

Capital Training Group

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 58587

Name of lead inspector: Joy Montgomery HMI

Last day of inspection: 07 October 2011

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Worple House

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Information about the provider

- Capital Engineering Group Holdings Ltd (Capital Group) is a recruitment company that started delivering government funded training in 2008. In 2009, Capital Group established Capital Training Group (CTG) to unite its subsidiary training companies and manage the delivery of government-funded training. In 2009/10 CTG delivered Train to Gain, European Social Funded programmes and started apprenticeship programmes. CTG holds a contract with the Skills Funding Agency to deliver apprenticeships and vocational qualifications to adults. Funded programmes represent less than 10% of Capital Group's business.
- 2. CTG's head office is based in Wimbledon. Most learners are based in London, Essex and Kent and a few learners are based in the North East and East Midlands. Partners, including three subsidiary companies and six subcontractors, deliver all training, assessments and reviews. At the time of the inspection there were 329 learners, of whom 95 were apprentices and 234 adult skills learners. The vast majority, 238 learners were in the subject area of construction and 65 in business administration and customer services. The remainder were on programmes in the subject areas of information and communications technologies (ICT), health and social care, horticulture and Skills for Life.
- 3. The following organisations provide training on behalf of Capital Training Group:
 - Hands on Skills (construction)
 - Industrial Training Services (construction)
 - The Plumbing Academy (construction)
 - John Laing Training (construction)
 - Siddhi Training (customer services)
 - Slic Training (various subject areas)
 - ITEC Learning Technologies (information and communications technology)
 - Future Unlimited (business administration)
 - Fusion People Training (customer services)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Employer provision:	
Train to Gain	441 learners
Apprenticeships	84 apprentices

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision Grade 4

Capacity to improve Grade 4

	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management Safeguarding Equality and diversity	3 3 4

Subject Areas	Grade
Construction, planning and the built environment	3
Business, administration and law	3

Overall effectiveness

- 4. The overall effectiveness of Capital Training Group's provision is inadequate with an inadequate capacity to improve. The majority of learners complete their qualifications in the timeframes expected and gain valuable occupational certificates and many construction learners gain licences to practice. However, success rates on Train to Gain declined in 2010/11. The personal and occupational skills developed contribute positively to employers' businesses and ensures self-employed practitioners gain work. However, several apprentices in plastering, plumbing and business administration have not yet secured suitable work experience or employment.
- 5. The quality of learners' training experiences varies between the different subcontractors with many providing good training in well-equipped training centres and others not receiving appropriate or agreed training. Learners are generally well supported by trainers and assessors as they progress through their programmes. Not enough learners improve their language, literacy and numeracy skills when these are identified as being at a low level.
- 6. Management of most programmes is satisfactory and CTG provides satisfactory support to providers delivering programmes on their behalf. CTG's quality

assurance arrangements focus too much on compliance to contractual obligations and not sufficiently on improving the overall quality of provision. Improving the provision is often left to the individual subcontractors to do with mixed success. The management of safeguarding is satisfactory. The promotion of equality and diversity is inadequate and disparities exist between different groups of learners.

Main findings

- The majority of adult learners complete their qualifications in the time frames expected and success rates are at, or above, national averages in construction and Skills for Life. However success rates are low in the smallest subject areas and disparities exist in success rates for small groups of learners.
- Success rates for the few apprentices who completed in 2010/11 were good. Current apprentices are making satisfactory progress in most subject areas although a significant number in construction and a few in business administration have yet to secure sustainable employment or work experience in order to complete their apprenticeship.
- Learners demonstrate good workplace skills and employers comment on how learners grow in confidence and take on additional responsibilities. Business administration learners deal confidently with customers and colleagues. Construction learners gain key industry accreditation ensuring continued employment in their sector.
- Learners feel safe in the training centres and workplaces. Health and safety is appropriately prioritised in construction training and learners demonstrate safe working practices on sites and in the training centre. Arrangements to safeguard learners are satisfactory.
- Teaching and learning are good in many sessions delivered in the training centres. Access to specialist equipment is good and resources support learning well in most training centres. Plastering apprentices currently lack access to adequate resources.
- Learning activities are not planned in sufficient detail to ensure individual needs are met and learners develop appropriate language, literacy and numeracy skills. Reviews on how learners are progressing against their planned learning aims are not sufficiently detailed to ensure CTG knows when learners will complete.
- Assessors carefully plan assessments to fit with learners' working patterns and employers' business requirements. However, several business administration apprentices wait too long before their first workplace assessment and some construction learners are asked to prepare additional evidence which increases the time taken to complete.
- CTG provides good support to its delivery partners on meeting contractual requirements. They provide training and facilitate opportunities to share good practice. However, partners are not always aware of each other's provision and

CTG does not fully exploit the potential synergy between partners especially in construction.

