

# Access Training [East Midlands] Ltd

Inspection report

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Unique reference number: 346192

Name of lead inspector: Gerard McGrath HMI

Last day of inspection: 28 May 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Access Training (East Midlands) Ltd  
96 Cliff Road  
Nottingham  
NG1 1GW

Telephone number: 0115 9587257

## Information about the provider

1. Access Training (East Midlands) Ltd (Access Training) started trading in August 2005. The organisation has however been delivering training for over 20 years under other trading names.
2. The company training centre is located in Nottingham city centre. The majority of training and assessment are provided in the work place. Some additional training and support sessions are delivered in venues across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.
3. Access Training has contracts for apprenticeships for both young people and adults, Train to Gain programmes and Entry to Employment (E2E) for 16 to 19 year olds. There are 494 learners in learning. It also holds commercial contracts with local employers. Access Training no longer provides training for any other provider.
4. In addition to health, public services and care, and preparation for life and work programmes, Access Training provides training to small numbers of young people and adults in animal care and horticulture, management and teaching assistant programmes. Access Training also offers vocational training to 90 recently recruited pupils aged 14 to 16 years in schools across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. These were not included in this inspection.
5. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the provider:
  - Nottingham Hairdressing Training Agency [NHTA]

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: Entry to Employment	40 full-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	186 learners 205 apprentices

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

Subject areas	Grade
Health, public services and care	2
Entry to Employment	3

## Overall effectiveness

6. The overall effectiveness of Access Training's provision is good. Directors and senior managers provide good leadership and have managed the significant changes to the provision well. Access Training has introduced significant improvements since the last inspection. Outcomes for learners are well above national averages on the majority of programmes. The quality of teaching and learning has also improved. Staff work well with employers to provide good training at work that meets the needs of learners and employers. Learners make at least good progress and the proportions of those who complete their qualifications in the expected time scale are now good. Operational management of the programmes with the largest numbers of learners is good. Arrangements to safeguard learners are good. The provider places a strong emphasis on the health, safety and well-being of learners. Access Training promotes equality and diversity well. Learners have a good awareness of relevant issues. However, actions to improve outcomes for all groups of learners have not yet been successful.

## Main findings

- Success rates on adult and child care apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes have risen steadily since 2007 and are high, with a high proportion of learners completing within their expected timescales. They have continued to improve in the current year and are now significantly above the national averages. E2E learners' attainment of learning goals is satisfactory. Retention has improved, and attendance is good. Success rates for the small numbers of learners on other programmes have risen in line with national averages.
- Learners on all care programmes enjoy gaining confidence at work and make good progress. Many learners on adult and child care programmes progress from level 2 to level 3 qualifications and gain promotion at work. E2E learners develop good social skills and confidence. A few also gain useful literacy and numeracy qualifications. Learners make satisfactory or better progress towards their qualifications.
- Coaching, training and learning on all care programmes are good. Effective and supportive one to one sessions in the workplace support learners' acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills. In the better E2E group teaching sessions, learners understand the clear learning objectives. A wide range of teaching methods and activities are used to effectively engage learners.
- Tracking and monitoring of learner progress on all care programmes is highly effective. Recording and monitoring of learner achievements and progress is accurate. The involvement of learners in the management of their learning motivates them towards timely achievement. Clear learning targets are agreed and well monitored.
- The provision meets the needs and interests of users well. Access Training has effective strategies and is active in engaging employers to supporting training and learning. Effective support for learners in the workplace helps them to progress into higher-level courses and more senior positions at work.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are effective. Learners value the good pastoral support from assessors. Learners receive effective learning support to help them to progress onto higher-level courses and employment.
- Management of all care programmes is good. Challenging performance and quality targets are set for all staff. Staff are well aware of their progress towards these targets. Communication is good and staff feel well supported.
- Insufficient use is made of management information to monitor and review the E2E programme. The accuracy and sufficiency of data has improved, but there has been insufficient analysis to identify areas where performance has not improved. Learner progress is now tracked through the introduction of new computer software. However, it is too soon to assess its impact.
- Access Training has introduced very effective strategies to improve outcomes for learners. All staff have a clear focus on improving learner performance. Managers collect and analyse very useful data about learners' achievements and activities to identify any slow progress and plan appropriate improvement actions. Regular appraisals are effective in managing staff performance.

