



**Oxford Energy Academy Ltd**



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## 1. Assessment Information

Assessment Type	INITIAL ASSESSMENT
Assessor's Decision	STANDARD MET
Assessor's Name	SAMANTHA HANMER
Visit Date	18/07/2016
Client ID	C19848
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## 2. Organisation – Background, Introduction and Overview

Oxford Energy Academy Ltd (OEA) was established in 2011 by the two founding Directors who between them have more than seventy years combined experience in the Gas Services Industry. The business was set up initially to provide training, assessment and re-assessment opportunities for individuals entering the sector as a result of a career change, and to provide upskilling and refresher training for engineers to maintain their industry registrations and licenses.

In 2014, OEA opened the Apprenticeship Academy to provide adults and young people with access to Trades Apprenticeships to meet local skills gaps identified by employers. At the same time, they began working with Prime Contractor ACE Introtrain as a subcontractor to access SFA funds to support the delivery of this project.

They operate from a purpose built business unit situated on an industrial estate in Witney, Oxfordshire and deliver a range of funded and non-funded qualifications, Apprenticeships and a selection of trades based programmes linked to the Plumbing Services Industry. The current portfolio includes qualifications in Gas, Renewable Energy, Construction, Oil and Electrical Installation. Accredited qualifications are delivered through partnerships with Awarding Organisation's Bpec and EAL. Additional sector memberships are held with OFTEC, IGEM, Gas Safe, EIC and the Engineering Council.

The departmental structure includes two Managing Directors, the Office Manager, Apprenticeship Coordinator, Course Manager, Administrator and two Assessors. The Directors are involved in the delivery of the service which extends to quality assurance activities.

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) is embedded into the delivery of training programmes and includes:

- Access to careers advice, CV support, referral to employers and Apprenticeships.
- Signposting and referral to internal and external colleagues and organisations to support learners with barriers to progression.
- The development of an individual learning plan (ILP) to detail the SMART targets and to establish goals and aspirations for life, learning and work.
- A comprehensive induction that includes sector-based skills advice linked to the lifelong learning plan for the learner.
- Screening and initial assessment to identify additional learning requirements such as literacy, language or learning support.
- Regular workshops and individual reviews to measure progress and offer support, advice and guidance.
- An exit interview to reflect on the learner's success, the development achieved and to provide information about their next steps and careers options including access to higher level apprenticeships and opportunities to achieve additional skills training and certificates of competence enabling individuals to work on a variety of appliances to enhance employability options.

### 3. Strengths

A number of strengths were identified during the assessment. These are detailed below. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard.

Staff described open and inclusive leadership from managers that encourage the team to share their thoughts and ideas during meetings and informal discussions to ensure the service runs smoothly. Staff share the vision; they enjoy being part of the team and work hard to ensure learners needs are met. Staff feel empowered to review their current provision and showed great enthusiasm that they are given the authority to enhance the learner experience. Examples discussed the introduction and development of resources such as the World Events Calendar to embrace equality and to share events with learners during workshops to trigger debate and to improve knowledge about different cultures and lifestyles. Additional examples described partnership work with Awarding Organisations to improve sector based journals to provide learners with improved access to sector information linked more closely to their learning aim.

**(1.2, 1.3, 1.7)**

The service benefits from its partnerships. In particular, with employers who work closely with OEA to deliver the Apprenticeship Programme. This two-way relationship helps employers to reduce skills gaps within their organisations and provides OEA learners with access to a network of employers who value the Apprenticeship Programme and recognise the skills that apprentices bring to their business. The results of employer satisfaction and demand for skilled staff has encouraged OEA to acquire a larger delivery site with plans to increase Apprenticeship opportunities over coming months.

**(1.8, 3.6, 4.1, 4.4)**

Learners know what to expect from an OEA Apprenticeship Programme and how this links to lifelong learning and individual career ambitions. They value the information provided by staff such as the Career Portfolio and progression advice which ensures they remain up to date and sector competent as qualified engineers. Several apprentices continue their learning with OEA on completion of the Apprenticeship so they can continue to develop skills and gain certificates of competence to work on a range of appliances in regulated environments such as commercial and domestic operations. Staff maintain training records for all apprentices and send reminders by email to inform them of certification expiry dates. As a result, engineers remain competent to work in line with industry requirements and in particular, gas safety regulations. **(2.2, 3.1)**

## 4. Areas for Future Development

A number of areas for continuous improvement were identified during the assessment which may develop or enhance the service delivered. These are detailed below and for the organisation to consider as part of its ongoing continuous quality improvement actions. The numbers in brackets refer to the element and criteria of the **matrix** Standard. These will form the basis for discussion at the Continuous Improvement Checks (CIC) conducted twelve and twenty-four months from the date of this Assessment, along with any other notable developments.

