

# CVQO Ltd

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

7–11 May 2017

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>	
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>	
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>	
Outcomes for learners	<b>Requires improvement</b>	
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Trustees, leaders and managers do not have sufficiently reliable data to enable them to identify trends in learners' achievement, attendance and progress or to evaluate the full impact of their initiatives to improve provision.
- Leaders and managers have not focused enough on ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better and as a result, it varies across the different cadet units with too much requiring improvement.
- Many learners make slow progress towards completing written work and practical activities. They do not attend learning sessions frequently enough nor do they have clear interim targets or know what they still need to do to achieve their qualification.
- Learners' achievement of teamwork and personal development in the community and of music qualifications requires improvement.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Trustees, leaders and managers respond rapidly and positively to learners' and trainers' feedback, taking action that is starting to improve learners' progress, learning resources and programme management.
- Learners enjoy participating in a wide range of exciting and fun practical learning activities where they gain significant skills and knowledge.
- Management learners benefit from a well-devised programme where they develop strong leadership skills and in which the majority achieve their qualifications.
- Learners develop good personal, vocational, team-working and problem-solving skills which they apply confidently and with maturity in a broad range of circumstances, including when applying for university or employment.
- Learners feel, and are, safe.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- CVQO Ltd (CVQO) has approximately 8,000 learners aged 16 to 18 who are taking vocational qualifications while attending cadet units, on a part-time voluntary basis, usually on one evening each week. Just under half of CVQO's learners are in the Air Training Corps, a third are in the Army Cadet Force with the remainder in the Combined Cadet Force, Sea Cadet Corps or school and youth groups. Learners take CVQO courses in addition to studying full time at school or college or being an apprentice. Just under half of CVQO's learners have fewer than five good GCSEs when they start their course. Most learners take a level 2 qualification in teamwork and personal development in the community (TPD). Smaller numbers are enrolled on qualifications in music for practical performance or management.
- CVQO offers learning through approximately 1,800 cadet units across England and at residential camps. Training is provided by a local team of trainers, including regional and area managers employed by CVQO and the cadet units' vocational qualifications officers (VQOs) as well as adult instructors, who are volunteers. CVQO's head office is in Camberley, Surrey, which is where the senior leadership, curriculum support and business services teams are based. CVQO also provides training to school pupils and adults, which was not included in this inspection as it is not funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). This inspection report does not have a provision type report or grade because CVQO is funded to deliver additional learning, rather than mainstream provision.

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

- Senior leaders and managers must use CVQO's own data more effectively as they receive it to identify trends in learners' attendance, progress and achievement, and to tackle any underperforming areas. They should collaborate with the ESFA to gain access to reliable data that trustees and leaders can analyse to monitor and challenge the effectiveness of improvement actions.
- Senior leaders should introduce a suitable mechanism for evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning and share the more effective teaching strategies they identify across the organisation and cadet units. In partnership with the Ministry of Defence, they should agree systems to assure the quality of training for ESFA-funded qualifications taught by VQOs and adult instructors.
- Senior leaders and managers must ensure that all involved in the programme strongly emphasise the importance of good attendance and where learners do not attend, take effective action to address this.
- Senior leaders should evaluate the extent to which the improvement initiatives they have introduced, including to the programme delivery model, level of support and structure of learners' workbooks, are improving progress, retention and achievement rates.
- Trainers should agree with learners interim targets for them to submit work, monitor their progress more incisively and help them understand what they still need to do to achieve their qualification.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not focused sufficiently on improving the quality of teaching and learning and, as a result, too much varies in quality and requires improvement. They recently introduced a system for observing learning sessions taught by CVQO's own trainers, but it is too early to judge its effectiveness. Despite leaders and managers managing trainers' performance effectively, they place too little emphasis during appraisal on improving teaching and learning or achievement rates. Leaders and managers have yet to devise suitable arrangements to assure the quality of training provided by cadet unit trainers.
- Leaders' and managers' use of data to manage and improve the provision requires improvement. They do not have ready access to reliable data to evaluate learners' attendance, progress, or achievement, which impedes their ability to monitor trends. Leaders and managers act quickly when they believe improvement is needed, but do not use data to evaluate the full impact of the actions they have taken. Although they know the destinations of a minority of learners who have been very successful, managers do not know the extent to which the majority of learners have used their CVQO learning to help them progress into further or higher education, employment or apprenticeships.
- Leaders and managers' self-assessment of the quality of the provision is too optimistic and incomplete. They have not made sufficiently critical judgements about learners' outcomes, the quality of teaching and learning or the effectiveness of safeguarding. As a result, leaders and managers have missed vital areas within the quality improvement plan.
- Trustees, leaders and managers have high expectations for all involved in the programme. They gather and use learners' and trainers' feedback extensively to identify improvement actions. Leaders and managers assign clear responsibility for action and set challenging timescales for improvement. They act swiftly and decisively. For example, when they realised too many music learners withdrew from their course before completing, they introduced learning activities at the next band camp, which has helped remedy this situation in the current year.
- Leaders have strengthened considerably CVQO's management capacity. Through restructuring of the executive team, a director and area managers now have specific responsibility and accountability for improving the quality of the provision. Leaders invested significantly in training managers to use data to identify learners that are at risk of not achieving. To facilitate learners' progress, managers have increased the support they give cadet units, including through parent volunteers. The management programme is particularly well led. Area managers have developed good quality teaching and learning resources which have had a positive impact on learners' achievement.
- Leaders and managers promote a strong culture of equality of opportunity which permeates throughout the organisation. They designed the TPD programme carefully to align with training delivered in the cadet units and help those with few qualifications to gain recognition for their achievements. A growing, and relatively high, proportion of learners start their programme with fewer than five good GCSEs and a significant number have a disability and/or learning difficulty. These learners achieve as well as, if not slightly