- Information, advice and guidance on the different courses are satisfactory for most learners and employers. However, a minority group of learners in a significant subject have not yet received the training and accreditation originally specified in their learning agreements.
- Equality and diversity is not sufficiently promoted. Learners show respect for others and most have a rudimentary understanding of their rights and responsibilities. However, learners' understanding of diversity is weak in construction and their awareness is not improved through training, assessment and reviews.
- Subcontractors encourage learners and employers to give feedback and sometimes they use this to make improvements. Systems for gathering views vary widely between partners and there is no consistent approach to ensuring responses are collated, trends analysed and suggestions for improvement implemented.
- Arrangements for quality assurance and continuous improvement are underdeveloped. Too much reliance is placed on partners assuring and improving the quality of their own provision. Observations of teaching and learning are not systematic and no central record is maintained to analyse trends over time. Self-assessment reports are overly descriptive and lack clear judgements.

What does Capital Training Group need to do to improve further?

- Ensure learners achieve within the time frames expected through better tracking of progress and continued access to appropriate assessment opportunities.
- Ensure subcontractors find all apprentices work experience placements early in their apprenticeship and all learners and employers receive accurate information about their learning programmes.
- Improve identification of, and support for, language, literacy and numeracy needs to ensure that all learners achieve their potential.
- Improve the promotion of equality and diversity by all staff, particularly in construction, to ensure learners fully understand their rights and responsibilities. Analyse success rates to identify any differences in performance and take action to narrow any achievement gaps.
- Fully develop quality assurance and improvement arrangements, including selfassessment processes, observations of teaching, assessments and reviews and the use of feedback from employers and learners to ensure they are systematic and contribute to improvement.

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

- the helpful and supportive assessors who provide flexible assessments
- access to qualifications that are needed for employment
- the variety of techniques used in the training delivered in the training centres
- learning different ways of doing a job
- the help and support to get on the career ladder and advance.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more accurate information about the training programmes
- greater opportunities to gain work experience and employment
- the ability to record evidence digitally and on-line rather than as written work
- assignments that are more relevant to the job.

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

- learners who are well matched to the requirements of the job
- the very flexible approaches to assessment
- the good skills learners develop.

What employers would like to see improved:

- clearer information on how assessments work
- better communication on what will happen and when.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 4

- 7. CTG's capacity to make and sustain improvement is inadequate. Success rates on adult skills provision were high 2008/09 and 2009/10 although variations exist between subject areas. The proportion achieving within the agreed timescales declined in 2010/11. Success rates for the small number of apprentices who have completed are high but this programme is too new to determine trends in performance. Data is not used to identify and understand the performance of different groups of learners.
- 8. CTG works closely with new subcontractors to ensure they are able to deliver the programmes offered. CTG's quality assurance systems have a strong focus on compliance to the funding contact while subsidiary companies and subcontractors own quality systems focus more on the experience for the learners. CTG's own systems do not sufficiently capture or co-ordinate the quality improvements made by their partners. One subcontractor stopped offering programmes where success rate were low and two other subcontractors improved their delivery following detailed feedback from learners.
- 9. The self-assessment process is inclusive and all partners contribute to CTG's overall self-assessment report. However, the resulting report is overly descriptive and does not effectively assess the quality of the provision. Many strengths identified in the report are overstated and considered to be normal practice. Recent action planning, arising from self-assessment, has yet to make an effective contribution to improvement.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

- 10. Success rates are high and above national averages for most adult learners. The vast majority complete within the timescales expected although success rates declined in 2010/11 by 6% due to learners on gas network operations taking longer than expected to complete. In 2009/10, success rates were high on Skills for Life and low for the small number of adults in animal care and health and social care; these programmes are no longer offered. The high success rates for females and low success rates for Asian learners are based on a small number of learners. However, CTG were not aware of these disparities.
- 11. Success rates for the small number of apprentices who have completed are high and above national averages. Most apprentices are making satisfactory progress towards completion of their frameworks although several plastering, plumbing and business administration apprentices are making slow progress as they are not currently employed and not all are working in a suitable learning environment.

