

Capita PLC

Employer

Inspection dates		22–26 October 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- A high proportion of learners, and well over the national average, are successful and obtain their qualifications within the expected time. Almost all the learners on administration and management courses gain their diplomas within the time planned for them.
- Learners develop good occupational, social and employability skills. Their training helps them to fulfil demanding job roles and meet exacting work targets, and Capita's support for volunteering and charitable activity helps them to contribute effectively to their local communities.
- Capita provides good training, both on and off the job, to develop learners' occupational skills. Assessors provide very good coaching to improve learners' English and mathematics skills to the levels needed for their apprenticeship qualifications. They are highly motivating, and provide good practical support and assessment to enable learners to progress.
- Capita's apprenticeship programme is led and managed particularly effectively. Managers know what is working well and what they need to do to improve the quality of training and learning, and have clear plans for these improvements.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The high-quality support that assessors provide for most learners is not replicated across the whole network of assessors. In a small number of centres, a few learners make slower progress.
- Assessors do not always set clear targets for apprentices' learning at their reviews.
- Assessors do not always use the results of assessments made at the start of learners' programmes to challenge them to gain even higher functional skills in English and mathematics.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Develop the assessor network so that the excellent practice seen in many centres is replicated across provision as a whole, and pays greater attention to training and learning.
- Make better use of diagnostic assessments and the results to provide learners with more challenging targets at higher levels of key skill, and provide the support to help learners develop those skills.
- Make better use of reviews to guide apprentices' learning, for example to further extend their knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A high proportion of learners at Capita are successful in gaining their intended qualifications. In 2011/12, the majority of Capita's learners achieved their awards, and on advanced apprenticeships in administration and management these proportions were outstanding. Almost all these learners completed their awards within the time planned for them. The proportion of successful learners has been high and well above national rates for over three years. However, these success rates are not equally high across all provision. In a small number of centres and subjects they are at, or just above, national rates. ▪ Learning and development managers have taken effective action to improve the attainment of some underperforming groups of learners. For example, there are now no significant differences in the attainment of learners from Black or minority ethnic groups and their White counterparts. The achievement gap between men and women has narrowed and is now almost closed. ▪ Learners make good progress in developing good occupational, personal and social skills. They gain in confidence and motivation and their employability skills improve. Learners value the opportunity to gain relevant and beneficial qualifications at work. Capita's excellent promotion of voluntary work and charitable activity helps learners to develop good social skills and contribute to their local communities. ▪ Learners develop good functional English and mathematics skills, and especially so in mathematics. Many learners begin their courses with low confidence and skill in mathematics and their performance improves considerably during their training. Most learners pass their key skills tests in communications and application of number at the first sitting. However, Capita has been slow in developing its assessors to provide functional skills qualifications. ▪ Learners have demanding job roles and their apprenticeship training is successful in enabling them to fulfil these job roles very effectively. Many learners report progression to more demanding jobs or promotion as a result of their apprenticeship training, and say that their courses prepare them well for their next steps in employment or training. Learners are placed on the certificate or diploma programme that most closely matches their initial assessment and job role and, where job roles permit, those learners who complete the certificate are successfully encouraged to progress to the diploma. However, Capita does not yet collect a wide range of data on learners' progression. 	
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quality of training and learning is good and commensurate with Capita's high success rates. Assessors use good questioning techniques to challenge learners and help them apply their skills in the workplace. Learners develop a wide range of transferable personal, social and 	

employability skills such as team leading, organisational skills and problem solving. For example, a management apprentice made significant reductions in the number of complaints about an IT (information technology) help desk team by analysing customer feedback and designing tailored training for the team.

- Capita blends on- and off-the-job training well and matches it carefully to learners' qualifications. This enables learners to become skilled in, for example, diagnosing problems, assessing priorities and giving on-line advice on subjects as diverse as legal aid or faults in technology, and reduces duplication in training.
- Capita's well-designed training modules develop learners' knowledge of such topics as fraud prevention, data protection, and equality and diversity. Learners enjoy using Capita's well-designed on-line resources for independent study. However, the range is currently narrow; vocational learning managers have suitable plans to extend it.
- Assessors are well qualified and experienced and give learners good, personalised support to motivate and inspire them. They are skilled in bringing out learners' strengths and helping to address areas for development. Learners report that their assessors are friendly, approachable and responsive.
- Assessors meet learners frequently and at times which take account of their needs and work patterns, communicating regularly between visits to maintain learners' motivation. Their excellent working partnerships with site managers are used well to help learners develop and progress.
- Assessment practices are good and portfolios contain a wide variety of diverse evidence of learners' skills. During assessments and site visits, assessors make particularly good use of digital recorders for professional discussion, to capture unplanned observations or interactions with colleagues, or to gather effective witness testimony. Learners use their e-portfolios competently for submitting evidence between visits. Assessors give learners prompt, constructive and detailed written feedback on their assessed work to help learners improve.
- Assessors hold regular meetings with learners to monitor their progress and learners understand what evidence they need for their awards. Capita uses a 'percentage completion' system to give learners a broad understanding of how much of the qualification they have completed, and how much they have left to do. However, the calculation does not give learners, or their managers, sufficiently detailed information on how much work remains.
- Although assessors and learners agree specific targets at reviews, they focus too narrowly on the achievement of units or examinations, and not on the steps in learning that are needed for learners' development. Long-term targets are insufficiently individualised for learners.
- Assessors are adept at helping learners to improve their skills and confidence in functional English and mathematics and in enabling learners to gain the required key skills qualifications for their apprenticeships. They make good use of Capita's well-designed business awareness training module and other resources to help learners develop these skills, and are particularly successful in mathematics. Learners use their improved skills confidently for applications such as payroll, calculating averages, or selecting appropriate charts and graphs for presentations.
- Learners are assessed at the start of their apprenticeships and induction prepares them well for their studies. However, assessors do not always make sufficient use of subsequent diagnostic assessments to challenge learners to higher levels of study in English and mathematics than those required by their apprenticeships. Assessors do not always correct grammatical or spelling errors in the work submitted for learners' qualifications. Learners do not routinely complete an assessment of their skills in IT.
- Site managers and assessors provide particularly good advice and guidance to learners throughout the programme, and link these well to workplace development and appraisal. They give learners good guidance on the qualifications and optional units which most effectively meet their job role and development needs.
- The programme promotes equality and diversity well. All learners complete Capita's annual training module on equality and diversity. Their workplace training develops learners'

