CLR Management & Training Consultancy Ltd
Inspection report

Unique reference number:	58450
Name of lead inspector:	Anthony Ward HMI
Last day of inspection:	17 February 2011
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Information about the provider

1. CLR Management & Training Consultancy Ltd (CLR) was established in August 2003 as a limited company, having operated from January 1998 as a sole trader business. The company is based in Bow, London, and offers Train to Gain programmes funded by the Skills Funding Agency, together with a range of full cost provision which is the major part of CLR's work. CLR provides National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) training and assessment programmes covering customer service, team leading, business and administration, management and advice and guidance. CLR has a managing director and a people and skills director. It employs three additional staff and works with three associate members of staff.

2. At the time of the inspection, 16 learners were on Train to Gain programmes, the majority on programmes leading to a NVQ level 2 in business administration. A few learners were taking qualifications in customer service, team leadership or management. Train to Gain learners work for a range of mainly voluntary sector and community organisations. Learners' assessment and training take place at their workplaces. CLR recruits learners mainly from East London in areas of relative high deprivation where the population is very diverse.

3. CLR does not provide Train to Gain provision on behalf of any other provider, nor do other organisations provide Train to Gain provision on behalf of CLR.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision: Train to Gain	104 learners

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	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3

Subject Areas	
Business administration and law	**3**

Overall effectiveness

4.   Learners enjoy their experience and most gain their qualification. These learners all complete by their expected end date, although the overall number who achieve their qualification is too low. Current learners are generally making at least satisfactory progress and they and their employers value the benefit they get from the programme. Learners develop increased confidence and improve their working practices. The assessment process is effective. However, learners often do not have sufficiently individualised learning plans. Assessors are flexible to the needs of the learners and their employers and offer good support. Learners feel safe and are treated fairly. Management systems are generally effective, however the quality improvement systems are too informal and have not had sufficient impact on the quality of the programme.

Main findings

■   Overall outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Nearly three quarters of learners gain their qualification by their planned end date, which is virtually all learners who succeed. Current learners are making at least satisfactory progress, however overall success rates are too low. The development of learners' personal and vocational skills is good and learners feel safe in the workplace.

■   Learning and assessment are satisfactory. Assessors use a good variety of assessment methods and learners build satisfactory portfolios of evidence. Employers and assessors provide effective on-the-job coaching. However, initial assessment, learning plans and reviews of progress are not sufficiently focused on learners' individual needs.

■   CLR meets the needs of most employers and learners effectively. The programme helps learners to improve in their work performance, helping with their career prospects. Some employers have a good involvement in the learners' programme, although others have an insufficient understanding of the learners' qualification. However, employers speak highly about the programme.

■   Support for learners is satisfactory. Assessors and employers provide effective support, both in the job role and in the learning programme. The provision of information, advice and guidance is satisfactory. However, the recording at mid-point and exit reviews is insufficient in detailing next steps for learners.

■   Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers demonstrate a clear desire to continually improve the provision. Systems are suitable for a small organisation. Data management is satisfactory, premises and resources are well managed and communication is good. Staff are focused on the success of the learners and are flexible to the learners' needs.

■   Learners have an adequate understanding of health and safety and equality and diversity. CLR works well with a range of partners to attract learners whose circumstances have made them hard to reach. Employers and CLR staff treat learners fairly and they know whom to contact should they have any concerns. However, learners' understanding of equality and diversity is not sufficiently reinforced by staff.

■   Quality systems are very informal and are not sufficiently effective in ensuring improvement and monitoring of the quality of the learners' experience. CLR recognises the need to develop its quality framework. Some new initiatives are in place but these have not yet had time to have full impact on results.

What does CLR Management & Training Consultancy Ltd need to do to improve further?

■   Introduce a more thorough initial assessment process, including a diagnostic assessment for literacy, language and numeracy, to better inform individual learning plans.

■   Improve the quality of learner reviews and action planning through a better focus on individual learners' needs and what learners require to progress further.