- 12. Learners develop effective work-related skills in the training centres and workplaces. Learners demonstrate high levels of competency in plant operations, highways maintenance, plumbing, customer services and use of information technology. Employers value the positive contribution made to their businesses through the development of learners' occupationally relevant skills.
- 13. Learners demonstrate safe working practices on construction sites and health and safety is appropriately prioritised in the training centres. All learners understand the need to keep themselves and others safe. Learners know what to do should they have any concerns about health, safety and welfare.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

- 14. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Trainers are knowledgeable, occupationally experienced and support learners well. Training sessions observed made good use of scenarios to develop learners understanding although interactions with learners were not always sufficiently varied to maintain learners' interest. Many learners benefit from well-resourced training facilities particularly in plumbing, and plant operations. Most customer service and ICT learners rely on training from their employers and on-line resources as the training centres are too far away for them to attend training sessions.
- 15. In business administration, learners who use English as an additional language are supported well to develop their skills so they can better understand and follow written procedures and verbal instructions. In construction no formal assessment is made of learners' language needs. Construction learners who have low levels of literacy and numeracy are reluctant to take up courses suggested and do not improve theses skills.
- 16. Assessments are carefully planned to fit in with the work learners are doing and their working hours. Assessors provide good occupational support to learners and help learners provide a diverse range of evidence for their portfolios although gas network operations learners are expected to provide more evidence than others. Reviews of learners' progress are less thorough. Employers and learners are not always clear what training is still needed or when specific parts of the programme will be completed.
- 17. The range of courses and programmes meet the needs of learners and employers well. Many construction learners gain industry required licences enabling them to be self-employed or work as contractors. Delivery partners have a good understanding of the needs of learners in their specific sectors and most offer a satisfactory range of funded and full cost courses. No progression opportunities are currently available for intermediate administration learners.
- 18. CTG provides good support to its delivery partners to ensure they comply with their contracts. Regular training opportunities are made available to partners,

often on their own premises. CTG facilitates the sharing of good practice by linking partners to act as critical friends. However, not all sub-contractors know how they fit into the wider network and close working between subsidiary companies is under developed. Delivery partners develop satisfactory or good working relationships with employers and a few work with local schools.

19. Information, advice and guidance provided at the start of the programmes vary between different providers. A few learners are not receiving the training originally agreed. Trainers and assessors provide satisfactory care and support to learners.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

- 20. CTG's strategy for the planning and development of learning programmes is satisfactory. The company has grown the number of sub-contractors to meet the needs of employers and learners, widen the range of subjects offered and increase participation of females and minority ethnic groups. CTG has recently appointed a training and development manager who has made a good start on planning for the further developments. The company's plans to improve the links between its training and recruitment groups for the benefit of learners have not yet been fully exploited.
- 21. Adult skills provision is satisfactorily planned and managed. The management of construction training and business administration training is satisfactory overall. However, CTG are not managing effectively the transfer of plastering learners from one subsidiary company to another. CTG does not have an effective strategy for ensuring that those assessed as needing literacy, numeracy and language support receive it.
- 22. Arrangements for safeguarding learners are satisfactory. CTG has an up-to-date safeguarding policy and has a designated senior member of staff who has been trained appropriately. It provides training for its own staff and delivery partners and carries out appropriate checks. All staff who come into regular and frequent contact with the small number of young, unemployed learners have had Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks. Partners safeguarding policies are checked.
- 23. Promotion of equality and diversity is inadequate. CTG has up-to-date policies for equality and diversity. It provides regular training and updating to its own staff and its partners although it is unclear who attends. Equality and diversity are adequately referred to in learners' inductions and handbooks. Learners in administration have satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities while in construction learners' understanding is not checked effectively enough and understanding of diversity is weak. Equality and diversity are not sufficiently well reinforced through training and assessment or progress reviews.

- 24. CTG analyses levels of participation by different groups of learners and targets the development of provision to increase representation from specific groups with some success. CTG do not routinely analyse the success rates for different groups of learners and has not yet indentified any issues causing disparities in performance for small groups of learners.
- 25. Feedback from learners and employers is encouraged but the system for carrying out surveys of learners' and employers' views is not consistently applied across the partnership. Responses, though read, are not collated, analysed or used effectively to improve provision. Some individual partners periodically review responses to learner surveys and take appropriate action to improve.
- 26. CTG's own arrangements to quality assure and improve the quality of provision are not sufficiently well-developed. CTG's quality cycle arrangements are not sufficiently clear, formalised or systematic and too much reliance is placed on sub-contractors assuring and improving the quality of their own provision. CTG has no formal written procedures for the systematic observation and grading of teaching, learning and progress reviews, and no central record in place to track trends over time. Observations, which are supposed to take place in partner providers, are often not done.
- 27. All partners are involved in self assessment and CTG provides support on the format and process for this. However, the quality and timeliness of submissions vary and many reports are too descriptive and insufficiently based on appropriate evidence. Inappropriate self assessment requirements are placed on some small providers. The action plans produced by partners are not sufficiently well used to inform an effective and overall action plan for CTG.
- 28. CTG has a strong focus on the risk assessment of new providers to ensure effective financial management of the contract. Staffing and training resources vary across partners but are generally satisfactory and provide satisfactory value for money.

