

The Care Learning Centre

Independent learning provider

24–27 May 2016

Inspection dates**Overall effectiveness****Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers take decisive action and monitor improvement carefully; this has significantly increased learners' achievement rates, which are now good.
- Apprentices are well motivated and many develop good independent learning skills; they draw on their experiences in the workplace to apply and develop their learning.
- Learners make good progress from their starting points because their training advisers support them well to achieve qualification units on time.
- Leaders and managers, through effective partnerships, provide a good range of apprenticeships and traineeship work placements that meet employers' and learners' needs.
- Training advisers promote equality of opportunity for all learners very effectively by training and assessing flexibly around workplace priorities.
- Training advisers use learning technology well and skilfully, including the virtual classrooms for remote learners, to enhance learning and make it more enjoyable.

It is not yet an outstanding provider

- Although learners improve their English and mathematics skills, too few acquire sufficient skills to pass functional skills tests at their first attempt.
- Managers do not ensure that training advisers use consistently high-quality learning resources.
- Employers are not always sufficiently involved in the development of their apprentices' skills.

Full report

Information about the provider

- The Care Learning Centre (CLC) is a private limited company, formed in 2001, with a head office in Newport, Isle of Wight. CLC has a contract with the Skills Funding Agency and provides apprenticeships throughout the Isle of Wight and southern England and a small number of traineeships in the Newport area.
- CLC offers intermediate and advanced apprenticeships in health and social care, hair and beauty, customer services and business administration. The vast majority of apprentices follow health and social care programmes, including more senior workers taking leadership and management apprenticeships at level 5.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Training advisers need to ensure they identify learners' starting points more accurately and use this information to plan the development of their English and mathematics skills more effectively.
- Managers need to monitor the quality of training resources more effectively to ensure that they are good quality, relevant and free from spelling and grammatical mistakes.
- Managers need to raise their expectations for the involvement of employers in the development of their apprentices.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and managers have taken highly effective action to improve learners' achievement rates. They analyse data incisively to ensure all groups of learners achieve equally well. Managers monitor very closely those learners who are at risk of not achieving and instigate suitable interventions where appropriate. This has helped increase the proportion of learners who achieve, and the majority make good progress.
- Managers use good systems to manage training advisers' performance. They carry out thorough observations of training advisers' learning and assessment sessions to identify where improvements are needed or good practice exists. Managers use the findings from observations and learners' achievement rates well to set training advisers' individual improvement targets. Training advisers are well trained and knowledgeable, particularly in their vocational areas.
- Leaders and managers introduced higher-level apprenticeships, hairdressing provision and traineeships in response to requests from employers, learners and partners. They work productively with partners and employers to provide a broad range of appealing and relevant work placements for traineeship learners, many of whom have significant barriers to participating in learning. The higher-level apprenticeship has increased the career potential for many learners, helping prepare them for management roles in the care sector.
- Leaders and managers set clear objectives for ensuring learners have equality of opportunity. CLC has invested significantly in resources to offer learners more diverse and flexible ways of learning, including through the virtual classroom. Training advisers promote equality of opportunity and diversity very effectively, particularly during learning sessions. They discuss equality and diversity in a context relevant to learners so they can relate them to workplace situations and care users.
- Leaders and managers self-assess accurately what needs to improve and the strengths of the provision. This gives them a clear agenda for improvement, which senior managers monitor frequently and thoroughly. This diligence has helped maintain good-quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers have devised actions and targets to improve English and mathematics teaching, learning and assessment, but not all of these have been achieved successfully. Although more learners now pass functional skills tests at the first attempt, this is still short of CLC's challenging target. Managers planned that all learners' starting points would be more accurately identified, but this has yet to happen.
- Managers do not assure the quality of resources and activities that individual training advisers source and develop. As a result, training advisers in a minority of learning sessions use resources that vary in quality and effectiveness, are not always relevant and up to date, or contain spelling and grammatical errors.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Directors have set a clear development strategy built on their good relationships with employers and partners.
 - Directors and senior managers focus relentlessly on improving achievement rates. They challenge very effectively where groups of learners achieve less well; this has raised achievement by intermediate-level apprentices and those aged 18 to 24 to be similar to that of their peers.
 - Although directors and senior managers review the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, they have yet to devise a strategy to raise this to be outstanding.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Managers have suitable arrangements for ensuring learners are safe; they deal with concerns rapidly and effectively.
 - Staff receive extensive training and development in all aspects of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty.
 - Despite making good progress with the 'Prevent' duty action plan, it is too early to see the full impact of this on learners' appreciation of the dangers and risks of extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Training advisers have valuable current or recent industry experience, which they use well to plan and conduct purposeful and motivational learning sessions. They know their learners well and tailor learning sessions around their individual requirements. As a result, learners develop good personal and workplace skills, and become more confident at solving problems and working with colleagues.