understanding, and training modules in key skills make good use of Capita's data on staff recruitment and retention to reinforce that understanding. However, assessors make insufficient use of discussion, during reviews, to develop learners' understanding further.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Capita has a strong commitment to training and development and provides outstanding leadership for its provision, ensuring that learners value their training. Learners see their apprenticeships as a means of improving the standard of their work.
- Leaders have a clear strategic plan for provision that is based on a thorough analysis of what they have achieved, their provision's strengths, and potential barriers to improvement. Leaders and managers have successfully maintained high-quality training, learning and levels of learner attainment while managing substantial growth across the apprenticeship provision within Capita.
- Management of the apprenticeship programme is good. Capita manages its assessors closely, while leaving them with sufficient freedom to use many of their own approaches to their work. It has strong internal verification systems that focus closely on standards and consistency across the range of qualifications offered, and internal quality assurers use these well to support assessors. Managers set clear targets for assessors and follow these up carefully.
- Managers carry out thorough and frequent performance reviews to monitor the work of assessors and learners' progress, and take decisive action for improvement where necessary. They carry out frequent observations of training, coaching and assessment sessions; their view of the standard of this key aspect of provision is accurate and matched that of inspectors.
- Managers have identified that they need to make their reports on training and learning more helpful to assessors, and have planned staff development to support this. They are aware of variations in performance across Capita's business sites and that the high-quality provision found in most sites and subjects is not replicated across all, and have planned actions for improvement.
- Capita's self-assessment of provision is thorough and detailed, although a few assessors are unsure about how they are involved in the process. Managers make effective use of the associated quality improvement plan to monitor progress towards achieving planned targets. However, the allocation of responsibilities in the plan is sometimes unclear and some of its targets have been missed.
- Capita places a high priority on using sustainable approaches to its work. It has won several awards for its commitment to sustainability and the impact that this is having on the environment. As part of the wider company, the learning and development team plays a full part in securing this commitment.
- Apprentices work in over 30 sites across England; managers plan this dispersed provision and monitor its quality very well. Site managers and learners confirm that the apprenticeships Capita offers are very well matched to the needs of learners and to the business needs of its company's sites. Learners find that their apprenticeships help them to improve the quality of their work, especially when they take on new roles such as leading teams.
- Site managers are closely involved in planning programmes for their sites and find the flexible approaches to studying enable staff to gain qualifications without impeding their contributions to the effective working of the business.
- Capita's promotion of equality and diversity is good. Equality and diversity have a high profile on the company's intranet and learners' understanding of equality and diversity is generally good. Capita has made a number of practical responses to ensure that the needs of different groups are met, such as the provision of quiet rooms for prayer or reflection and a very active programme of charitable work and volunteering opportunities.
- The company supports its promotion of equality and diversity well with mandatory, annual on-line training for staff, and reinforces this in job-related training. However, assessors do not make

best use of learners' progress reviews to develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity further.

- Safeguarding arrangements at Capita are good. Security is high at each of its business sites and Capita gives learners good information on how to keep themselves and their personal information safe. Assessors and others who come into frequent contact with learners have appropriate Criminal Records Bureau checks and are suitably trained. Learners know who to contact if they have any concerns about bullying or harassment.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Capita PLC		
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Apprenticeships
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Business Studies	2

Provider details

Capita PLC	
Type of provider	Employer
Age range of learners	16-18 and 19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1954
Principal/CEO	Simon Pridgeon Managing Director, Capita Learning and Development
Date of previous inspection	July 2008
Website address	www.capita.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection						
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	14	475	4	384	n/a	n/a
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)					

Additional socio-economic information

Capita PLC is a large company employing 52,000 staff. It provides business process outsourcing, back office and customer contact services in the United Kingdom and Ireland. It has 32 business centres at locations across England.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Penelope Horner HMI
-----------------------	---------------------

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of Vocational Learning as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used interviews and on-line questionnaires to gather the views of learners; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



Learner View is a new website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too.

To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk or if you have any questions about Learner View please email Ofsted at: learnerview@ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and provider inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012