tool for improving the quality of provision. A quality improvement plan, to which staff proactively contribute, successfully drives forward identified actions for improvement. The outcomes of regular audits are used effectively to identify improvement needs and to quickly take action. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Most policies and procedures are thorough and have recently been updated. Some quality assurance initiatives have to be developed and established further.

## Key strengths

- Good overall success rates
- Good teaching and learning
- Particularly effective support for learners
- Good leadership and management
- Good promotion of equal opportunities

## Key areas for improvement

- Under-developed arrangements for staff training

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

#### Good: Grade 2

8. Overall success rates are good for apprentices and advanced apprentices. For advanced apprentices, they were 73% in 2004-05, 33% in 2005-06 and 72% in 2006-07. For apprentices, they rose from 43% in 2004-05 to 78% in 2006-07. Since 2005 retention of learners has been satisfactory at 70%.
9. Learners make satisfactory progress towards their qualifications and produce a satisfactory standard of work for their portfolios. Level 3 learners develop satisfactory research skills to complete their technical certificate and the national vocational qualification (NVQ) knowledge evidence. Learners develop appropriate work and employment skills that contribute to their economic and social well-being.
10. The performance of different groups of learners is monitored effectively. For example, data identified that several groups were making slow progress. Positive actions were introduced by the staff. Most of the single lone parent group now make good progress as non-employed apprentices, and from a particular cohort of seven advanced apprentices 83% have now achieved their framework.

### Quality of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

11. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers prepare detailed schemes of work with logical progression to prepare new learners for work. Most lessons are well planned and support learning with a wide range of learning activities. Learners work well individually and in large and small group work. Teachers and learners have a good rapport. Teachers develop the learning that is taking place with progressively challenging targets. Throughout lessons, teachers make good use of opportunities to assess learning, but outcomes are not always recorded. YMCA unit accreditation is used to motivate learners. Resources are effective in supporting learning. Handouts and other support materials are well prepared to provide guidance to learners. Good quality displays of learners' work are evident in classrooms. Information technology (IT) resources are available in each classroom and a small library of textbooks is available for use in the centre. Learners are able to use the laptop computers. Provision for key skills is good. Class numbers for key skills are small and an experienced key skills teacher supports learners well to achieve their award.
12. Support for learners is good. Learners are particularly effectively supported to complete the programme. YMCA staff are knowledgeable, approachable and develop good relationships with all learners. Initial assessment and guidance are satisfactory. They ensure that learners' needs are identified early, and provide learners with a realistic view of childcare employment. The support provided for those with literacy and numeracy needs is effective. Individual tutorials take place every six weeks and inform learners of their achievement and their next targets. Information, advice and guidance are readily available. Staff are good motivators, and skilled at realising when a learner may be struggling and needing extra attention. A clear copy of the tutorial record is given to

learners. Group or individual coaching is given if a learner wishes. Assessors visit the workplace to carry out detailed reviews. Learner, tutor, assessor and workplace manager participate fully in reviews. Difficulties are dealt with promptly by Ashton YMCA. Learners value the informal support given for personal difficulties. Such support is not always well recorded. The placement officer effectively prepares learners for work placement and accompanies them to workplace interviews. The placement officer visits the workplaces regularly to monitor health and safety, helping to ensure that learners have a safe working environment.

13. The programmes offered are satisfactory to meet the needs of learners wishing to follow careers in childcare. They also meet the needs of employers. Timely career advice raises learners' aspirations across a wide range of childcare professions. Some interviews and initial assessments take place on Saturdays, making it easier for learners, parents and guardians to be involved. There is some flexibility in programme delivery. For example, those learners exempt from having to take key skills are encouraged to use their time to complete the apprenticeship more quickly. A successful programme for young mothers offers them the opportunity to follow training by supporting them with childcare facilities and reduced placement hours. Work is in progress to develop a programme to meet the needs of Muslim learners wishing to work in childcare.
14. Assessment is satisfactory. Holistic assessment is used throughout the programme, and feedback for learners is useful. Some portfolios contain too little direct observation evidence. Staff are aware of this and assessors are now making more visits to the workplace. Arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory. However, internal verification records of observing assessor practice are at times repetitive and lack developmental detail. Some assessors and internal verifiers accept learners' written evidence describing out of date practice, for example, about first aid practices.