- Staff development is used particularly well to support improvements. Staff carry out a wide range of internal training that focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, including teaching qualifications. Staff share their individual learning well during regular development days. Managers have reviewed job roles and delegate additional responsibilities very effectively to staff at all levels.
- Safeguarding of learners is good. Directors and senior managers give safeguarding a high priority. Learners receive comprehensive information about safeguarding issues at induction. Safeguarding issues are dealt with effectively and promptly. Staff have carried out comprehensive training and have a sound awareness of safeguarding and the Every Child Matters agenda. Learners feel very safe.
- Promotion of equality of opportunity is good and is well integrated into coaching and learning. Good use is made of external links to recruit learners from minority ethnic communities. A significant proportion of staff hold or are working towards an appropriate equality and diversity qualification. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity
- Access Training appropriately monitors the quality of teaching and learning at the training centre through regular lesson observations. However, the observations do not sufficiently focus on learning. Some quality improvement initiatives place an over-reliance on informal processes. On-the-job training is not subject to an effective quality assurance process.

### What does Access Training need to do to improve further?

- Further develop systematic arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in the work place.
- Improve the quality of target setting and the use of interim success measures to better identify the effectiveness of management strategies.
- Introduce functional skills more effectively into vocational situations to aid the learners' understanding of their relevance to their future employability.
- Plan learning more effectively to meet the needs of more able E2E learners by ensuring lessons have a sufficient range of activities and tasks to engage learners fully throughout.
- Make more effective use of management information to improve the monitoring of the E2E programme and drive up standards.

### Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

#### What learners like:

- working with animals
- assessors taking their concerns seriously
- enjoying their training

- learning to use the internet for research
- very good support from assessors
- getting better at their job roles and improving standards of care.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the over reliance on written work
- faster rate of progress with assessments
- better explanations about the relevance of literacy and numeracy
- the long period of waiting before starting training
- some lessons are boring.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the speed and helpfulness of responses to queries
- good standard of communication
- staff are helped to exceed original expectations of their potential
- assessors always keep appointments.

What employers would like to see improved:

- nothing reported.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

7. Access Training has made significant progress in improving the provision since the previous inspection with key areas for improvement now judged satisfactory or good. Achievement for most learners has significantly improved. The apprenticeship framework success rates overall are well above national rates and show an improving trend over the previous two years. This improvement is reflected in the current year's rates. Access Training holds a Train to Gain contract in its own right and for the current year, success rates are high. Previously, the provider acted as a subcontractor for the delivery of Train to Gain provision. Success rates during this period were good.
8. Access Training has a clear strategic direction that promotes ambition and raises expectations of high performance. The self-assessment process is well established and used to improve the quality of the provision. The provider now more effectively uses stakeholders' views to formulate judgements. Safeguarding and equality of opportunity are good.
9. The provider's management structure, resources and staffing arrangements effectively support its capacity to improve. However, Access Training does not sufficiently review and evaluate the impact of all its policy and procedures to secure improvement or fully use interim targets to aid monitoring. Quality monitoring of on-the-job training is inadequate. Inspectors identified some aspects of these weaknesses during the last inspection monitoring visit.

### Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

10. Success rates on adult and child care apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes have risen steadily since 2007 and are high, with a high proportion of learners completing within their expected timescales. They have continued to improve in the current year and are now significantly above the national averages. Around 90% of apprentices, 80% of advanced apprentices and 96% of Train to Gain learners have successfully completed their qualification in the first eight months of the current year. E2E learners' attainment of learning goals is satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy qualification success rates in 2008/09 were poor, but these have recently improved. Retention rates have improved and are satisfactory, and attendance is good. Success rates for the small numbers of learners on other programmes have risen in line with the national averages.
11. Learners enjoy gaining confidence at work and make good progress. Learners on all care programmes progress to higher levels of qualifications and many go onto higher education. Learners develop good caring skills and detailed

understanding of the needs of vulnerable service users. E2E learners develop good social skills and confidence. They become confident in speaking in sessions and tutors ensure that all learners take part in discussions. Learners understand their own skills development.

12. Learners feel very safe. Accurate risk assessments are carried out of workplace settings and activities. Comprehensive health and safety training effectively supports safe working practices.