- Training advisers use a good variety of interesting activities during learning sessions including internet videos that demonstrate good working practice. These are chosen well and relate directly to apprentices' work settings and the learning topic. For example, an apprentice learned more about living independently through watching a video that replicated effectively the circumstances of a service user.
- Training advisers use technology to good effect. Apprentices, many of whom are on the mainland, benefit from high-quality virtual classroom sessions which offer significant flexibility in learning. Apprentices enjoy the variety offered through virtual classroom sessions, for example through video clips, presentations, discussions and feedback from training advisers.
- Trainees, many of whom lack confidence or have low prior academic attainment, benefit from good support. They learn in a nurturing and caring environment in small groups, which meet their individual needs well. However, at times the low numbers of trainees attending learning sessions restrict what they learn from peers through group interaction where they can share views and experiences.
- Training advisers use questions effectively to help learners develop a deeper understanding and to relate their new learning and skills to the workplace. They encourage the more experienced apprentices to reflect incisively on their current job role and research theories to improve everyday practice. Apprentices draw down information from the internet, which helps them relate legislation and case studies to everyday practice in the workplace.
- Training advisers assess learners' progress frequently and accurately. They provide learners with good-quality oral feedback that is supportive and encouraging and highlights clearly what needs to be improved. During a hairdressing practical activity, apprentices received very constructive feedback which helped them improve their techniques in applying highlighting tint. Where learners fall behind, training advisers increase the frequency of visits and telephone support to help them catch up.
- Training advisers promote equality and diversity well, making good links to the workplace. This helps learners apply the principles of equality and diversity with their service users. During a learning session, an apprentice explained individual roles and responsibilities within the context of cultural background and how this related to the correct use of personal protective equipment.
- Learners complete a comprehensive induction which prepares them well for their course. As a result, they have a good understanding of the expectations and demands of the qualification.
- English and mathematics teaching requires improvement. Although learners complete an initial assessment of their English and mathematics levels, their starting points are not accurately established to identify fully what they need to develop. Training advisers do not teach learners sufficient skills or strategies to apply English and mathematics at work or in their everyday lives; they rely too heavily on learners completing practice test papers.
- Employers are not sufficiently involved in planning learning programmes or in reviews of learners' progress. As a result, training advisers do not always incorporate apprentices' completion of in-house training and additional skills developed in the workplace to speed up their progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

- Apprentices take pride in their learning and it helps them become more confident and self-assured in their workplaces. They have consistently positive attitudes to learning and this helps most to make good progress. The good rapport that training advisers rapidly establish with learners also helps to build their confidence.
- Training advisers provide good levels of support to apprentices through regular one-to-one learning sessions and progress reviews. Apprentices value this approach and they are well prepared and ready to learn during each visit by their training adviser. Learners on traineeship programmes do not, however, always respond positively to the flexibility of the small-group learning sessions. A minority do not arrive at the planned time for their learning sessions and this is not helping them develop this important workplace behaviour.
- Learners improve most employment-related skills well, including the use of information and communication technology. They also improve their English and mathematics skills during learning sessions. However, the approaches taken by training advisers to support this improvement are not yet sufficiently effective to help enough learners to pass their functional skills examinations at the first attempt.
- Learners have a good understanding of the importance of equality of opportunity and of valuing diversity. They also have a basic awareness of British values and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, although this level of awareness needs further development. Learners feel and are safe; they know how

to raise concerns if they need to and how to keep themselves safe while using the internet.

- Learners receive good initial information, advice and guidance, which support them to consider carefully whether the apprenticeship or traineeship is the best option to meet their needs and aspirations. Staff provide good advice on options with other providers, where appropriate. Advice and guidance provided by training advisers towards the end of programmes helps most learners make good choices. For example, a good proportion of intermediate-level apprentices progress on to higher apprenticeships. Training advisers' advice is less effective for higher-level apprentices to help them make choices about further or higher education or appropriate career choices.

Outcomes for learners

are good

- Following a decline in achievement rates in 2013/14, managers successfully increased achievement rates for the very large majority of apprentices in 2014/15. The provider's own data shows that managers and training advisers have ensured that this rate of improvement has been sustained for current learners.
- Learners enjoy learning and take pride in the skills and knowledge they develop and improve. For many apprentices in the care sector, the apprenticeship represents a return to education and training, and these learners thrive on the one-to-one learning support provided by training advisers. Learners on traineeship programmes, many of whom have low previous levels of attainment, make good progress in a wide range of work placements which fit well with their aspirations. As a result, most trainees gain apprenticeships, other full-time employment or places on further education courses.
- The large majority of current learners are making good progress in developing the skills and knowledge required in their workplaces. The standard of most learners' work is good and meets or exceeds the standards required by the qualification. The large majority of current apprentices are making good progress toward completing their programmes in the planned timescales. A good proportion of apprentices progress from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships and a small number progress further to higher apprenticeships.
- Apprentices gain skills and knowledge that improve their performance at work and help them take on extra responsibilities and make progress in their careers. On completion of their intermediate-level apprenticeships, care sector learners often become senior team leaders. This enables them to progress on to the advanced-level apprenticeship and deputy manager roles at work. Learners identify ways in which their ability to perform their job role well has improved, particularly in relation to knowledge of the care sector, roles and responsibilities, duty of care and communication with service users.
- Achievement gaps between different groups have narrowed and there are no significant variations.

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,552
Managing director	Claire Turner
Website address	www.carelearningcentre/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	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	22	198	3	323			142	
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	14		5		19			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nil 							

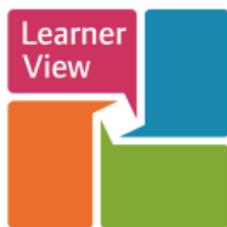
Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Mark Shackleton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Janet Rodgers	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Baber	Ofsted Inspector
Patricia Collis	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Pullen	Ofsted Inspector
Daisy Walsh	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the quality manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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