The IAG statement could include more detail to show learners how referral and signposting link to progression and achievement. For example, as a result of OEA's growth ambitions to deliver Traineeships, staff expect to see an increase in applications from younger learners. Staff are aware that learners of a younger age are often more likely to present with a wider range of support needs. The policy or set of service aims could detail the different aspects of the service more clearly to summarise the help and support available through signposting and referral. The staff could use the document as a checklist during the initial IAG meeting to ensure that learners understand the full range of support, advice and guidance that is available. **(3.1)**

OEA might like to consider how they can continue to improve the general careers advice information to provide more detail to support longer term career planning at an earlier stage in the apprentices journey. Although noted as a strength, that OEA provides specialist advice relating to industry progression in the Career Portfolio when they complete their programme, some learners could benefit from this information at an earlier stage. For example, the revised information could outline options for both employment and self-employment.

Further information could include specific advice about Advanced Learner Loans or Higher Level Apprenticeships. Learners would value progression advice at an earlier stage as some discussed. The IAG section on the website or the apprentice handbook could be used to display this information. **(3.1, 4.7)**

Future developments incorporating technology could introduce case studies or videos to capture interviews with apprentices and employers to use as a marketing and engagement tool. A more visual approach might help staff to engage with a wider audience and to attract new apprentices and employers to the service. **(4.7)**

Learner feedback is collected during reviews, surveys and exit interviews and used to monitor learner satisfaction. There is potential to improve the focus and quality of feedback to explore the wider aspects of the IAG service to establish the difference it is making. For example, when supporting young people to decide individual career aspirations. Aspects to more closely evaluate could include the induction, exit interviews, specialist careers advice sessions and guest speakers and visitors such as the smoking cessation service.

Additionally, staff could improve how they share the outcomes of feedback with learners to show how it informs improvement and the commissioning of additional services. The 'You said we did' approach could be used to display outcomes, shared on the website or via the social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.

This may help staff to monitor the effectiveness of delivery and encourage learners to provide feedback and to suggest ideas that could be used to develop the service further. **(4.3, 4.7)**

The service may benefit by developing its approach to moderating the effectiveness of IAG interventions. Managers could introduce peer observation or extend the current arrangements to cover more robustly the induction and exit interviews. This could add value to the sharing of good practice to develop the IAG delivery model further. **(4.5, 4.6)**

The annual **matrix** Continuous Improvement Check will allow the organisation to demonstrate on an ongoing basis the developments they are continuing to make in order to support individuals <http://matrixstandard.com/continuous-improvement-checks/>. These may include the Areas for Continuous Improvement above.

Please note that annual Continuous Improvement Checks are mandatory, and non-completion within the required timescale will impact on your organisation's accreditation.

## 5. Methodology

The following methods were used to gather evidence against the **matrix** Standard during the assessment process.

- An initial planning discussion with one of the Managing Directors.
- On-site attendance at OEA Head Office in Witney, Oxfordshire.
- The opening meeting and interview with one Managing Director.
- Telephone interview with the second Managing Director.
- One to one interviews with four staff.
- Pair interview with two staff.
- Telephone interviews with two partners.
- One to one interview with one partner
- Group interviews with twelve learners/apprentices - one of five, one of four and one of three.
- Closing meeting with the Managing Director and the staff team.

Review of a range of information including; the website, the business plan and position paper, quality improvement plan (QIP), delivery policies, feedback analysis and a selection of service marketing materials and leaflets



## 6. Detailed Findings

### Organisation, Direction and Achievements

Oxford Energy Academy (OEA) Ltd's Mission is to support, motivate and inspire learners to achieve and exceed their aspirations. They strive to improve the lives, work and economic prospects for all learners living locally and in neighbouring Towns. Their overall ambition is to be recognised regionally and nationally as an outstanding provider of vocational skills education and training. OEA has identified five strategic aims to achieve the Vision which are described as follows;

- To ensure continuous improvement of learners success.
- To develop and maintain a responsive and collaborative offer of programmes.
- To provide excellent teaching, learning and training as part of a high quality and engaging learner experience.
- To ensure opportunities for success for the diverse communities of Oxfordshire, enabling social cohesion and social mobility.
- To secure long-term financial sustainability whilst investing in high-quality resources.