## The quality of provision

Grade 2

13. Coaching, training and learning on all care programmes are good. Highly supportive one to one sessions in the workplace contribute to learners' development of occupationally relevant knowledge and skills. Assessors are knowledgeable and make good links between theory and practice. However, there is insufficient focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Initial assessment and diagnostic testing are thorough. Effective individual learning plans contain relevant and achievable targets and learners' achievements are accurately recorded. Teaching and learning on E2E programmes is satisfactory. Induction is thorough, and well understood by learners. In the better teaching sessions, clear learning aims are identified and learning is constantly reviewed. A wide range of teaching methods and activities engage learners and retain their interest. However, more able learners are insufficiently challenged. In some lessons teaching activities are insufficiently differentiated activities and learners lose concentration.
14. Functional skills are insufficiently contextualised to vocational settings. E2E learners are often unaware of why they are carrying out functional skills, or how they contribute to their employability. Learners complete multiplication and division calculations that are insufficiently linked to their work place experiences. Too few Train to Gain learners with low literacy skills accept additional support.
15. Tracking and management of learner progress is highly effective. The involvement of learners in the management of their learning motivates them towards achieving within planned timescales. Challenging staff performance targets relating to learner progress are agreed and well monitored. Learners now make satisfactory or better progress.
16. Assessors are well qualified in a range of professions and provide assessments to meet the needs of employers and learners. Effective use of good Information Communication Technology (ICT) resources supports learning and assessment. Learners value the new on-line learning materials. In media lessons, good use is made of technology to enable learners to develop good skills in video, visual design and music.
17. Care, guidance and support for learners are effective. Learners value the good



pastoral support from assessors. Effective strategies have widened participation by male learners and learners from minority ethnic groups. Effective support helps learners to progress into higher-level courses and more senior positions at work.

## Leadership and management

Grade 2

18. Senior managers have established a clear strategic direction, which is communicated well to all staff. Strategic plans appropriately focus on key aspects of the learning journey and effectively support the achievement of regional and national objectives. Staff have a good understanding of how their work supports the strategic goals. Managers effectively promote ambition and raise expectations of high performance. However, Access Training does not sufficiently review and evaluate the impact of all its policy and procedures to secure improvement.
19. Since the previous inspection the analysis and use of management information has improved and is now satisfactory. Managers use an appropriate range of relevant reports to monitor and evaluate performance. However, Access Training does not sufficiently use interim targets to aid monitoring progress towards strategic objectives.
20. Access Training has introduced very effective strategies to improve overall success rates and for completion within planned end dates. Senior managers have a clear focus on improving outcomes for all learners. Managers collect and analyse very useful data well to monitor learners' progress. Regular appraisals are effective in managing staff performance.
21. Staff development is used particularly well to support improvements. Staff complete a wide range of internal training that focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Staff share their individual learning well during regular development days. Managers have reviewed job roles and delegated additional responsibilities very effectively to staff at all levels.
22. Access Training has good safeguarding arrangements. Directors and managers give safeguarding a high priority. Access makes good use of links with appropriate external agencies to update its approach to protection and to support learners. The provider effectively monitors the implementation of the safeguarding policy and associated procedures. Access Training has prepared well for the introduction of the Independent Safeguarding Authority vetting and barring requirements. Staff have a sound awareness of safeguarding and strongly promote safety awareness. The provider ensures there is a good focus on the safe use of the internet for all learners.
23. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The provider offers a wide range of monthly events to raise learners understanding of diversity, social and economic issues. Many staff hold, or are working towards appropriate equality

and diversity qualifications.

24. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity with apprentices receiving particularly good reinforcement during progress reviews. However, tutors do not use progress reviews for E2E learners as successfully. Learners are very clear as to what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and how to raise any concerns. Staff very effectively monitor and deal with behaviour that may cause offence. Monitoring arrangements at the training centre and in workplaces are effective.
25. Access Training has been successful in recruiting learners from minority ethnic communities. The use of equality and diversity data is satisfactory. Despite a range of marketing activities, the gender recruitment for care programmes conforms to stereotype. The provider has yet to address effectively the relative under-performance of black minority heritage learners on E2E programmes.
26. Partnership working is good. Access effectively uses links with a good range of external organisations to recruit learners and promote training. The provider makes good use of its links with secondary schools to promote learning to pupils at risk of leaving learning.
27. Access Training makes good use of its engagement with users of its services to support and promote improvements. The provider ensures users have opportunities to give feedback on the service they receive. The learner forum provides useful feedback about individual programmes. Access Training appropriately analyses this feedback to improve its service.
28. Access Training has a well-established self-assessment process that it uses well to improve the quality of the provision. The report now makes appropriate use of stakeholders' views. Judgments and grades reflect those awarded by inspectors. However, some judgements are not fully supported by data. The provider adequately monitors the improvement plan. Access Training appropriately monitors the quality of teaching and learning at the training centre through observation. However, the observations do not sufficiently focus on learning. Some quality improvement initiatives are over-reliant on informal arrangements. On-the-job training is not subject to an effective quality assurance process.
29. Access Training manages its resources effectively and provides good value for money. Learners have access to an appropriate range of learning and support resources. The provider efficiently uses teaching and training accommodation and staff to support learning. Learners learn and work in a healthy and safe environment.

## Subject areas

Health, public services and care

Grade 2

### Context

30. A total of 173 learners are working towards qualifications in child care. Fifty five are apprentices, 66 advanced apprentices and 52 are Train to Gain learners. A total of 134 learners are working towards qualifications in adult care. Twenty nine are apprentices, 11 advanced apprentices and 94 are Train to Gain learners. Much of the training and assessment is carried out in the workplace. Some childcare learners attend additional training and support sessions in community venues.

### Key findings

- Success rates on adult and child care apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes have risen steadily since 2007 and are now high. A high proportion of learners completing within their planned end dates. The success rates have continued to improve in the current year and are now significantly above the national averages.
- Learners enjoy gaining confidence at work and make good progress. Many learners on Train to Gain health and social care provision and childcare apprentices gain promotion at work, progress to advanced qualifications and on to higher education programmes. Learners develop good caring skills and gain a detailed understanding of the needs of vulnerable service users.
- Learners feel very safe. Managers place a strong emphasis on the health, safety and well-being of learners. Effective risk assessments are completed of workplace settings and activities. Comprehensive health and safety training effectively supports learners in developing safe working practices.
- Coaching, training and learning are good. Effective and highly-supportive one to one sessions in the workplace contribute to learners' development of occupationally relevant knowledge and skills. Assessors are knowledgeable and make good links between theory and practice. However, there is insufficient focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills.
- Tracking and management of learners' progress is highly effective. The involvement of learners in the management of their learning motivates them towards achieving within their planned end date. Challenging learning targets are agreed and well monitored. Managers monitor individual learners' progress frequently and those who make slow progress receive additional training and support visits.
- Effective use of good ICT resources supports learning and assessment. Learners value the newly developed on-line learning materials and progress reviews. Assessors are well qualified in a range of professions and provide assessments to meet the needs of employers and learners in their specific

settings.

- Care, guidance and support for learners are effective. Learners value the good pastoral support from assessors. Strategies to recruit male learners have effectively widened participation. Learners are effectively supported to progress into higher level courses and employment in health care settings. Effective strategies engage employers in supporting learning.
- Management of all care programmes is good. Progress towards performance and quality targets are monitored monthly. Staff understand their targets and the changing factors which impact on the achievement of these targets. Communication is good and staff feel well supported and receive extensive professional development.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is good and well integrated into coaching and learning. Effective action supports learners from disadvantaged groups and celebrates their achievement. Learners have a good understanding of relevant issues for their roles working with children and vulnerable adults.
- Safeguarding of learners is good. Learners receive training in the principles and practices of safeguarding during induction. Regular checks and reinforcement of knowledge ensure it is a high priority. Learners' ability to identify potential risks is well developed.
- Monitoring of training in the workplace is inadequate. Managers are unaware of the quality of work place training provided by Access Training staff or employers.

### What does Access Training need to do to improve further?

- Further develop systematic arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in the work place.
- Introduce functional skills more effectively into vocational situations to aid the learners' understanding of their relevance to their future employability.