better than, their peers. Trainers promote diversity, tolerance and community cohesion particularly well, which has resulted in learners understanding and exhibiting British values during individual and team activities.

## **The governance of the provider**

- Trustees have a wide range of experience and knowledge and routinely visit cadet units. They use this expertise effectively to support and challenge leaders' and managers' actions and the rate of improvement.
- Trustees receive detailed reports about the provision, but these do not contain the most pertinent data to enable them to assess how well CVQO meets all of its aims, particularly for learners' achievement and destinations.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff and volunteers are appropriately trained and checked before having contact with learners.
- Staff carry out thorough risk assessments of activities that learners undertake, some of which are hazardous and high risk. They take learners' safety very seriously and as a result learners feel safe.
- When safeguarding incidents are raised, managers take appropriate action and maintain comprehensive records. However, they do not always receive details of incidents that occur during activities run by the cadet unit trainers, as these are dealt with by the VQO.
- Managers have a suitable 'Prevent' duty action plan and risk assessment. All staff have had recent training but have yet to ensure that learners understand fully the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching varies too much, depending on each individual trainer's skills and expertise, and not enough is good or better. Not all trainers plan theory learning sessions well enough to ensure that the most able learners have sufficiently difficult tasks or those who struggle have enough opportunities to practise and apply their learning. A few trainers do not question learners effectively to check they have retained new learning or made sufficient progress in the learning session. In a few learning sessions, trainers place too much emphasis on learners completing workbook tasks at the expense of ensuring that they understand new concepts or terminology.
- Following assessment, learners receive very brief feedback about the quality of their work and what they need to improve. Too much assessment takes place at the end of their course, which means learners cannot rectify mistakes early enough and a minority repeat errors throughout their coursework. Too often, trainers and assessors give very positive feedback to learners instead of pushing them to achieve to their full potential.
- Not all trainers reinforce the importance of good English skills during learning sessions or when marking learners' work. Only a minority correct learners' spelling and grammar to

help them develop these skills in a meaningful context. As a result, learners spell commonplace words incorrectly, such as orchestra, adventurous, communication and professional. A few trainers help learners acquire good English skills, for example in using abbreviations correctly, citing reference sources used for research and structuring sentences.

- Trainers and learners agree suitable long-term targets for the completion of qualifications, taking good account of external pressures, such as college or school examinations. They encourage learners to take responsibility for setting their own deadlines. However, many learners struggle to plan their work effectively because they do not have any interim targets for completing coursework, practical tasks or qualification units.
- Trainers have extensive knowledge, skills and experience of the army, Royal Air Force (RAF) and Royal Navy through having worked in the forces or being a cadet themselves. They use this to good effect to contextualise training to meet learners' needs and interests. Trainers often use humour and interesting anecdotes to enliven learning sessions and maintain learners' interest. They praise learners and encourage them to do well, giving valuable support to those who need additional help. In a few instances, trainers do not identify those learners who need additional support in a structured way, as learners choose whether or not they declare their support needs.
- Managers have cross-referenced comprehensively the activities that learners complete at their cadet unit with CVQO's qualifications. This helps learners make good initial progress as a result of, for example, leadership roles they hold at the cadet unit, sailing qualifications or challenges taken during the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. It motivates learners, particularly those who have achieved few previous qualifications. Occasionally, trainers do not check that learners' skills and knowledge are still current or that they can apply these to the standard required for the qualification.
- Learners have access to good-quality learning resources, including reference books. In particular, management learners benefit from high-quality presentations which relate different leadership models to their cadet unit role. Trainers challenge learners' views about diversity and stereotypes effectively, for example through learners discussing case studies of women in high-ranking job roles.
- Learners have suitable opportunities to develop and apply mathematical skills within relevant learning activities. Through completing navigation activities, TPD learners gain competence in using grid references while improving their map reading skills.
- Learners enjoy participating in a wide range of exciting practical learning activities where they gain significant skills and knowledge. They relish the challenge posed by the adventurous, and sometimes hazardous, activities such as expeditions, flying lessons and outdoor camps. Through completing a project to build a fully-working flight simulator at their cadet unit, a group of learners learned a wide range of new skills including in carpentry, design and electronics.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

