

# CSM Consulting Limited

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

13–16 September 2016

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Too few apprentices complete their programmes in the expected time.
- Managers do not have enough oversight of apprentices' programmes to ensure that apprentices gain sufficient on- and off-the-job training.
- Managers do not fully comply with all aspects of the 'Prevent' duty guidance.
- Assessors do not record apprentices' progress accurately and therefore do not ensure that actions are put in place quickly enough to support them.
- Managers across all regions do not ensure that assessors are held to account for apprentices' progress.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Apprentices gain good practical and employability skills.
- Apprentices are professional, articulate, well motivated and are highly valued by their employers.
- The vast majority of learners achieve their functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics at their first attempt.
- Seniors managers have invested significantly to improve the learners' experience.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- CSM Consulting Limited (CSM) is a commercial company established in 2003 and operated by its owners. The administrative head office is in Bridgwater, Somerset where it also has a training facility. CSM provides training in three geographical areas, the South West, Yorkshire and London. CSM has new offices and training facilities in London.
- CSM has changed its provision considerably since the last inspection in 2014. It now offers apprenticeships and training for adults in functional skills. The vocational areas with the largest number of apprenticeships are in supporting teaching and learning, health and social care, business administration and team leading.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that apprentices complete their programmes on time by:
  - improving the tracking and monitoring of their progress so that they receive appropriate support
  - ensuring that apprentices have the opportunity to improve their English and mathematics early in their programme.
- Managers should use data more effectively to support quality improvement and to ensure that learners achieve their potential.
- Board members need to challenge senior managers swiftly to ensure that necessary improvements take place quickly.
- Managers need to ensure that systems are in place and used appropriately to hold assessors to account for how well apprentices are achieving.

Leaders and managers need to fully comply with all aspects of the 'Prevent' duty guidance, particularly by undertaking 'Prevent' duty risk assessments.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have stopped providing short courses and have focused instead on developing strategies to help meet the local and government priority for apprenticeships. However, they have not acted quickly enough in dealing with all the weaknesses identified during that inspection. Apprentices are still taking too long to complete their programmes, and managers have only recently redesigned programmes to allow for the development of English and mathematics skills early enough in their courses.
- The use of data in self-assessment and curriculum planning is not sufficiently comprehensive to identify all the strengths and weaknesses of learners' programmes. Managers do not always know how many hours of on- and off-the-job training apprentices receive. Managers make insufficient use of the feedback collected from learners to improve aspects of the programmes.
- The information technology system to record and support learners' progress is not providing staff with the information they need. It is difficult for assessors to gain a clear picture of learners' progress and for managers to provide the necessary oversight while new systems to monitor learners' progress are being introduced. Staff do not transfer information required to the new system quickly enough for it to be effective.
- Leaders and managers have recently improved the support provided for mathematics and English due to new leaders in these subjects. Staff use online resources well to support learners to gain independent learning skills and support assessor-led sessions. New leaders work well with vocational teachers to develop their skills in integrating mathematics and English within learners' programmes.
- Managers have introduced more robust performance management and capability processes. This has led to the emergence of a more cohesive team of assessors with an increased focus on staff understanding their role in tracking and maintaining learner progress. However, not all managers hold assessors to account for apprentices' progress. At times, managers have not managed staffing changes or absences well, resulting in learners making slower progress, particularly in Yorkshire.

### The governance of the provider

- Board meetings do not appropriately quality assure provision and outcomes and, as a result, governance miss or delay implementing aspects of improvement.
- Board members are actively involved in the day-to-day running of the business, which results in good communication and gives staff the opportunity to express their views.
- The board has maintained a strong financial position during a period of funding changes, which enables ongoing investment in capital and revenue projects to improve the learners' experience.

### Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Managers arrange recruitment well and make use of effective policies and vetting in place prior to employment with the company.

