

CSM Consulting Ltd

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		17–21 March 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
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:

- Success rates for current apprentices are improving and are around or above the national average, with learners making good progress to complete their qualification by their end date.
- Learners develop good vocational skills which are readily transferred to the workplace, and produce good quality work in their portfolios.
- Well-qualified and experienced assessors motivate and encourage learners to meet their individual needs and aspirations.
- Coaching and assessment are particularly good, and learners develop relevant skills and knowledge which benefit them and are valued by employers.
- Assessors provide detailed and supportive feedback so that each learner is clear about their progress and what they need to do to complete their qualification.
- Leadership and management are good and directors have a clear vision for developing the provision and robust procedures for performance management.
- Managers have made significant changes within the company to change the culture and to improve the quality of the provision.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- In 2012/13, success rates for apprenticeships were low, but increasing, with the provider's data showing significant improvement in the first eight months of 2013/14.
- Teaching is good, but rarely outstanding.
- English, mathematics and information technology have not been managed sufficiently well to ensure that learners reach the required standard within the time allowed.
- Managers have not always used data sufficiently well to manage the provision.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all apprentices complete their programmes within the planned timescale through appropriate planning of all components of the programme.
- Ensure that all planned actions following observations of teaching, learning and assessment are specific, focused on improvement and timely.
- Ensure that all learners receive appropriate and timely functional skills support.
- Use data better to manage the provision by monitoring the profile of observations of teaching and learning, analysing performance gaps between all groups of learners, and making better use of information from the tracking of learners' progress.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. In the current year, the majority of apprentices and learners on short and very short classroom-based courses achieve their qualifications and success rates are above the national averages.
- Overall apprenticeship success rates are considerably higher than previous years and are above the national averages. Current apprentices are in line to complete their qualifications on time. However, in 2012/13, the proportion of apprentices successfully completing their programme was low.
- The proportion of learners in 2012/13 who achieved short qualifications in the workplace was above the national rates and the large majority of these learners achieved within the expected timescale.
- Learners identified as requiring extra support with their learning progress and achieve well. There are no significant gaps in the achievement of learners in relation to age, ethnicity, learning difficulty or disability. However, the success rates of women are higher than those of men on apprenticeship programmes and short courses at foundation level. This gap has significantly reduced on apprenticeship programmes.
- The vast majority of learners improve their personal, social and employability skills and many are better prepared to improve their careers, existing employment or find work having been unemployed. For example, learners on the courses for providing security and for operating forklift trucks were able to describe how their qualifications had made a significant contribution to their securing employment in the relevant industry.
- The standard of learners' work is good. Most learners make considerable progress during their learning relative to their starting points. Apprentices and learners on short courses demonstrate acquired knowledge, skills and understanding that they can apply to the workplace. For example, apprentices on advanced courses who support teaching and learning in schools are able to show how their training has enabled them to ensure pupils participate more fully in lessons.
- The promotion of English and mathematics is good on apprenticeship programmes. All learners undertake a comprehensive assessment of their skills and staff use this information to support apprentices to develop their functional skills effectively. However, these developments have yet to become established practice and some apprentices continue to take their functional skills tests towards the very end of their programme. Assessors on short courses do not always support learners to develop essential English skills required in the workplace.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which is reflected in the high achievement rates on short courses and the progress of apprentices across the provision. Assessors encourage and foster good use of a wide range of resources to develop independent learning. They offer strong support and motivate learners to achieve high standards of work and progress well.
- Assessors are well qualified, with good relevant experience which they use very effectively to plan and deliver good training. Individual coaching is particularly good for management learners. Training materials are useful, accessible and relevant. Well-produced workbooks are augmented by bespoke training material and, in management programmes, a good range of online resources; although, in teaching and learning support, additional resources are more limited.
- Initial assessment identifies accurately the most suitable level and programme and learners' individual needs. Assessors design programmes carefully for learners. These programmes develop skills, knowledge and understanding in specific job roles and these are particularly valued by employers. Assessors set challenging targets to stretch and encourage learners to develop their skills. In management programmes clever questioning techniques are used particularly well to assess knowledge and understanding and further develop these through good professional discussion.
- Assessment practice is good. Assessors use a wide range of methods to assess learners' competence and understanding. Assessment visits are frequent and are flexible to meet the learners' work patterns. The feedback on learners' work is thorough and useful and verbal feedback is particularly good. However, feedback is not recorded in sufficient detail in teaching and learning support programmes, although these learners give improved feedback to teachers following their own assessment training.
- Learners have a clear understanding of their progress, what is required to succeed in the qualification and also what they need to do to improve their performance at work. In management programmes, employers are fully involved in reviews and have a good understanding of learners' progress. Headteachers of teaching and learning assistants are not routinely involved in review meetings; however, they support learners well in school.
- Assessors generally use technology well to support assessment and learning; however, in management programmes, available technology is used insufficiently to fully benefit management learners.
- Assessors promote English, mathematics and information technology during the programmes. Most learners are clear about the benefits of improving their functional skills. CSM has recently introduced arrangements to strengthen delivery of functional skills; for example, a tutor with specific expertise is delivering very effective individual support. However, for too many learners, support has not been sufficiently effective and many learners coming to the end of their programmes have yet to pass their functional skills assessments.
- Information and guidance are good. Initial assessment offers learners a clear and sufficiently detailed guide to their programme and provides good insight into aspects such as health and safety, equality and diversity and safeguarding. Learners have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities and, particularly in teaching and learning support programmes, have a good understanding of programme requirements. The assessor offers management learners effective advice and guidance through a personal development plan following completion of their qualification.
- Coaching and assessment promote equality strongly, support the value of diversity and raise awareness of how to tackle bullying and harassment. Assessors use naturally occurring examples in learners' working or private lives to develop their understanding and awareness of broader diversity issues. For example, learners become better at managing staff with different cultural backgrounds and personal circumstances within teams working shift patterns.

