

CTS Training

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

15–18 January 2019

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Adult learning programmes	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers have effectively improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and increased the proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications. The large majority of learners now make good progress and achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders and managers have successfully established a highly inclusive, welcoming culture throughout the provision. Learners, many of whom have experienced very significant challenges in their lives, thrive in the supportive atmosphere where all feel valued.
- Leaders and managers work tirelessly to promote social justice and community cohesion through a curriculum that is highly responsive to the needs of hard-to-reach learners. External partners value their considerable expertise and experience in relation to, for example, the education of Roma learners.
- Leaders and managers provide very effective pastoral support that helps to ensure that their high expectations of learners are met. As a result, the large majority of learners improve their self-esteem and confidence, enjoy their learning and complete their programmes successfully.
- In most cases, leaders, managers and teachers use their knowledge of learners' starting points effectively to provide an individually tailored curriculum. This enables most learners to develop the knowledge and skills they need for further study, employment and successful lives as citizens of modern Britain.
- Attendance is too low, especially in tutorials. Learners with low attendance do not make sufficiently rapid progress.
- Teachers do not routinely provide activities that sufficiently challenge the most able learners to develop their knowledge and understanding to their full potential.

Full report

Information about the provider

- CTS Training (CTS) provides learning programmes at two sites in Rotherham and Sheffield for learners who have significant barriers to education and employment. CTS offers 16 to 19 study programmes and courses for adult learners. Programmes are mostly in mathematics, English, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), employability, and personal and social development. A small number of younger learners study customer service or construction at subcontracted provision in Doncaster and Sheffield. Programmes are at level 2 or below.
- Unemployment levels in Sheffield and Rotherham are higher than the national average. A high proportion of Sheffield residents have qualifications at level 2 and above. However, the proportion of Rotherham residents who have qualifications at level 2 or above is much lower than that nationally. Sheffield and Rotherham have a significant Roma population. The majority of CTS's learners on 16 to 19 study programmes are from Roma communities.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that attendance improves.
- Ensure that teachers provide challenging activities and helpful feedback that enable the most able learners to reach their full potential.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. They have restructured the organisation to provide a clearer focus on the quality of education on 16 to 19 study programmes and programmes for adult learners. As a result, achievement rates have improved significantly.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations of their learners. They have a good awareness of learners' individual starting points and the considerable barriers to learning and employment that many learners have. They provide very effective, sensitive support that is instrumental in retaining learners on their programmes and helping them to make good progress.
- Leaders and managers make good use of their strong partnerships with external agencies to provide extra support for learners when appropriate. For example, they work well with local authorities' early help teams to address the complex challenges faced by many of their learners. The local authority, local schools and Jobcentre Plus value the high quality of provision and care at CTS and regularly refer vulnerable learners to them. Learners increase their confidence and prospects as a result of the respect, kindness and wrap-around care that they receive.
- The curriculum is very accessible to local learners and caters for their different circumstances well. For example, programmes have flexible entry points that enable learners to start at any time during the year. Subcontracting arrangements provide learners across South Yorkshire with local access to relevant courses. Engage Training and Development provides employability training in Doncaster and Portland Training delivers a level 1 construction programme in Sheffield.
- Leaders and managers have used a range of successful strategies to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, they have developed subject-specialist standardisation groups in English, mathematics and ESOL. Leaders and managers provide well-targeted training to address any areas for improvement identified during lesson observations and work scrutiny. Managers hold tutors to account for their learners' retention, achievement and progress. They manage underperforming staff appropriately by, for example, providing extra support or, when necessary, terminating contracts. Consequently, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved over time and is now good.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the small amount of subcontracted provision is of a similarly high standard as the rest of the provision. They facilitate the sharing of good practice between staff at CTS and the two subcontractors and monitor the quality of programmes well. As a result, learners benefit from high-quality education at all sites.
- Leaders and managers do not record effectively enough the time that learners spend engaged in work-related learning and tutorial activities, or the full impact of these activities. This reduces their ability to evaluate and improve the quality of a few aspects of the curriculum.