Since 2011, OEA has delivered a range of funded and non-funded qualifications including Foundation Programmes and a range of sector-based qualifications linked to the Plumbing Services Industry. In 2014, they began working with Prime Contractor Introtrain as a subcontractor to deliver Intermediate and Advanced Level Apprenticeships to provide a progression route for the Foundation Programme learners. Unfortunately, funding for the Foundation Programme was limited which meant that delivery couldn't continue. The Directors are in discussions with the Prime to extend their delivery to incorporate Traineeships to provide a Pre-Apprenticeship route for learners who are identified as requiring additional support and may not be ready to move straight into an Apprenticeship Programme.

OEA's overall ambition is to secure a direct contract with the SFA to provide the Apprenticeship Academy with financial security and a sustainable future. Further plans include the delivery of Advanced Learner Loans for those not eligible for funding via the Apprenticeship route. OEA has seen an increase in referrals and employer demand over the last year and as a result, have acquired a larger delivery site to support plans for growth. Still in Witney, Oxfordshire, the new premises provide more space to increase learner capacity and increased registrations will meet employer demand.

All learners who contact OEA have access to the IAG service for careers, learning support and advice. Staff measure the success of the IAG service through retention and achievement rates. For 2014/15, targets were agreed at 89% retention and 89% achievement for level 2 and level 3. Contract evaluation for 2014/15, shows 83% retention for Level 2 and 100% retention for Level 3. The achievement data for this period is published in the 2015/16 evaluation and shows 100% achievement for level 2 and level 3 for the previous year. For 2015/16, the targets remain the same at 89% for retention and achievement. The current evaluation shows retention rates at 88% for level 2 and 100% for level 3. Additional evaluation for 2015/16 shows that of the 28 level 2 completions, 25 progressed to a level 3 Apprenticeship.

The service defines learner outcomes as follows;

- To identify personal learning aims career goals and aspirations.
- To identify individual barriers and develop strategies to overcome these through one to one support, signposting or referral.
- To develop work skills through a programme of training and work experience and to progress onto permanent employment or an Apprenticeship.

Outcomes and learner progress are used to establish service impact. For example, the intended outcomes are established with learners during the initial contact and suitability interview, induction and one to one sessions. Staff review progress with learners at each contact and record the outcomes in the ILP documentation. Results and success rates are used to measure the overall effectiveness of this service. Outcomes and learner progress are further used to identify additional resources such as changes to the learning plan or timetable, learning support and additional help needed to progress. For example, signposting for learners who require support with Maths and English or who need additional one to one support from assessors to achieve their intended aims.

Staff recognise the challenges learners experience when balancing employment responsibilities and home life and as a result, have supported a number of learners to move to a new employer as a result of working relationships and clashes in personalities. A further example discussed an employer who required a continual schedule of weekend working which the learner felt to be unfair. The learner was encouraged to source a new work placement with staff support.

Leadership is considered to be strong and supportive of staff. Staff feel valued and involved in the delivery of the service and the future direction of the organisation. Staff shared examples of their ideas developing and shaping the service such as the introduction of a visiting smoking cessation service and guest speakers to explore issues with apprentices that have the potential to affect young people such as bullying, crime, drugs and alcohol misuse and gang related crime. Initial verbal feedback from learners has been positive. However, a full evaluation will be captured during the learner survey next month.

Staff comments during the assessment were described as follows;

*"The annual away days allow staff to get to know each other away from the workplace."*

*"This is a great place to work. We are encouraged to be the best we can and provide learners with a great experience."*

*"The opportunities to develop your skills as a member of staff are endless. If we need training or upskilling, we get it."*

*"This is a great place to work; managers allow flexible working patterns to create a good home life balance".*

Learners described their involvement in selecting an appropriate employer. One learner discussed staff support that ensured a good fit between the employer needs and the apprentice's expectations. For example, employers are sourced and selected to meet the apprentices individual requirements so placements are effective and offer learners with sufficient exposure to work that relates to their chosen pathway. The learner interviewed moved to OEA from another provider and described an improvement in support and being more involved in the process of selecting an employment setting.

