

C&G Assessments and Training Ltd

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 58539

Name of lead inspector: Gerard McGrath HMI

Last day of inspection: 26 November 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 22 Longacre Close
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Information about the provider

1. C&G Assessments and Training Ltd (C&G) was established as an independent learning provider in October 2003. The main training centre and headquarters are located in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, with a second site in Beckton, East London.
2. C&G's senior management consists of three company directors, supported by an Information Technology (IT) manager and an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) manager. A team of 19 assessors delivers coaching and assessment in the workplace and in dedicated training centres.
3. C&G contracts with the London Skills Funding Agency to deliver National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) since August 2009. The provider offers a number of NVQs and other qualifications relevant to the construction industry. The majority of learners are working towards an NVQ at level 2.
4. C&G holds subcontracts from a further education college to provide a range of NVQs and from another independent learning provider to provide the main qualification to learners working towards their apprenticeship in construction.
5. All coaching and assessment for NVQs are carried out in the workplace.
6. Government-funded training makes up the majority of the company training provision.
7. There are 66 learners aged 19 and over working towards NVQs. Currently, seven learners are working towards the NVQ portion of their apprenticeship programmes, subcontracted from another provider. There are no current learners, aged from 14 to 16, following Diploma programmes.
8. The proportion of learners in training from minority ethnic groups is 2%. No current learners are female. All learners are in employment. Learners are spread widely geographically across England, from Central and Greater London to Merseyside.
9. This was the provider's first inspection.
10. The provider provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Bexley College
 - Construction Skills.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Young learner provision: 14-16	12 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	156 learners 7 apprentices

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision		Grade 3
Capacity to improve		Grade 3
		Grade
Outcomes for learners		2
Quality of provision		3
Leadership and management		3
Safeguarding		3
Equality and diversity		3
Subject Areas		Grade
Construction, planning and the built environment		3

Overall effectiveness

11. C&G's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The number of learners who gain their qualifications is very high and well above national averages. Learners make good progress, gain confidence and improve their work practices. The promotion of health and the well-being of learners is good and learners feel very safe at work. However, insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of literacy, numeracy and language skills. Record keeping throughout the provision is weak.
12. The quality of assessment is satisfactory, although it varies between assessors. Tutors and assessors give good advice, guidance and support to learners. The planning and management of the programme are satisfactory. However, the discussion and reinforcement of relevant equality and diversity topics throughout the programme are insufficient.
13. The strong leadership by senior managers is effective in driving ambition and has led to very high success rates for learners. C&G recognises that the analysis of management information to plan improvements and the over-reliance on informal systems to monitor the provision are areas for improvement.

Main findings

- Success rates for NVQs are very high and well above national averages at 99%. Almost all learners achieve within the planned duration of their programmes.
- Learners are highly skilled, experienced and demonstrate good standards in the workplace. They make good progress towards their qualification. Learners enjoy their learning and talk confidently and knowledgeably about their work.
- Learners significantly improve their confidence, self-esteem and employability. Many learners achieve additional units, over and above those required for their qualification. Qualified learners, particularly those who are self-employed, benefit from considerably improved opportunities when tendering for work.
- Learners feel safe, have good knowledge of health and safety, and demonstrate safe working practices.
- C&G provides insufficient encouragement for learners to further develop their literacy, numeracy and language skills. Results of initial assessment are not recorded on individual learning plans (ILPs) and are not used effectively to plan learning or offer guidance to external sources of support.
- Workplace assessment is inconsistent. Learners' performance is accurately observed and recorded, but learners' knowledge and understanding are not consistently assessed through questioning. Decisions about learner competence are not always clearly recorded. Assessment planning sometimes fails to accurately identify specific tasks to be undertaken.
- Reviews of learners' progress are weak. Although learners receive frequent review visits, actions are not always agreed or adequately recorded. Assessors do not keep adequate records of learners' individual progress towards their qualification. Learners cannot accurately identify their level of achievement. Employers or workplace supervisors do not always contribute to the review.
- Programmes are well matched to the needs of employers and learners. Assessors are skilled in identifying qualifications that are closely allied to learners' experience and current work. However, learning goals are not recorded on ILP documents.
- Relationships with employers are strong, well established and effective. Liaison between assessors and workplace supervisors is very effective and supports the collection of workplace evidence. Employers support learners well.
- Support and encouragement for learners are particularly strong. Expectations for learners' success are high. Learners are encouraged to identify and discuss any barriers to their successful completion of their course. Assessors are flexible and make significant and determined efforts to conduct reviews and assessments at times and locations convenient for the learner and to fit in with learners' work patterns.
- The strong leadership from senior managers is effective in driving ambition and has led to very high success rates for learners. Senior managers have a very close, working knowledge of individual learners' progress. All staff understand and support the expectation of success for all learners.