The governance of the provider

- The senior management team act as directors of the company. They plan strategic direction well to meet the needs of vulnerable local learners, including a high proportion of learners from the Roma community. They use their strong links with external agencies effectively to target hard-to-reach learners throughout the community.
- Leaders' and managers' understanding of the quality of the provision is broadly accurate. However, they have not identified or acted upon a few areas for improvement quickly enough, such as the lack of challenge for the most able learners in a small minority of lessons. The senior management team recognises that they need to strengthen their capacity to provide independent scrutiny of the quality of provision. They have recently appointed a new highly experienced governor to provide external oversight and challenge. It is too early to see the impact of this recent appointment.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers undertake effective safer recruitment procedures to enhance the safety of learners. They maintain a thorough and up-to-date single central register that records accurately staff training, references and Disclosure and Barring Service checks.
- The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is suitably qualified and knowledgeable and ensures that all staff have regular safeguarding training, including in relation to the 'Prevent' duty. Staff are appropriately vigilant and use the company's effective safeguarding procedures well when necessary.
- Leaders and managers work tirelessly to support learners through complex and frequent safeguarding issues. The DSL maintains a comprehensive record of safeguarding incidents and concerns. Managers deal with incidents effectively, including through referrals to external safeguarding agencies, and ensure that concerns are followed through to an appropriate resolution. This exceptional attention to learners' welfare helps to ensure that learners remain in education despite very challenging circumstances. Learners feel, and are, safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the previous inspection, leaders, managers and teachers have provided increased levels of well-targeted individual support for their learners. For example, a high proportion of learners receive one-to-one tuition promptly and effectively to address any gaps in their knowledge. As a result, most learners make good progress from their starting points and a high proportion achieve their qualifications or other planned outcomes.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is high at both main sites and on subcontracted provision. Learners benefit from skilful teaching no matter where they study.
- Teachers provide effective support to learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, they provide coloured overlays when appropriate. They ensure that learners with mental health issues have the time that they need to overcome anxieties associated with learning. They manage behaviour well so that all learners

benefit from calm learning environments. As a result, the high and increasing proportion of learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve their qualifications at the same rate as other students.

- Teachers use their good skills and subject knowledge to design and provide a wide range of effective activities and resources that motivate and enthuse learners. Teachers value having their 'own' classrooms, where they can display useful resources to good effect. Learners routinely use the engaging displays on classroom walls as aide-memoires. This helps them to retain knowledge well over time.
- Most teachers assess learners' progress accurately during lessons and effectively promote high standards of work. They provide constructive verbal feedback that identifies what learners have done well and how they can do better. As a result, most students produce work of a standard that meets and sometimes exceeds the requirements of their qualifications.
- Teachers promote equality and respect for diversity effectively in classes. For example, they encourage learners to explore issues connected with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights. They ensure that learners are aware of the different customs and cultures of various ethnic and religious groups. Learners from a wide range of backgrounds work well together in class and show respect for different opinions.
- Teachers have a good understanding of learners' starting points and provide effective teaching that is well matched to individual needs and abilities. However, in a small minority of cases, teachers do not challenge the most able learners to make the progress of which they are capable. For example, they do not respond effectively when very able learners ask advanced questions about complex concepts. A few learners find the pace of some lessons too slow. They complete tasks quickly and then do not receive more challenging work. Consequently, a small minority of the most able learners do not fulfil their potential.
- In English, mathematics and ESOL classes, which form a large part of the curriculum, well-qualified teachers provide logically sequenced, engaging activities that successfully help learners to improve their skills and achieve their qualifications. However, a minority of teachers of other subjects do not routinely take naturally occurring opportunities to develop learners' English and mathematical skills further. For example, a few teachers do not provide sufficiently constructive feedback on marked work to help learners improve their written English.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners behave very well. They treat each other, staff and visitors with respect and courtesy and they understand the need to respect diversity. Staff deal effectively, sensitively and firmly with the rare incidents of disruptive behaviour. Classes and social spaces are characterised by a highly inclusive atmosphere where all learners are valued and treated as equals. Learners flourish as a result of this positive culture.
- Learners know how to keep themselves safe and how to report any concerns that they may have. They have an adequate awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- Learners have a good understanding and appreciation of British values. For example, some learners discuss the democratic processes underpinning Brexit and their own hopes

and fears about this issue and the ideological positions that might influence the free press in a democracy. They can relate this to media discussions of immigration and employment rights. Other learners have a sophisticated awareness of the relationship between democratic citizenship and access to legal representation.