Training to provide learning support

Good

Apprenticeships

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This is reflected in the good progress of current learners and their improving success rates. Assessors set and maintain high expectations of learners and this ensures that they progress in both their work and personal development.
- Assessors use their sound professional knowledge and expertise well in order to enable learners to link theory to practice. Assessors plan learning and assessment activity very effectively in order to meet the needs of each learner. Learners enjoy their learning, are well motivated and take ownership of their learning.
- Assessors offer learners good support and effective advice and guidance at the start of, and during, their learning programme. Progress is appropriately monitored through regular monthly visits. The large majority of learners are encouraged to reflect on their own experience, which further consolidates their knowledge and understanding. Learners know what is expected of them and how they are progressing.
- Assessors work hard to ensure the standard of learners' work is good. Assessors successfully ensure that learners consolidate and extend their knowledge and skills by making effective links between each element of their course to improve their work practice.
- Assessors take each learner's starting point fully into account when planning their learning. Assessment arrangements are flexible and well managed, allowing learners to receive timely feedback. Assessors provide good detailed verbal feedback following observations which enables learners to improve and develop within their work role. Learners are challenged to reflect on their practice. For example, following an observation of an activity with a group of children, the assessor questioned why the learner had arranged the room in that way, allowing children to move freely between the floor and desk. The learner was immediately able to link this practice to previous learning on behaviour management strategies.
- Assessors use challenging and probing questions well to test knowledge and consolidate understanding. However, written feedback is insufficient and lacks detail to ensure that learners know how to improve.
- Not all learners develop English and mathematics at the appropriate stage of their programme. Assessors actively promote and encourage the development of these skills. However, a minority of learners do not receive appropriate tuition and, as a result, are not progressing within the agreed timescale. However, assessors continue to undertake professional development which enhances their ability to support learners with English and mathematics.
- Learners receive good advice and guidance during their training programmes. Assessors offer a high level of pastoral support and care. However, there is insufficient emphasis placed on further study and career aspiration.
- Assessors promote equality and diversity strongly. They encourage learners to reflect and consider equality and diversity issues holistically. For example, during a discussion on the school snack and food policy, the assessor questioned the learners' understanding in relation to different beliefs that some faith groups and cultures hold about certain foods. Learners discuss equality and diversity confidently and discuss how theory relates and impacts on their practice.

Business management

Good

Apprenticeships

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which is reflected in the progress and skill development of current learners. As a result, learners make good progress in their vocational qualification and develop valuable knowledge and understanding. The assessor inspires learners

to produce work of a high standard. For example, they make good use of various management models to reflect on their own teams and produce reports which are well written and thoughtfully detailed. The assessor also encourages learners to work on their own initiative and reflect on the benefits of learning.

- The assessor, who is well qualified and very experienced, provides very effective individual coaching in the workplace. Learning is carefully planned to meet the specific requirements of the learners' work. The assessor is particularly skilled at using professional discussion to address learners' strengths and areas for development through signposting additional resources and guiding learners to further independent learning. Learning resources are good, with traditional workbooks, additional bespoke learning material and a wide range of web-based resources. Initial assessment identifies appropriate levels and individual needs which inform effectively the planning of learning.
- Managers and learners recognise the development of valuable work skills, for example improved communication, better team building, effective delegation, people management skills and some particularly good development of English in letters and emails. Learners feel stretched and challenged during their programmes. They discuss and agree specific targets to achieve and often discuss longer-term goals. The assessor offers suitable praise for good work, but is firm in ensuring that significant amounts of work are completed in learners' own time. However, additional opportunities, for example taking higher level functional skills, are not always offered.
- Assessment practice is good and assessment methods provide a rich mix of appropriate evidence. Assessment feedback is informative and constructive, both verbal, where it is comprehensive, and written, where it is concise. Learners understand clearly what they need to do to complete their programme and to improve their performance. Good questioning techniques draw out and, where required, develop knowledge and understanding. The assessor pays good attention to correcting grammar and spelling. Frequent visits are flexible to the needs of the workplace. However, available technology is not used sufficiently in assessment for the benefit of the learners. Managers are involved in reviews and support the programme well.
- Assessors promote English, mathematics and information technology well in assessment and through good individual coaching. Delivery of these skills is now effective, with examples of coaching by specialist staff significantly improving English and mathematics to the benefit of the company. However, for too many learners, functional skills have been taught too late in their programmes and with too little effect. Many learners coming to the end of the programme have still to pass functional skills tests.
- Information, advice and guidance are very effective, with good examples of advice and guidance on progression, further training and learning issues. Learners are offered a clear and informative induction which addresses both the content of the course and other important aspects such as health and safety, safeguarding and equality and diversity. Although learners are informed about the requirements of the programme, the induction process does not sufficiently assess their commitment, motivation and personal circumstances to ensure the likelihood of their success.
- Assessors promote equality and diversity well during the programme and use learners' experiences in the workplace to extend understanding and improve practices, for example in-depth discussion on managing males and females in ethnically diverse teams to explore how staff could be better supported. Learners receive effective learning support which meets their particular individual needs well. They work in safe environments with a very good relationship of mutual respect with their assessor.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. The managing director has a good understanding of the sector and a clear vision of how the organisation needs to develop to meet local and national needs. The board of directors shares and promotes this vision and has worked hard to adapt the