## Entry to Employment

Grade 3

### Context

31. The E2E programme is delivered at the training centre in Nottingham. Hairdressing training is provided through a sub-contract with NHTA. At the time of the inspection, 40 learners were on programme in the vocational pathways of animal care, health and social care and hairdressing. Additional qualifications are offered including first aid, functional skills, child care, citizenship, personal and social development and cookery.

### Key findings

- Learners' attainment of learning goals is satisfactory. Learners of minority ethnic heritage performed less well than white learners but the reasons for this have been identified and dealt with. Literacy and numeracy success rates were low in 2008/09, but these are now improving. Retention has improved, and attendance is good.
- Learners develop good social skills and confidence. Much encouragement is given to learners to enhance their confidence and develop their interaction with others. Learners' verbal contributions in lessons are valued, and tutors ensure that all learners are encouraged to take part in group discussions. Tutors stress the skills learnt in each session, and learners reflect positively on their own learning.
- Individual learning is well planned. Initial assessment and diagnostic testing are thorough and learners' starting points are accurately assessed. Effective individual learning plans are well detailed and thorough, with relevant and achievable targets that identify the small steps in learning to be recognised. Learners clearly understand the targets to which they are working. Learners' achievements are accurately recorded.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Induction is thorough, and well understood by learners. In the better teaching sessions, clear learning aims and objectives shared with learners are constantly reviewed. A wide range of teaching methods and activities are used to engage learners and retain their interest. Learning is well planned, building on previously acquired skills and abilities.
- Satisfactory use is made of ICT to support learning. In media lessons, good use is made of new, state-of-the-art technology to enable learners to develop effective skills in video, visual design and music. However, in many lessons interactive white-boards are poorly used.
- The degree of challenge provided to learners that are more able is insufficient. In some lessons insufficiently differentiated activities lead to learners losing concentration and talking amongst themselves.

- Functional skills are insufficiently focussed around vocational relevance. Learners are often not aware of why they are carrying out functional skills or how they contribute to their employability. For example, hairdressing learners complete multiplication and division calculations which are insufficiently related by tutors to work place tasks, such as mixing colouring agents.
- Strategies for widening participation are effective. Good partnership working benefits learners. Productive links have been made with a wide range of external agencies, to promote learning and enabling learners' needs to be met effectively. Open days are held regularly where young people can try tasters from the vocational pathways. At one such event four young people joined the E2E programme.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, action planning to improve outcomes for learners is insufficient. No interim targets or milestones are set for improvements in outcomes for learners. Learner progress is now tracked through the introduction of new computer software. However, it is too soon to assess its impact.
- Safeguarding of learners is good. Comprehensive information about safeguarding issues is given to learners at induction, and they are aware of whom to contact if they have safeguarding issues. Safeguarding concerns are dealt with effectively and promptly. Staff training has been effective and staff fully understand their responsibilities.
- Promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity are satisfactory. Wall displays promoting equality and diversity are prominently displayed. Learners and staff treat each other with respect. Staff challenge the use of inappropriate language by learners. Access Training has accurately identified varying success rates for different groups of learners, but strategies to deal with this are very new.
- There is insufficient use of management information to support effective monitoring and review of the programme. The accuracy and sufficiency of data has improved, but there has been insufficient analysis to identify all areas where performance has not improved and plan improvements.

### What does Access Training need to do to improve further?

- Further develop systematic arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in the work place.
- Introduce functional skills more effectively into vocational situations to aid the learners' understanding of their relevance to their future employability.
- Plan learning more effectively to meet the needs of more able E2E learners by ensuring lessons have a sufficient range of activities and tasks to engage learners fully throughout.
- Make more effective use of management information to improve the monitoring of the E2E programme and drive up standards.

## Information about the inspection

32. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's staff training coordinator, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
33. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the training provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.



**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Access training [East Midlands] Ltd**

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners				
Full-time learners	431	40	186	205
Part-time learners	0	0	0	0
Overall effectiveness	2	3	2	2
Capacity to improve	2			
Outcomes for learners	2	3	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2			
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2			
How well do learners progress?	2			
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2			
How safe do learners feel?	2			
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	3			
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	3			
Quality of provision	2	3	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2			
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2			
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2			
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2			
Leadership and management	2	3	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2			
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	n/a			
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2			
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2			
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2			
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2			
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2			

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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