Subject areas

Construction, planning and the built environment Grade 3

Context

29. Currently 238 learners are in training, 209 are on adult skills programmes and 29 on apprenticeship programmes. Thirty learners are working towards gas network operations qualifications and 102 towards qualifications in plant operations. The remainder are working towards a variety of construction related qualifications including highway maintenance, plumbing and plastering.

Key findings

- Success rates for construction learners are satisfactory. On Train to Gain programmes, completion within the planned timeframes have declined from 100% in 2008/09 to the national averages except for gas network qualifications which are 8% below national averages. Four apprentices have successfully completed their qualifications but most current apprentices are making slow progress towards completion of their qualifications.
- Learners demonstrate good work related skills. Learners are competent in their plant operations and highway maintenance work. The approved certification for many learners significantly increases career prospects and confidence in applying for work in this mainly sub-contracted sector. However, there is a lack of employment opportunities for some plastering and plumbing apprentices.
- Learners feel safe. Safe working practices are satisfactorily promoted at provider's premises and on construction sites. However, some important mandatory health and safety signage is not in place in Barking and opportunities are missed to develop learners understanding of health and safety in workplace reviews.
- Training overall is satisfactory. Good resources are used effectively in the offsite training for plant operations in Billericay and for plumbers in Edenbridge. The training for gas network operations is good. All training undertaken on construction sites is planned as part of the learners' natural work pattern.
- The development of learners' language, literacy and numeracy skills are insufficient. Many learners' initial assessments show low levels of literacy and numeracy and very few take up any courses suggested for improving these skills as this often means additional travel costs and time. There is no specific assessment of learners' language skills.
- Assessment of learners work is thorough and assessors plan carefully to ensure learners are able to effectively accredit a range of their skills. Assessments are particularly flexible to meet learners and employer needs and are offered at short notice and outside normal working hours.
- The range of provision meets the needs of most learners and employers. However, the sub-contracted providers do not share best practice sufficiently

- well to ensure learners' needs are met. In response to external verifiers, different requirements are place on learners to produce specific types and quantities of evidence for their portfolios. This is a significant contributory factor in the slow completion rate for learners in gas network operations.
- Initial information, advice and guidance is generally satisfactory for most learners. However, it is unsatisfactory for a significant minority of learners in plant operations and highways maintenance and complaints are not always dealt with effectively.
- Management by CTG of sub-contractors' compliance to contracts is good. However, the management of plant operations and plastering programmes in Barking is not effective in meeting the needs of learners. CTG has not managed the transfer of plastering learners from Goldtrowel to Hands On Skills well and learners are unsure how and when they will complete their programmes.
- Equality and diversity is not adequately promoted and rarely discussed during training or progress reviews. Learners have a very limited understanding of what equality means and very few understood the concept of diversity. This lack of understanding is also evident in several delivery partners' paperwork and in the attitudes and behaviours of some of staff.
- The self-assessment process is insufficiently critical and states many normal practices as strengths. Insufficient evidence exists to support the strengths identified. Most self-assessment reports are overly descriptive and judgements on the quality of training are cursory. The quality improvement processes are insufficiently robust to identify the issues which most impact learners.
- Resources are satisfactorily used by most delivery centres to enable learners to progress and achieve their qualifications. However, the management of both staff and physical resources for plastering apprentices and highways maintenance apprentices at Barking need improving.

What does Capital Training Group need to do to improve further?

- Ensure initial advice and guidance correctly identifies the outcomes that all learners should expect to achieve and all apprentices have work experience opportunities that enable them to accredit their skills.
- Improve the level of literacy, numeracy and language support to ensure that all learners can achieve their full potential. Develop a range of approaches and resources that enable trainers to offer this support where and when required by learners.
- Improve the sharing of best practice across the provider network to ensure all learners have access to the best training and assessment available to meet their needs.
- Ensure promotion of equality and diversity is given a higher profile for all users. Training staff require appropriate updating to raise their awareness of all aspects of equality and diversity to give them greater confidence in addressing

these issues and challenging behaviours in all their contacts with learners and employers.