Additional examples described changes to delivery times to suit individual needs and one to one appointments to help learners to progress.

OEA have invested heavily in the Academy to provide a state of the art learning environment for its learners which simulates a 'real work environment'. Income streams and business planning dictate financial expenditure, with staff making good use of the organisation's resources to support learner achievement. In 2014, OEA moved to the current premises in Witney, however, as described above, have outgrown these premises and plan to move to a bigger site imminently. Staff are provided with Laptops and mobile phones to ensure they are available to both employers and learners.

Feedback is collected from learners informally during reviews and formally through the learner survey at various stages in the programme. Staff use feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of the service and to identify improvements. The most recent evaluation shows from 74 responses that 95% of learners rated the pre-course information between good and excellent and 94% agreed that advice from staff had helped to plan future goals.

As a result of learner feedback, information for employers has improved to outline minimum pay requirements and workshops and staff support is available during the evenings for learners who require access to additional one to one support. A sample of quotes collected during the assessment are as follows;

*"They helped me to transfer from (xxxx) as I wasn't getting the help I needed".*

*"They treat us like adults and care about our future."*

*"The notice boards provide loads of information about local jobs and available work".*

*"Staff are always available to help".*

*"The information they provide about being an engineer at the first meeting is really good.*

*"(xxx) helped me to decide what I wanted to do."*

*"The staff know their stuff and use their experience to help us get on at work."*

*"The staff are brilliant and want us to succeed."*

*"I've made loads of contacts to help me set up my own business and get regular work."*

Learners were able to describe the organisation's appeals and complaints procedure and the steps to follow should they be unhappy with any aspect of the service.

OEA completes an annual self-assessment report (SAR) that produces the quality improvement plan (QIP). Managers encourage the whole team to contribute to this process. Current evaluation outlines the following strengths;

- Effective employer relationships that offer sustainable job outcomes for learners.
- Good retention and achievement rates.
- An effective training and development strategy for staff.
- Outstanding learner and employer satisfaction rates.

Areas for development have been identified to;

- Continue to develop partnerships with schools to improve the advice young people receive about progression to trades based Apprenticeships and careers in the Plumbing Services Industry.
- Secure additional funding to finance planned growth.
- Promote the Academy to increase employer partnerships and opportunities for learner progression once qualified.

## Service Delivery

Learners join OEA in a number of ways. Examples discussed, a referral from employers, self-referral or through friends and school career advisors. OEA advertise opportunities on the website and local radio to ensure that young people are aware of the Apprenticeship Programme. As an established provider of skills training; OEA continues to receive an increasing number of enquiries mostly from local employers. Staff are beginning to develop case studies and testimonials to engage and motivate new learners and to attract additional employers. Social media is being developed to share success and achievements. Staff recognise they could do more to capture and share these outcomes.

Staff described their contributions to resource review and updates during standardisation and team meetings and how they use these opportunities to share best practice and ideas with managers and colleagues. Staff were involved in developing the new employer information sheet which outlines the terms and conditions and rates of pay for apprentices. Further examples described the workbook learners use as an information resource and to record their learning. As a result of this review, the Awarding Organisation has included the revised workbook in the information they provide to approved centres who deliver Bpec accredited qualifications.

The induction provides learners with a range of information, options and choices for potential employment if not already employed and exposure to several career pathways within the Plumbing Services Industry. Learners have access to computers and are guided to a variety of industry specific websites to explore careers and employment opportunities. The initial assessment identifies additional requirements such as literacy, language or learning support. Currently, the Prime Contractor delivers learning support, particularly, for those who require help to improve Maths and English.

Staff shared examples of signposting learners to other training providers to access opportunities to become electricians or bricklayers. It is noted that for most enquiries learners know what OEA offer before they make an application so the number of referrals to other providers are small in numbers. Following the induction, learners attend the Academy for one day a week for skills workshops and meet with assessors at least monthly in the workplace. A twelve-week formal review is carried out at the employers site with the learners and with the employer to discuss progress and any barriers to progression. Staff have identified two employers who required additional information and advice to ensure that apprentices were receiving the correct rate of pay.

Learners receive a handbook that outlines information about the Apprenticeship and the frameworks and career pathways available. This further describes standards and expectations of behaviour and attendance. The handbook summarises OEA policies and provides an outline to show how OEA will ensure the learners safety and well-being while also promoting equality and diversity. Learners are aware of the support available from the IAG service and described the links on the website and the various posters displayed around the Academy, which include contact details of support organisations to help with matters relating to health, well-being and finance such as travel discounts and child care bursaries.