- Formal safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. The company has an appropriate range of policies and risk assessments for children and vulnerable adults.
- The analysis of management information to identify trends in performance is weak. C&G has a wide range of available data. However, the analysis of the performance of different groups of learners and assessors to identify trends is inadequate. Statistical reports are not used effectively to support planning.
- Reinforcement of equality and diversity is insufficient. C&G has a range of established equality and diversity policies and procedures. The information on equality and diversity topics given to learners during their induction is clear. However, little is done throughout the programme to raise learners' awareness and check their understanding of relevant topics.
- Formal quality improvement arrangements are incomplete. C&G has carried out a series of pilot observations of group sessions, but no others. Senior managers rely heavily on frequent internal verification observations to judge the quality of teaching and assessment.

What does C&G Assessments and Training Ltd need to do to improve further?

- Make better use of standardisation meetings to improve the quality and consistency of assessment and to improve the understanding and use of initial assessment.
- Improve the quality of learners' progress reviews to ensure employer participation and effective integration of clear and suitable targets to support learners to complete their programme in the agreed time.
- Develop and consistently apply systematic arrangements for the collection and detailed analysis of management information.
- Increase the awareness of equality and diversity by providing more effective training for staff and promoting key issues during induction, training and assessment activities.
- Fully implement robust company-wide procedures, including observations of teaching and learning, to ensure a consistently good quality of provision for all learners.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the good support from assessors
- being able to achieve a recognised qualification
- the additional work opportunities that qualifications bring
- assessors with good industry knowledge
- the advice provided to accurately match qualifications with their needs.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the opportunity to do more bricklaying.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- good communications with assessors
- C&G's responsiveness to employers' requests
- staff expertise and knowledge of the industry
- having staff with nationally recognised qualifications
- flexibility in supporting learners.

What employers would like to see improved:

- no areas for improvement identified.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

14. C&G's capacity to make further improvements is satisfactory. Senior managers offer clear leadership and focus on driving very high success rates for learners. Overall, outcomes are good and well above national averages. C&G has developed good working relationships with employers and workplace supervisors to provide effective personal and workplace support for learners. Informal management structures are effective. Learning resources are satisfactory. The provider's internal verification procedures are appropriate. However, the arrangements for observations of teaching and learning are informal and unsystematic.
15. C&G has incomplete formal arrangements for monitoring and improving the quality of the provision. C&G carries out an annual self-assessment of its provision, which is inclusive of the views of users. The associated report is reasonably accurate and managers use it effectively to agree appropriate improvement plans. However, the analysis of data is weak and information reports do not fully support the identification of accurate success measures and appropriate monitoring of action plans.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

16. Success rates for NVQs are very high and well above national averages at 99%. Almost all learners achieve within the planned duration of their programmes. 14% of learners have progressed from level 2 to level 3 qualifications and a few have gone on to qualifications at levels 3 and 4.
17. Learners are highly skilled, experienced and demonstrate good standards in the workplace. They work well with colleagues and deal very effectively with customers and clients. They make good progress towards their qualification. Learners enjoy their learning and talk confidently and knowledgeably about their work.
18. Learners significantly improve their confidence, self-esteem and employability. Many learners achieve additional units, over and above those required for their qualification. For many, successful completion of the programme represents their first formal qualification and recognition of their expertise. Qualified learners, particularly those who are self-employed, benefit from very considerably improved opportunities when tendering for work. However, learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are not developed throughout the programme.
19. Learners feel safe, have good knowledge of health and safety and demonstrate safe working practices. Learners are able to work safely and expertly in busy office settings without endangering or inconveniencing those around them.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