■   Strengthen employer engagement throughout the programme to improve employers' understanding and involvement in the qualification to better support learners.

■   Develop arrangements to promote learners' understanding of equality and diversity through more informative induction material and better reinforcement during reviews.

■ Further develop and formalise quality improvement systems to ensure effective monitoring and more rapid improvement of the provision.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors
What learners like:

■ achieving a qualification to help get a job

■ becoming more confident

■ the good support from assessors

■ improving the quality of work

■ the helpful and approachable staff.

What learners would like to see improved:

■ the delay in starting

■ difficult to understand workbooks

■ the slow download of the e-NVQ.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors
What employers like:

■ the excellent communications

■ the good workshops

■ the improvement in learners' job performance.

What employers would like to see improved:

■ their level of involvement in learners' programme.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement   Grade 3

5. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. The proportion of learners who complete their programme within their planned end date is close to the national average. Overall success rates are increasing but are still too low. Learners make at least satisfactory progress and develop good personal and vocational skills. CLR generally meets employers' and learners' needs well and the work that learners do has a very positive impact on local communities. CLR's managers provide clear direction and support for staff to meet local needs and aid participation and inclusion.

6. CLR's self-assessment process is inclusive and makes good use of feedback from learners and employers. Staff are enthusiastic and well focused on the success of the learners. Managers monitor the quality of provision using a range of quality assurance processes. However, these are not sufficiently thorough. Managers have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement, although these are not well recorded and quality improvement planning is underdeveloped. CLR recognises the need to develop its quality systems further.

Outcomes for learners   Grade 3

7. Overall outcomes are satisfactory. Success rates have shown an improving trend. In 2009/10 the proportion of learners who complete their programme within their planned end date were satisfactory with nearly three quarters of learners completing by their planned end date. Overall success rates, although meeting the contract minimum level of performance target, were too low. However, nearly all learners who successfully completed their programme finished within their planned time.

8. Current learners make at least satisfactory progress towards achieving their qualification. Most are on track to achieve within a four-month timescale. Learners enjoy their learning programme and feel they benefit both personally and in their work. Learners feel safe in their jobs. Two groups of learners, although small in number, performed less well than the whole. This was recognised by CLR and appropriate action taken.

9. Learners develop good personal and vocational skills. They demonstrate a significant improvement in the standard of their work and gain a better understanding of how to do their jobs to a higher standard. For example, they deal more confidently with customer issues and develop better team-working skills. They improve their knowledge, in aspects such as health and safety, gaining a better understanding of how to complete risk assessments.

10. Learners improve their overall awareness of the organisations in which they work and the work that they do has a very positive impact on local communities. Most learners work as volunteers in organisations who provide

support and advice for many disadvantaged people, as well as those from specific minority ethnic groups.

The quality of provision   Grade 3

11. The quality of learning and assessment is satisfactory. Assessors use a good range of assessment methods and learners build satisfactory portfolios that have a sufficient variety of evidence. The recent introduction of the e-NVQ is having a positive impact, with learners welcoming this method of assessment. Learners complete workbooks effectively to demonstrate knowledge and understanding. Staff complete reviews of progress, however these are often insufficiently individualised and do not effectively detail required action. The information recorded is often too similar for different learners.

12. Employers provide good on-the-job coaching to meet the needs of the learners' job role. For example, one employer provides a daily work plan for the learner that helps develop their skills. Assessors also provide effective one-to-one coaching via visits and electronic communication to support learners' progress in learning. CLR assesses levels of literacy and numeracy, however initial assessment is not sufficiently thorough to identify specific individual support needs. In addition, individual learning plans do not effectively record individual vocational skills development needs.

13. CLR generally meets employers' and learners' needs effectively. Employers value the improved quality of learners' job performance and support their work towards accredited qualifications to help learners progress to employment. Learners improve their employability skills and most achieve and on time. The range of subjects is appropriate and some learners progress to a level 3 qualification.