Learners agree their short, medium and long-term goals on the learning agreement and ILP detailing the intended outcomes to be supported by the service.

The ILP measures the distance travelled, and progress made enabling both staff and learners to explore additional interventions or changes that may be required to keep them on track to achieve individual targets. As a result of learner reviews, eleven learners have received help to find a new employer for a variety of reasons but mostly to ensure they have access to sufficient real work activity to support their learning and develop trade skills. One example discussed a learner who wasn't receiving the correct pay. However, swift intervention by staff resolved the issue. Another example discussed a learner who was unhappy with frequent weekend working so was supported to find a new employer.

The Apprenticeship is described as a stepping stone to employment and provides options for further learning to support individual skills and ambitions such as becoming a qualified gas engineer competent to work on a range of appliances. On completion of the Apprenticeship Programme, learners receive a Career Portfolio to show achievements so far. The portfolio includes information about progression to higher level apprenticeships and certificates of competence such as electrical installation add-ons to enable the qualified engineer to develop their technical skills to work on a range of appliances and employment settings such as in commercial and domestic environments. Staff include a summary sheet advising the individual when their certifications are due for renewal and send reminders six months in advance of the expiry date to allow sufficient time for renewal. Staff describe this as a commitment to lifelong learning for the apprentice.

Learners benefit from this organisation's partnerships, in particular, with employers to access paid work including permanent contracts of employment. Learners described benefits such as employment references, paid work opportunities, travel support, vehicles and free uniforms.

The website provides industry specific information and advertises the range of programmes on offer. The IAG service and links to support organisations are displayed here also. Apprenticeship opportunities and job vacancies are advertised which shows the learner how the apprenticeship can lead to employment as many employers expect the apprenticeship as a minimum entry requirement. The contact form allows a potential learner or employer to make an enquiry or request a callback. Staff monitor the amount of visitors to the website and to date it has received more than 44, 500 visitors since its update in 2014. This activity has provided staff with confidence to develop plans for growth and development.

Staff are beginning to use YouTube to provide a more visual approach to careers in plumbing to explore the different tasks that an engineer will be required to undertake. For example, clips are used to show different environments such as domestic premises, commercial operations and construction sites. As a result, a number of learners have changed employer so they can further their skills and practical experience to support individual career choices. For example, one learner didn't like the idea of site work and preferred a more customer facing role in domestic maintenance services.

So far, social media such as Facebook and Twitter haven't proved to be as popular as staff initially thought they would be as a communication tool. Facebook is used to advertise programmes of learning and to share news, events and updates with current learners. Learners are encouraged to like Facebook during the induction so they can be informed of service updates. Bpec tagged OEA in a post when the Academy opened which was subsequently shared with learners.

Twitter currently has 63 followers and is used mostly as a business to business engagement tool, however, plans to engage more with learners are currently being discussed.

## **Staff Competency**

Managers described the staff attributes they seek when recruiting. These are mostly around occupational competence and experience, enthusiasm and a passion for supporting others to realise their potential. Although for qualification delivery qualifications such as assessor, quality assurance, teaching and trade qualifications are essential, managers will invest in unqualified staff who show potential to add value to the learner experience.

The team have several years of combined sector experience. This ensures the delivery of IAG is effective and reflects industry standards. Managers provide staff with opportunities to maintain their CPD and encourage staff to read the various trade publications purchased by OEA and support staff to attend Bpec events and industry conferences.

Managers value industry experience and have supported a number of staff to achieve teaching qualifications and competency certificates relating to industry so they can teach and advise on specialist subjects such as gas engineers who wish to add gas fires to their skills set. Assessors are working towards quality assurance qualifications to provide opportunities for career development. One member of staff has been registered to start at Level 3 IAG qualification in September this year to support her role in the delivery of the IAG service and named contact for safeguarding and well-being.

Staff described access to training and development opportunities such as teaching, assessing and quality assurance qualifications. Further examples described attending short courses such as Prevent, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity and Health and Safety. Managers outlined further plans to consider formal IAG qualifications for additional delivery staff as the organisation grows.