20. C&G provides insufficient encouragement for learners to further develop their literacy, numeracy and language skills. Diagnosis of learners' current literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory, although their language skills are not assessed. Learners are informed of the results of testing, but have insufficient understanding of them. Results of initial assessment are not recorded on individual learning plans (ILP) and are not used effectively to plan learning or offer guidance to external sources of support.
21. Individual coaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff have relevant skills and expertise that are highly valued by learners and used effectively. There is particularly good development of learners' knowledge and understanding on scaffolding principles. Portfolios are well structured with clear referencing of evidence against performance outcomes.
22. Workplace assessment is inconsistent. Learners' performance is accurately observed and recorded, but learners' knowledge and understanding are not consistently assessed through questioning. Assessment reports are detailed and learners receive constructive verbal feedback. Decisions about learner competence are not always clearly recorded. Assessment planning sometimes fails to accurately identify specific tasks to be undertaken and the types of evidence and assessment methods to be used.
23. Reviews of learners' progress are weak. Although learners receive frequent review visits, actions are not always agreed or adequately recorded. Targets lack sufficient detail. Assessors do not keep adequate records of learners' individual progress towards their qualification. Learners cannot accurately identify their level of achievement. Employers or workplace supervisors do not always contribute to the review. There is insufficient reinforcement and questioning of learners' understanding of equality and diversity related to the construction industry.
24. Programmes are well matched to the needs of employers and learners. Assessors are skilled in identifying qualifications that are closely allied to learners' experience and present practice. Learners are successfully encouraged to identify how often they carry out each type of work identified in the qualification standards. However, learning goals are not recorded on ILP documents.
25. Relationships with employers are strong, well established and effective. Employer satisfaction is high. Employers value assessors' sector knowledge, the good communications and the frequent visits to learners. Liaison between assessors and workplace supervisors is very effective and supports the collection of workplace evidence. Employers support learners well. They relocate learners to different sites in order to improve access to infrequently occurring tasks and assessment opportunities.

26. Support and encouragement for learners are particularly strong. Expectations for learners' success are high. Learners are encouraged to identify and discuss any barriers to their successful completion of their course. Assessors' professional and good-humoured approach produces good working relationships and mutual respect. Assessors are skilled at helping learners to understand the evidence requirements of their qualification. Assessors are flexible and make significant and determined efforts to conduct reviews and assessments at times and locations convenient for the learner to fit in with learners' work patterns. Learners have very good access to assessors who respond rapidly and effectively to requests for help.
27. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets awarding body standards. Observation of assessors' performance is accurate and well recorded, as are learners' views of the assessment learners have undertaken. Assessors are provided with constructive feedback. There is insufficient sampling of portfolios throughout the programme.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

28. The strong leadership from senior managers is effective in driving ambition and has led to very high success rates for learners. Senior managers speak to assessors very frequently and have a very close, working knowledge of individual learners' progress. All staff understand and support the expectation of success for all learners. The systems for tracking and recording learners' progress are informal.
29. The management of training courses is satisfactory. Programmes are well planned and very well designed to meet the needs of employers. Careful planning of assessment minimises disruptions to work duties.
30. The company-wide formal safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Seven current learners are aged 16 to 17. The company has an appropriate range of policies and risk assessments for children and vulnerable adults.
31. The analysis of management information to identify trends in performance is weak. C&G has a wide range of available data, which it uses well to ensure compliance with funding body and financial requirements. However, the analysis of the performance of different groups of learners and assessors to identify trends is inadequate. Statistical reports do not accurately reflect the available information and are not used effectively to support planning.
32. Reinforcement of equality and diversity is insufficient. C&G has a range of established equality and diversity policies and procedures. The proportion of female learners reflects the low representation of females across the construction industry. Learners from minority ethnic groups have consistently high success rates. White British learners are slightly less likely to succeed in a timely manner. The provider recognises these trends, although the numbers of learners who do not succeed are small and can affect the trend analysis disproportionately. The proportion of learners completing by their target end

date varies in different geographical regions. This aspect has yet to be recognised and investigated by managers. The information on equality and diversity topics given to learners during their induction is clear. However, little is done throughout the programme to raise learners' awareness of these issues and check their understanding of relevant topics.

33. Formal quality improvement arrangements are incomplete. C&G has carried out a series of pilot observations of group sessions held in the Becton training centre for Diploma learners, but no others. Senior managers rely heavily on frequent internal verification observations to judge the quality of teaching and assessment. However, no systematic, criteria-based system for observation is in place to assess accurately the quality of all the key parts of teaching and learning, and to record trends.
34. The self-assessment report is reasonably accurate, although very descriptive, and managers use it effectively to agree appropriate improvement plans.

Information about the inspection

35. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's centre manager, 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 funding body 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.
36. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
C&G Assessments and Training 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	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners Part-time learners	73	73
Overall effectiveness	3	3
Capacity to improve	3	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1	
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?	1	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	na	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	na	
Quality of provision	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3	
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	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	na	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3	
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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