14. CLR has satisfactory partnership arrangements. It has good links with voluntary organisations across London, widening access to learners who often work in just a voluntary capacity. Some employers participate well in the programme, offering specific one-to-one support for their learners and actively engaging with assessors. However, some other employers are insufficiently involved with the learners' qualification.

15. Support for learners is satisfactory. Induction is effective in giving learners a sufficient understanding of their programme. Assessors provide effective support through visits and good communication. Employers provide satisfactory support, with close supervision of learners. In the best examples, employers provide specific time during work to provide support for the qualification. However, in some instances assessors do not negotiate sufficient time away from work to meet with learners at support visits.

16. Information, advice and guidance are provided at the start, mid-point and at exit of the programme and are satisfactory overall. The initial process is effective for learners to identify a suitable learning programme. However, the recording at the mid-point and exit is insufficient and ineffective. It does not

give a sufficiently clear indication and action plan of how individual learners can progress further.

Leadership and management   Grade 3

17. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers demonstrate a clear desire to continually improve the provision. Systems and processes are being developed appropriately and are generally suitable for a small organisation. Data management is satisfactory and the system is capable of further development. The premises and resources are well managed. Communication is good both internally and externally with learners, employers and partner organisations. The suitably qualified and experienced staff are enthusiastic and well focused on the success of the learners.

18. Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. A director takes responsibility for safeguarding, which is discussed at team meetings. Staff have undergone appropriate checks and have a satisfactory awareness of safeguarding issues. No safeguarding incidents have been reported. Health and safety have a high profile within CLR. Learners receive appropriate information at their induction. They have an adequate understanding of health and safety in the workplace and know what to do if there are any issues. Assessors have appropriate knowledge and awareness of health and safety and risk assessment. They carry out assessments of employers' premises and activities through questioning learners and employers. However, formal health and safety visits to employers' premises are not undertaken routinely. These are planned to restart imminently.

19. Arrangements for equality and diversity are satisfactory. CLR works well with partners to help and support those who would otherwise not take up training and accreditation. The great majority of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Staff are flexible to the needs of learners and work hard to ensure that the provision is inclusive. Learners' success is celebrated well through individual and group presentations on employer premises. Equality and diversity are discussed at all team meetings and staff have a satisfactory awareness of equality. CLR identifies variations in performance by particular groups of learners and has put in place action to rectify these. Documentation and reviews are too superficial to help reinforce learners' understanding of wider equality and diversity issues. However, the work completed in their qualification helps learners to understand their rights and responsibilities. They feel they are treated fairly and know whom to contact should they have any concerns.

20. User engagement is satisfactory. Learners have regular opportunity to evaluate the service they receive. They feel that CLR listens to what they say and acts upon it. Employers receive good communication and support from CLR and recognise the changes made as a result of their comments.

21. Quality systems are very informal and, even for a small organisation, are not sufficiently effective in ensuring improvement. For example, the mechanism for monitoring the quality of interventions during the programme is not sufficiently

systematic. CLR recognises the need to develop its quality improvement systems. Some new initiatives are in place. However, these have not yet had time to have full impact on the quality of provision and success rates. Internal verification is satisfactory and systems are fit for purpose.

22. CLR offers satisfactory value for money. Outcomes are satisfactory and most learners make at least satisfactory progress. Management systems are appropriate for the size of the organisation and staff are suitably qualified and experienced. Learners develop increased confidence and improve their work skills during their programme.

Information about the inspection

23. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's learning and skills director, 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 and data on learners and their achievement.

24. Inspectors used 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 and interviewed staff and employers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

CLR Management & Training Consultancy 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 Full-time learners Part-time learners	16	16
Overall effectiveness	3	3
Capacity to improve	3	
Outcomes for learners	3	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	4	
How well do learners progress?	3	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	3	
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	N/A	
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2	
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?	3	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3	
Leadership and management	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3	
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	N/A	
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?	4	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3	

*where applicable to the type of provision