provision to meet changes in funding. The quality director has reviewed the company structure and procedures and has put into place actions to accommodate these changes. Staff have a good understanding of their role and how they contribute to the performance of the company. Managers have high expectations and set challenging targets for staff.

- The management of the provision is good. The courses are well managed and tutors are responsive to the needs of individual learners. Resources are good. Communication is good within the organisation. The directors work closely together and communicate effectively with all staff through regular meetings. Partners speak favourably about the effective communication and the responsive nature of the company.
- Quality improvement procedures are robust and effective and have improved the quality of provision and success rates significantly over the last eight months. Since their last inspection, CSM has improved its system of observing teaching and learning and the proportion of teaching and learning which is good or better has improved. Action points are effectively translated into continuing professional development which is monitored well to assess the impact. However, a small proportion of the observations fail to include any improvement action points for tutors.
- The checking procedures to assure the quality of the portfolios are very detailed and effective. Guidance for observations of teaching and learning and portfolio evaluation are very detailed and assure consistency. As a result, outcomes for learners have improved significantly. The quality improvement plan is detailed, relevant and accurate, with many action points completed ahead of time and realistic evaluations of work in progress.
- Arrangements for staff training and continuing professional development are good. Records of all professional development activities are recorded well, including overall evaluation and impact assessment. The range of relevant and appropriate staff training is good and recent training included information, advice and guidance, safeguarding, equality and diversity, dyslexia and effective auditing.
- Partnership working is good. CSM has a very good working relationship with Jobcentre Plus where it offers a variety of short courses for unemployed people. These courses meet the needs of this client group well and are well received. Delivery is efficient and flexible, with speedy resolution of any problems. CSM enjoys a good relationship with the General Municipal Boilermakers Union with whom it runs a wide variety of courses. CSM is an active member of Dorset and Somerset Training Providers Network.
- The self-assessment process is good and inclusive, with contributions from all staff, customers and learners. The self-assessment report links well with the quality improvement plan, both are an accurate representation of the provision, and used well to manage and develop the provision. Learners' views are collated and are used to improve the provision and resources, such as changes to the structure and delivery of courses and the providing of free tea and coffee for learners.
- Managers, teachers and assessors use an effective electronic information system consistently to monitor students identified at risk. Leaders and managers use lesson planning, review documentation, specific training, staff meetings and individual appraisals to encourage staff to promote equality and diversity and ensure the learning environment is fully inclusive. Managers collate and use data to analyse performance gaps for most, but not all, groups of learners.
- The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Leaders and managers ensure robust safeguarding arrangements are in place. The manager with responsibility for safeguarding has developed strong links with local safeguarding bodies, and ensures staff act promptly to identify and protect learners at potential risk. Health and safety are a key priority for the provider and risk is managed very effectively, ensuring learners are able to study in a safe environment.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

CSM Consulting Ltd

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Training to provide learning support	2
Business management	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0							
	Part-time: 2018							
Principal/CEO	Rory Finlayson – Managing Director							
Date of previous inspection	March 2012							
Website address	www.csmtraining.co.uk							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	69	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	22	-	183	-	-		
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	-							
Part-time	-							
Number of community learners	-							
Number of employability learners	-							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

Contextual information

CSM is a commercial company operated by its owners and based in Bridgwater, Somerset. It delivers training in four regions: South West England, London, Manchester and Yorkshire. It has been an established work-based learning provider for over ten years. Funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), it offers a range of short courses for unemployed people including information technology, security, first aid, manual handling, fork lift truck and warehousing. None of these courses were running at the time of inspection. It also offers apprenticeships in management, warehousing, customer service and support in teaching and learning in schools. At the time of inspection there were 189 learners on apprenticeships and 103 have left this year, with 81 having achieved their qualification.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Charles Clark HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Quality Director 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 group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; 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>

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