Staff described a range of support and information received when they joined the service. Most of this is received during the induction. Staff receive the employee handbook, regular contact and communications with managers, meetings, emails, and contracts of employment. Staff described on-going support when they joined the service, such as job shadowing, monthly one to one reviews and the annual appraisal with a six-month review.

Staff are observed at least annually to support the teaching, learning and assessment aspects of their work. The Directors have engaged with an Ofsted inspector to carry out this function who grades staff against the Common Inspection Framework (CIF). This is a small team so, close working arrangements in shared offices allow staff to observe each other informally and to seek support from colleagues if they have a concern or require information. The frequency of formal observation has the potential to increase should the observer feel that improvements in practice are required. Staff described the benefits of observation, particularly when they joined the organisation and when working towards teaching and assessing qualifications. Staff record these activities on their CPD records which are checked by quality assurance staff for sufficiency and discuss outcomes during the appraisal.

## Quality Assurance and Infrastructure

Policies and procedures are in place that reflect the organisation's current position and service delivery. Staff with allocated responsibilities such as quality assurance staff, update policies annually and submit any revisions or additions to a Managing Director for approval before publishing. Updated versions are shared with staff during team meetings, stored on the staff drive and circulated by email. All policies are subject to version control and have allocated staff responsibility.

The Quality Assurance policy is applied to all aspects of delivery and describes the requirements for regular resource updates, quality assurance observations of staff and the frequency of meetings and sector specific standardisation activities. As a result of resource review, staff have updated the employer information pack to show the latest pay increase for apprentices.

Equality and diversity matters are addressed through policies, staff training and embedded into the delivery of workshops. At the beginning of each session or group activity, staff establish ground rules with learners and often raise a topic for discussion that links to current world events. Examples discussed a debate around the recent attacks in Nice and the impact this has had on France and thoughts around terrorism and the effect on tourism. Additional discussions have taken place around Brexit and the potential impact on industry and trading costs in Europe. For example, potential increases in plumbing supplies sourced from Europe.

The rules and expectations are explored with the group and learners are encouraged to make suggestions and participate. Typical rules discussed, respecting others opinions, using appropriate language and listening to others when they are speaking or making a contribution. Staff were able to describe how day to day working duties link to the detail in policies and procedures and how confidentiality, data protection and impartiality are ensured through the delivery of the service. Examples reported by staff include; reassuring learners that matters discussed during the IAG service will remain confidential and protected. Learners described confidence in staff that matters discussed would remain confidential. Learners shared examples of confidential discussions with staff relating to employment matters, for example, issues with pay and working hours.

The Safeguarding Policy has been updated to incorporate the Prevent Duty guidance. All staff interviewed were able to describe their involvement in Safeguarding responsibilities and the value of the recent Chanel training. All staff are subject to DBS checks and clearance before working for OEA and include any relevant details if applicable on the application form. Learners know who to approach for any safeguarding concerns and as many confirmed would trust staff to help them if they required support. The learner handbook provides contact details for the Apprenticeship Co-ordinator as the responsible person for safeguarding. Staff plan to make this role more visible by including a poster in the main reception with the staff members photograph displayed.

Learners are encouraged to disclose previous convictions during the application process and to indicate whether they have been in trouble with the police. It is noted that if a learner were to disclose a previous conviction, staff would work with the individual to explore the impact if any on attending the Academy if the nature of the conviction was relevant and considered to be a risk to others.



OEA haven't identified any examples so far. However, the question remains on the application form to support OEA's continued commitment to ensuring learner safety and well-being. An example of OEA's commitment to safeguarding arrangements discussed two learners who joined a programme at the same time who were discovered to have experienced problems at school. One of the learners was reported as bullying the other while at school. Staff spoke to all parties and agreed to separate the learners so they could attend the Academy at different times in agreement with the parents. As a result, both learners completed their programme successfully and were able to progress without coming into contact with each other.

OEA has a varied network of partners that include employers, school career advisors, training providers in other sectors and various partnership networks within the Plumbing Services Industry. Partners recognised staff for their skills and experience and described OEA as delivering a valuable and outstanding service. In particular, for employers to meet skills and recruitment needs. OEA have a good relationship with industry Awarding Organisation Bpec and as a result feature in their publications where they are listed as an approved delivery partner.

