

Certified Computing Personnel

Reinspection monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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REINSPECTION MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

The Certified Computing Personnel (CCP) group was established in 1994 and has run government-funded training programmes since 2001, predominantly in the Brent and Harrow area. It particularly provides training opportunities for disadvantaged young people or those with poor educational experiences. It currently has eleven full-time staff including the managing director and four senior managers, three part-time staff, and three who are freelance. Current funded programmes include Foundation Learning and apprenticeships in plumbing and IT. The current plumbing apprentices do not have employed status. In addition, CCP offers private training in management, plumbing and IT.

At the last inspection in August 2010, CCP's overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate. The focus of this visit was to judge the effectiveness of developments since then, particularly how well the experience of learners has improved and the extent to which quality improvement activities, programme delivery and the use of management information have been adapted to overcome the identified areas for improvement.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

How successful are self-assessment and quality improvement activities in raising standards and ensuring provision is of a high quality, and to what extent are staff and learners involved in improvement planning?

Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection self-assessment was judged to be inaccurate, with too much focus on audit. The main driver for improvement since then has been a post-inspection action plan, although additional improvements identified through routine self-assessment are also covered well in a separate quality improvement plan. The action plan is very detailed and addresses every point raised in the report, although with proper identification of, and focus on, six core areas for improvement. Actions are being promptly completed, although a lack of learners following a recruitment ban means that the rigour of improvements linked directly with training has not been fully tested. The great detail of the plan makes it difficult to evaluate overall progress in a simple way. However, managers and staff are fully conversant with their required actions, and when and how they need to complete them, and the great majority of actions have been completed or are close to completion. The annual self-assessment report is more inclusive and accurate. Learners are better involved in improvement activities through more rigorous surveys and discussions, leading to new improvement actions. CCP's work in this area demonstrates a better capacity to improve than was seen at the inspection.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made in maintaining or improving the outcomes for learners?

Reasonable progress

Outcomes were satisfactory overall at the last inspection. Success rates for Train to Gain Skills for Life learners were exceptionally high, but they were low in level 2 information and communication technology (ICT) courses and satisfactory in other areas. Few learners progressed into full-time employment. Attendance of current learners is now good, with much closer monitoring of attendance and punctuality. Learners understand the importance of regular attendance and good time keeping, and unauthorised absences are declining. Good practical help and guidance are given to relevant learners to enable them to obtain their Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) cards. Since the August 2010 inspection CCP has been unable to recruit further learners. Its priority and focus are ensuring the successful achievement of the remaining learners and supporting them into further qualifications or, where possible, employment, although progression into employment is likely to remain low. The overall achievement rate for plumbing apprentices at the end of 2009/10 was low at 50%, although early indications are that the rate is now improving. For most ICT programmes learners' achievement was at least satisfactory and in some cases it was good.

Quality of provision

How effective are the actions taken to improve the planning, recording and monitoring of individual learners' progress?

Reasonable progress

The last inspection judged progress reviews to be very weak, lacking structure, having imprecise targets and not recording learners' progress. The monitoring of learners' progress and the recording of achievement have improved. Tutors now review their learners' progress more effectively and make better use of initial and diagnostic assessments in preparing individual learning plans. Achievement is now recorded regularly, and tutors are more easily able to identify slow progress or causes for concern and initiate appropriate support. Written feedback to learners is generally satisfactory, although in some cases it is not fully clear what the learner has done well and what they need to do to improve further. The virtual learning environment is used well to support learning and monitor achievement. Learners on the plumbing programme are now much clearer about how well they are progressing. Learners can access all assignments and support materials from home; in some cases this has promoted better parental support and involvement in learning. The progress monitoring chart is now displayed in the plumbing classroom and this has developed healthy competition between learners, with individual learners having greater control over when their assessments take place.