Develop more effective and consistent quality improvement arrangements across all delivery partners so that CTG can monitor all aspects of the learners' experience, identify areas for improvement and ensure partners take appropriate actions.

Business administration and law

Grade 3

Context

30. Currently 65 learners are in training, 53 apprentices and 12 adult skills learners on programmes in customer services or business administration at Level 2. CTG subcontracts all its training to four subcontractors providing learning both locally and nationally.

Key findings

- Success rates are good overall. In 2009/10 success rates for Train to Gain learners at level 2 completing within their expected timeframes was 94%, well above national averages. However, overall success rates at level 3 are 9% below the business administration national average.
- Learners develop effective work place skills. Improved verbal and written skills help learners complete work tasks more effectively. Training further develops learners' confidence in dealing with customers and visitors both in person and on the telephone. Learners who use English as an additional language make good progress in developing their language skills so they are more able to understand and follow written policies, procedures and verbal instructions.
- Learners enjoy their learning and feel safe. They use safe working practises including personal protective equipment and are aware of bullying and harassment policies and procedures. Learners enjoy learning sessions and feel they have significantly improved their skills since starting their course.
- Teaching and learning are good. A good range of resources and activities support learners well. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of individuals and group learning sessions and are closely matched to the qualification units. Tutors are well qualified and knowledgeable. They reinforce being safe and healthy lifestyles in lessons although this is not routinely built into lesson planning.
- Planning for, and review of, learner progress is poor. Individual learning plans do not list the range of learning that learners require in order to succeed in their qualification. Too often there are no planned achievement dates or they are set for the end of the programme. Progress reviews are often too vague and just repeat plans for assessment.
- Learning sessions and assessment visits are planned to meet the needs of learners and business requirements. Assessments are planned at evenings and weekends to suit shift patterns and personal commitments. However, some learners have waited one or two months before receiving their first assessment in the workplace.
- Needs of learners and employers are satisfactorily met. However, a few learners are not yet in a work placement or formally registered as an apprentice although they have been attending training. Apprenticeship programmes are

only offered at level 2 and there are currently no progression opportunities to level 3.

- Good partnerships exist between CTG and its sub-contractors. CTG staff work closely with its subcontractors to ensure they fully understand what is required of them. This support is particularly valued by the two that are new to apprenticeship programmes. Sub-contractors work closely with a wide range of prestigious companies and voluntary sector organisations. Several also work with schools and other organisations to support potential learners onto apprenticeship programmes.
- Care guidance and support are satisfactory. Apprentices are well-matched to their job roles. Tutors help learners when they are experiencing any difficulties with their qualification. Employers are enthusiastic and keen to hear about the progress their employees are making.
- CTG provides training to its subcontractors on topics such as equality and diversity, observation of teaching and learning and safeguarding. This enables them to improve their documentation and to introduce appropriate policies and procedures. However, it is too early to judge the impact of theses.
- Self-assessment is inclusive and includes the production of self-assessment reports by each sub-contractor in CTG's required format. For many subcontractors this is the first self-assessment report they have written. The quality of the reports varies and do not always focus sufficiently on learner experience. The proposed grades are not supported by sufficient evidence and two providers have only recently taken on apprentices.
- Sub-contractors have developed quality assurance arrangements that are checked through audit and observation by CTG staff members. Some providers are still developing their systems. Sub-contractors are unaware of the systems used for checking the quality of provision; some checks have not taken place for over a year.

What does Capital Training Group need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that success rates improve on adult skills at level 3 programmes through more systematic tracking of the achievement of the different components of the learning programmes.
- Ensure that all apprentices are found a work experience placement promptly on starting the apprenticeship and that more timely assessment visits are made to the workplace for apprentices when starting their learning programmes.
- Improve the planning of learning and the measuring of learners' progress through clearer and more detailed individual programmes based on the diagnosis of learners' needs.
- Ensure that sub-contractors receive systematic checks on the quality of provision through observation and the monitoring of all aspects of the quality of the learners' journey.

Information about the inspection

- 31. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's quality manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans and data on learners and their achievement since the start of the contract in 2008.
- 32. 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 learning sessions and assessments. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Capital Training Group

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

	1	1
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	329	329
Part-time learners	0	0
Overall effectiveness	4	4
Capacity to improve	4	
Outcomes for learners	3	3
		3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3	
How well do learners attain their learning goals? How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through	3	
learning and development?	3	
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?*	n/a	
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?	4	
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

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