Partner comments as follows;

*"Without them, we couldn't fill our vacancies".*

*"Communications are excellent, and the staff are all brilliant".*

*"They keep us informed of any changes or new information and let us know how our apprentices are doing".*

*"Apprentices know what to expect and how learning will make them more employable".*

*"They help us with our on-going training needs and develop courses to help us improve."*

Staff outlined the importance of partnerships and how they contribute to learner success achievement and progression. Staff work hard with employers to establish their recruitment needs and to ensure that learners needs are met. For example, additional workshops and flexible arrangements have been agreed for employers who are supporting more than one apprentice. This ensures that the employers business operations are not affected when apprentices are attending the Academy. Flexible arrangements ensure that apprentices from the same employer attend on different days.

Employers described OEA as a *"preferred provider and as being employer responsive"* as delivery is not restricted to term time enrolment days as they have experienced with other providers.

Staff value the input from partners and employers and have used this to influence current developments to grow the organisation and expand their offering. The main drivers to meet employer demands for skilled staff and to provide sustainable routes to employment for young people. They gather feedback mostly verbally from employers as several are known to the Directors and value their knowledge for industry-related advice. A number of employers attend OEA for their training and upskilling so communications and relationships are well established. OEA has identified their service as being a preferred provider from 90% of local employers. They are currently working with 38 employers across Oxfordshire and the surrounding Towns and Villages.

## 7. Conclusion

Oxford Energy Academy Ltd has demonstrated during this initial **matrix** Standard assessment that they are a service that has clear leadership and direction that delivers a professional, objective and impartial IAG service.

NB: Continued accreditation is subject to annual Continuous Improvement Checks at twelve and twenty-four months following assessment and three-yearly on-site accreditation reviews. If checks/reviews are not undertaken in a timely way this will have an impact upon the organisation's accreditation.

## 8. The matrix Standard Evidence Grid

Element 1 Criteria		Met	Not Met	Strength	AfFD
1.1	The service has clearly defined measurable aims and objectives which link to any wider organisational strategic aims.	✓			
1.2	The service is provided with clear leadership and direction	✓		✓	
1.3	The organisation implements policies to promote equality and diversity, impartiality, confidentiality and professional integrity in all aspects of service delivery	✓		✓	
1.4	The organisation complies with existing and new legislation which might impact upon the service	✓			
1.5	The organisation defines client outcomes and uses them as a measure of success for the service	✓			
1.6	The organisation promotes the service in ways which are accessible to all those eligible to use it	✓			
1.7	Clients and staff influence the design and development of the service	✓		✓	
1.8	The organisation establishes effective links with other appropriate partnerships and networks to enhance the service	✓		✓	

Element 2 Criteria		Met	Not Met	Strength	AfFD
2.1	The organisation uses its resources effectively to deliver the service	✓			
2.2	Clients are provided with current, accurate and quality assured information which is inclusive	✓		✓	
2.3	The organisation defines the skills, knowledge, competencies and qualifications, in line with current national recognised professional qualifications and frameworks, for individual staff roles, linked to the aims and objectives of the service	✓			
2.4	Staff are supported in undertaking continuous professional development and provided with opportunities for career progression	✓			
2.5	Effective induction processes are in place for all staff	✓			

Element 3 Criteria		Met	Not Met	Strength	AfFD
3.1	The service is defined so that clients are clear about what they might expect	✓		✓	✓
3.2	The service is delivered effectively to meet its aims and objectives	✓			
3.3	The service provided is impartial and objective	✓			
3.4	Clients are given appropriate options to explore and understand that they are responsible for making their own decisions	✓			
3.5	When exploring options, clients are provided with and supported to use appropriate resources including access to technology	✓			
3.6	Clients benefit from signposting and referral to other appropriate agencies or organisations	✓		✓	

Element 4 - Criteria		Met	Not Met	Strength	AfFD
4.1	The organisation measures and evaluates the service against its stated aims and objectives and identifies improvements	✓		✓	
4.2	The organisation monitors and evaluates client outcomes to support and improve service delivery	✓			
4.3	The organisation evaluates feedback on the service to build upon its strengths and addresses any areas for improvement	✓			✓
4.4	The organisation evaluates the effectiveness of its partnerships and networks to improve the service	✓		✓	
4.5	The organisation defines quality assurance approaches which are used to improve the service	✓			✓
4.6	Staff performance, linked to their role within the aims and objectives of the service, are reviewed and evaluated to improve the service	✓			✓
4.7	Effective use is made of technology to improve the service	✓			✓
4.8	The organisation continually reviews improvements to help inform the future aims and objectives of the service	✓			