- Learners know who to contact should they have any concerns. The very small number of learners who have raised issues received prompt and appropriate action. All staff have undergone online and face-to-face training on how to protect learners from radicalisation. However, assessors have not yet consistently ensured that learners have an appropriate understanding of these issues.
- Managers ensure that ongoing training supports staff undertaking risk assessments. This helps staff to assess accurately the employers' workplace and their approach to health and safety. However, staff do not fully consider their 'Prevent' duty when assessing risks.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The tracking and monitoring of learners' progress are not consistently strong, and consequently staff do not respond early enough to support apprentices who are making slower than expected rates of progress. Progress reviews are now more frequent, with sharp, well-focused targets that motivate learners to work hard and achieve. However, support for learners who have been on a programme for more than a year is less effective, and they are not making the necessary progress to complete on time. A combination of staff changes and poorly devised and infrequent training and assessment has slowed the progress of a minority of apprentices.
- Apprentices receive good individual coaching in the workplace, and assessors and employers use their knowledge and industry experience well to set high standards and motivate apprentices.
- The vast majority of assessors make effective use of a broad range of evidence to record apprentices' competence during assessment, such as direct observation, digital recordings of professional discussions, research and witness testimonies. They use challenging, probing questions to check learners' depth of understanding and develop their problem-solving skills and independent learning well. Most assessors provide comprehensive feedback to apprentices, which clearly details what they need to do to improve. However, a small minority of assessors do not plan sessions well enough or provide sufficient feedback, thereby hampering learners' progress.
- Apprentices develop good job-related skills while at work which employers value. Assessors and employers demand high-quality work and respectful behaviour, and expect apprentices to work hard to develop their knowledge and skills. Most apprentices respond well and work diligently to succeed in their learning. For example, learning support apprentices quickly gain the confidence to manage challenging needs and behaviours of children in classroom settings.
- Managers and staff are now placing a strong focus on developing apprentices' English and mathematics skills. Assessors increasingly help apprentices to develop their skills quickly, and more are achieving qualifications in these subjects earlier in their programme than in previous years. For example, care assessors take time out to explain assessment instructions and codes of practice clearly and in plain English. Staff have recently provided helpful additional sessions in the workplace which are supporting apprentices' development of English and mathematics skills.
- Assessors provide useful pastoral support to help learners complete their programmes. Assessors visit out of hours to meet learners' shift patterns and weekend working to ensure that they undertake assessments of work practice. Learners with identified

learning needs have learning and assessment materials adapted to help them complete their qualification. As a result, these learners perform as well as their peers.

- Assessors are skilful at helping apprentices to develop a good understanding of the diverse communities in which they live and work. They use the diversity of their workforces and clients within training sessions to explore apprentices' perceptions and celebrate differences. Apprentices understand how to stay safe at work and online, but those not working in schools, are less secure as to how to protect themselves from those who promote radicalisation and extremism.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Apprentices on supporting teaching and learning programmes, and those on health and social care programmes, have a particularly good awareness of the safety of the children, families or vulnerable adults with whom they work. Apprentices working in schools fully understand the impact of radicalisation and extremism and how to report concerns, and draw links between equality, the diversity of their work environments and fundamental British values. Apprentices on other programmes do not have such an advanced understanding and the provider has introduced recent measures to address this. Learners know who to contact if they have concerns over safeguarding, and the provider's staff promote this well.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of the importance of health and safety in the workplace and the responsibilities that they have to ensure both their safety and that of others. Learners are safe and feel safe. Health and social care learners complete a number of additional courses in their workplace to improve their skills and understanding further, for example fire awareness and first aid.
- Learners are articulate, professional and enjoy their apprenticeships. They attend work and training or assessment sessions well and promptly. Apprentices gain confidence in their skills, their potential to succeed and in their job roles. Employers report improvements in apprentices' general workplace practice, such as better communication with care home residents, assisting business customers with queries and when using information technology to solve problems.
- Apprentices develop appropriate, relevant skills for their chosen sector. Motor vehicle apprentices use computer diagnostics to service cars effectively, and apprentices on team leader programmes improve their organisational skills and performance management of shift workers. Apprentices' development of English, mathematics and information technology skills has lagged behind the development of their professional skills. Managers and assessors are now working hard to improve this, and most apprentices report improved support.
- Staff provide learners with effective information, advice and guidance. Learners understand what is expected of them to succeed in their courses, develop their skills and fulfil their potential to progress to higher-level courses and enhance their careers. However, very few apprentices progress from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships. A very small number undertake higher-level apprenticeships or degrees.

## Outcomes for learners

## Requires improvement

- Although most apprentices complete their apprenticeship programme, too few complete within the planned time. In 2015/16, less than a third of apprentices finished their apprenticeship within the planned time; many of the current apprentices are making faster progress. There are no significant gaps in the achievement of different groups of learners.
- A large majority of learners pass their functional skills examinations at their first attempt, and apprentices are benefiting from recent improvements in arrangements to support the development of skills in English and mathematics. Business administration apprentices apply their improved skills in formal and informal writing and using spreadsheets to assist their employers' needs well. However, many apprentices are still taking their functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics at the end of their programme, and this is hindering their progress and ability to complete on time.
- Apprentices develop, and apply, employability and practical skills well in the workplace. Apprentices on teaching assistant programmes use their initiative in supporting class teachers and children well. For example, they help children with a range of additional needs through their induction into a new school. Apprentices on team leadership programmes grow in confidence and undertake increased leadership roles within their companies.
- Employers value the contribution that apprentices are making. For example, health and social care learners use their acquired knowledge around fundamental British values to change induction and training at their care homes.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	51433
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,316
Principal/CEO	Rory Finlayson
Telephone number	01278 452015
Website	<a href="http://www.csmtraining.co.uk">www.csmtraining.co.uk</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	0	44	0	15	0	6	0	1
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	48	142	12	394	0	21		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:								

## Information about this inspection

The inspection 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 individual interviews and telephone calls 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.

### Inspection team

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Roger Pilgrim, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Zimmerman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Stittle	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Lacey	Ofsted Inspector
Kathleen Tyler	Ofsted Inspector
Bev Cross	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Flint	Her Majesty's Inspector

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