## **Leadership and management**

**Good: Grade 2**

### **Equality of opportunity**

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

15. Leadership and management are good. The company has a clear strategic direction, and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The board of trustees is active, supportive and inclusive of senior managers who now attend and participate in most meetings. All staff have performance targets which they understand, and also know what actions they have to take to achieve them. These targets are well monitored and reviewed regularly. Learners' progress is also clearly focused on targets and monitored closely by staff. The management information systems are used well to generate meaningful reports to monitor and manage staff performance and learner progress effectively. However, the use of different systems for recording and analysing information is wasteful of time and not all staff can access the information. The staff team work well together and communications are good. Best practice is shared well and used very effectively to bring about improvement. Managers are supportive of all staff and ensure staff are informed through appraisal, interim reviews and regular staff meetings. Most of the facilities and resources to support learning are good. Some links with employers, placement providers and with local schools and other organisations to develop training and community focused initiatives are good and effective.

16. Equality of opportunity is good. Most policies, procedures and practices are comprehensive and up to date. They contribute to ensuring that all learners are well supported and benefit from their training. Good training for equality and diversity takes place at induction, during their course work and through the review process. Positive promotional materials are used to challenge stereotypes and promote educational and social inclusion. Staff work effectively to encourage partnerships and inclusion. Nursery places are available for young single parents. They are supported and can access training more easily. Equal opportunities data is analytical and the performance trends of different groups are monitored well. Learners are well engaged in activities and learning relevant to staying healthy, keeping safe and contributing to the community. Regular evaluations demonstrate that learners are enjoying and achieving. A monthly newsletter is produced to inform a range of groups and individuals about developments, and achievement is celebrated widely. Ashton YMCA largely meets its statutory obligations under relevant equalities and race legislation. However, at the time of the inspection, no training had taken place to cover the most recent legislation on race and gender equality. Arrangements for safeguarding young children and vulnerable adults are appropriate.
17. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Arrangements to control, amend and improve provision are detailed and comprehensive. Internal audits to check quality are effective. Some of the changes introduced to improve quality are new and still evolving. For example, although peer observations are completed for aspects of the learners' experience, grades are not awarded to individual staff and the overall grade profiles are not used to introduce further improvements. Self-assessment is good. Inspection findings matched many of the strengths and areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment process is inclusive. Feedback from learners and employers is collected and used well to inform improvements. The self-assessment report and action plan are effectively used to help improve quality. Data is insufficiently used to support judgements about performance and improvement.
18. Arrangements for staff training are under-developed. Some good staff training has taken place, for example, around target-setting, the integration of key skills and IT training. However, no staff training plan is in place to ensure staff are occupationally updated. For example, no recent training has taken place for such aspects as the new measures of success and for using the management information systems.

## What learners like:

- Good, friendly and supportive staff
- Helpful tutors
- 'I feel able to ask for help'
- The range of teaching and learning methods
- Good support for key skills
- 'I've gained confidence in attending interviews'

## What learners think **could improve:**

- 'Off-the-job training could be closer to the nursery'
- 'Too many activities to complete during the assessment visits'

## Annex

## Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship programmes** managed by Ashton, Wigan and District YMCA 2004-05 to 2006-07

## Early years and playwork

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners *	Provider NVQ rate **	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	11	82%	N/A	73%	27%
		timely	5	80%	N/A	60%	15%
	05-06	overall	3	33%	N/A	33%	35%
		timely	5	60%	N/A	20%	15%
	06-07	overall	20	83%	N/A	72%	N/A
		timely	15	83%	N/A	71%	N/A
Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	46	46%	N/A	43%	36%
		timely	46	33%	N/A	33%	15%
	05-06	overall	33	81%	N/A	73%	55%
		timely	33	79%	N/A	73%	30%
	06-07	overall	45	77%	N/A	78%	N/A
		timely	29	77%	N/A	78%	N/A

**Note** 'At the time of the inspection - LSC data for 2006-07 had yet to be fully validated'

\* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

\*\* Provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'