What progress has been made in ensuring that relevant staff have the expertise, training and support necessary to meet the learners' individual needs?**Significant progress**

Staff development was seen as insufficient and ineffective at the previous inspection and staff had insufficient expertise in curriculum planning to meet learners' needs. The provision was chaotic and disorganised. This aspect has been a particular focus of recent staff and management activity, and CCP is now significantly better placed to meet learners' needs when new learners are recruited. New staff have been recruited to aid with the identification and meeting of organisational and individual needs. A thorough analysis of staff expertise and individual strengths and weaknesses has been carried out through a combination of constructively critical lesson observations, discussions and review of learner records such as progress reviews. As a result, individual and company-wide training plans and individual support and coaching have been introduced and are being properly implemented. Peer support and the sharing of good practice have improved significantly. The improvement in resources includes a range of tutor-devised on-line material, with the appropriate aim of providing a wider variety of learning activities. A better system of regular meetings is planned to cover both the reviewing of learners' progress and continuing staff improvements.

What progress has been made in ensuring that all learners have suitable opportunities to develop accredited skills?**Reasonable Progress**

Ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to develop vocational skills and to have them accredited was a recommendation following the last inspection. A stronger focus on developing employability skills now gives learners a better understanding of the additional skills and experience necessary to gain employment. CCP is developing a network of experienced trade professionals who will register with the company for work in North London and the surrounding area. Where appropriate they will have access to subsidised further training and qualifications, providing they agree to take on apprentices for a proportion of the time or for a specific period to enable learners to complete National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) units. Negotiations are also at an advanced stage to work with a local community group to offer plumbing services to people who are on low incomes or disadvantaged. Employers who have taken ICT, customer service and plumbing learners on work placements or for specific projects speak highly of the quality of the learners and the good support and communication from CCP. Jobsearch for learners is now better structured, with improved support and resources. Learners now have jobsearch targets and receive better advice and guidance on applying for jobs, attending interviews and maintaining employment. Feedback to learners following jobsearch sessions is satisfactory, but targets are not sufficiently clear or focused on actions that can be reviewed.

Leadership and management

What progress has CCP made in improving the collection, collation and analysis of management information in order to improve the performance of programmes and the experience of learners?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection CCP has begun to make more effective use of management data to improve the provision. There is a better approach to ensuring that all levels of staff are aware of overall and individual learners' progress so that any problems can be promptly identified and rectified. Improved quarterly management reports examine general strengths and weaknesses of the provision. There is a better understanding of published qualification success rates, and how they can be used appropriately in self-assessment. Tutors are using course-specific systems more effectively to monitor learners' progress, and using the results better to update the company management information system and to identify individual learners' needs. This individual learner information has the potential to enable CCP to focus more efficiently on staff and contract performance during meetings between tutors and managers. Following the improvement in initial and diagnostic assessment, better information on individual learners is available to tutors to help them plan learning.

How successful are the new arrangements to ensure that learners are protected, staff have up-to-date and appropriate training, and relevant procedures are effective and contribute to the success of learners?

Significant Progress

The need to improve arrangements to protect learners was identified as an urgent area for improvement at the previous inspection. This has been rightly dealt with as a matter of priority, with clear and appropriate actions in the post-inspection action plan completed. For instance, appropriate staff have now undertaken formal awareness and specialist training. Staff understanding of safeguarding responsibilities is now good. Learners now have an improved introduction to the subject during their induction, and routine reinforcement through a subsequent test and discussion during progress reviews. The revised policies and learner materials are now clearer and more relevant. Those learners still in training have a good understanding of safeguarding, and feel safe. Physical improvements have been made, such as the security of the accommodation and ensuring that young learners are not left unsupervised. Risk assessments are now an improved routine part of CCP's work, and help ensure a safe working environment on the premises and with employers. Relevant staff have completed refresher first-aid and safety training since the previous inspection. It is pleasing to see that further improvements on safeguarding, over and above those highlighted in the inspection report, have been set out in the routine quality improvement plan.

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