- Learners' attendance requires improvement. Although attendance is voluntary, too many learners do not attend their cadet unit regularly enough to ensure that they make good progress. Trainers do not sufficiently stress the importance of attending, particularly for

learning sessions where learners complete coursework or activities needed for their qualification.

- Learners have a basic understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Generally, they know about terrorism and how this affects them as cadets but few appreciate how radicalisation and extremism extends to, or are prevalent within, the geographical locations they live and learn in.
- Learners gain useful insights into working within the services relevant to their cadet unit. In one cadet unit, RAF recruitment officers speak to learners about different career opportunities and life in the forces. Not all learners benefit from broad enough careers advice and guidance across all the uniformed services to help them make a fully informed choice about their future.
- Learners appreciate fundamental British values well and can explain how these apply when working in the forces and as a representative of their cadet unit. Those who attend learning sessions demonstrate high levels of respect, discipline, behaviour and maturity. They enjoy learning and participate enthusiastically in learning activities.
- Learners acquire good skills, qualities and attributes. They improve their team-working, leadership, problem-solving and delegation skills. Learners apply their newly acquired skills well in diverse contexts. For example, management learners who are school prefects are able to handle discipline concerns more confidently. Learners recognise the benefits of taking their course and feel better equipped to go into work or higher education.
- Learners feel, and are, safe. They value the importance their trainers place on ensuring that they enjoy participating in exciting activities in a safe environment. Learners know who to contact in their cadet unit should they have concerns about their safety and well-being. They appreciate the increased need for vigilance, for example when wearing uniform in public places, and for checking visitors' identification.
- Learners completing the volunteering unit of their qualification hold successful fundraising and volunteering activities. They develop expertise in running and supporting external events, particularly those taking the music qualification. Learners make significant contributions to local charities.
- CVQO celebrates excellence and success well, with learners who excel being entered for an annual award. They are highly motivated by this recognition and the resulting opportunity to carry out community-based work in South Africa.

## Outcomes for learners

## Requires improvement

- Not all learners make good progress towards completing the written work and practical activities needed for their qualification. Too often, they lack a sense of urgency in submitting written work to be marked. Learners' progress is showing early signs of improvement in a number of regions and subjects, largely due to the actions and interventions of individual trainers.
- Learners' achievement of TPD and music qualifications dipped in the most recent year from a previously very high rate and this now requires improvement. Leaders and managers know many of the reasons why this has happened and have taken swift action to remedy the situation. Although it is too early to show any increase in achievement

rates, fewer learners withdrew from their programme this year than previously.

- The majority of management learners achieve their qualification, which has resulted in a larger proportion of learners achieving at level 3 than at level 2. All other groups of learners achieve at similar rates, including men and women, those with a disability and/or learning difficulty and from different ethnic groups or areas with high levels of deprivation. Learners with dyslexia achieve slightly better than their peers.
- The majority of learners' work is of a suitable standard at level 2, and good at level 3. Learners cite good examples in their coursework of how they apply their learning in activities they carry out at school, college or the cadet unit. One learner led a Young Enterprise project group much more confidently as a result of completing a management qualification with CVQO.
- Learners who have completed their course, whose destinations are known to leaders and managers, progress very well into further education, university or employment. Successful learners include those that now study at prestigious universities or are employed as professional musicians. A small, but significant, minority of learners have progressed with CVQO from a level 2 to a level 3 programme through additional funding secured by leaders.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	1248225
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	8,208
Principal/CEO	Mr Guy Horridge
Telephone number	01276 601703
Website	<a href="http://www.cvqo.org">www.cvqo.org</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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	-	-	7,836	-	496	-	0	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
Funding received from:	Education 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 director for quality and curriculum, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. 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. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

## Inspection team

Janet Rodgers, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mark Shackleton	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Helen Groves	Ofsted Inspector
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Tim Gardner	Her Majesty's Inspector
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