- Learners increase their understanding of personal, social and ethical issues as a result of the sensitive discussions and effective support that they experience.
- Learners benefit from high levels of effective pastoral support that help them to increase their confidence, self-esteem and understanding of their rights. Staff help learners to access appropriate medical care, counselling and advice about housing and budgeting. This helps learners to increase significantly their independence, health and well-being.
- Learners benefit from highly effective work-related learning that increases their chances of employment. The development of useful skills for work, such as writing reports and presentations, composing a job application, working effectively as a team and solving problems, is central to the curriculum. Learners value these skills and develop increasingly positive attitudes to learning and work as a result of their programmes.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have increased the proportion of learners who take part in external work experience. Most learners for whom it is appropriate benefit from work experience with a partner organisation or local employer. For example, Roma learners undertook very successful work experience at their previous school, where they provided valuable translation services that helped the school to communicate with Roma parents. School staff greatly valued the contribution made by these learners. They were impressed by the progress that the learners had made at CTS since leaving school. However, many learners have very significant barriers to employment and are not yet ready for external work experience.
- Most learners improve their English, mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. For example, some adult learners on employability courses have never used a computer before but, by the time they complete their course, they can search and apply for jobs online and create digital curriculum vitae.
- Learners benefit from effective pre-course advice and guidance. This ensures that they enrol onto the most appropriate courses to match their skills and ambitions. Staff work closely with external partners to ensure that potential learners have access to useful information about the curriculum. For example, CTS managers give high-quality presentations to parents and pupils at careers events at local schools. They work closely with many of the most disadvantaged pupils, in some cases from Year 9 onwards, to provide them with a smooth transition to further education. Staff also work in partnership with the local authority's early help team to place young learners who are not in education, employment or training onto the most suitable course. Most learners appreciate the care taken to re-engage them with learning. They speak very positively about their teachers and centre managers. Most remain in learning throughout their programme, often for the first time.
- Learners benefit from high-quality careers information, advice and guidance during their courses that motivate them and give them hope for their futures. They attend job fairs and open days at colleges, visit a range of workplaces and listen to visiting speakers from local industries. Teachers provide individually tailored guidance and learners also have appointments with advisers from the National Careers Service. As a result, most learners progress to further study, voluntary work or employment upon completion of their

programmes.

- Leaders and managers do not set high enough expectations for attendance. Attendance is too low, particularly in tutorials. Staff regularly make home visits and communicate effectively with parents and carers, when this is appropriate, for learners on 16 to 19 study programmes. This is beginning to have a positive impact on families' and learners' attitudes to education and the importance of attendance.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications has increased in all areas of the curriculum. Leaders and managers took effective actions that significantly raised achievement rates for adult learners in 2016/17; these improved rates were sustained in 2017/18. On 16 to 19 study programmes, achievement improved slightly in 2016/17 and steeply in 2017/18. The proportion of learners on 16 to 19 study programmes who achieve their qualifications is now much higher than at similar providers.
- Most learners make good progress from very low starting points. Many learners have no previous qualifications. The large majority develop their knowledge and skills despite a high proportion having had limited formal education and very significant challenges in their personal lives.
- Leaders and managers have successfully ensured that there are no substantial gaps in the achievements of different groups of learners.
- The large majority of learners achieve their qualifications in English, mathematics, ICT and ESOL. These subjects are the core components of both 16 to 19 study programmes and employability programmes for adults.
- The majority of learners progress to positive next steps in further study, voluntary work or employment, or make greater contributions to the lives of their families and communities.
- Most learners produce work of at least the required standard. A small proportion of learners produce work of a high standard. For example, a small number of learners on 16 to 19 study programmes produce well-informed written work that demonstrates thoughtful analysis and an ability to engage with complex theory.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- CTS provides study programmes that re-engage learners in education and prepare them well for future study and employment. At the time of the inspection, 136 learners were enrolled on a study programme consisting of English or ESOL, mathematics, ICT, employability skills, personal and social development, and work-related learning or work experience at the provider's two main sites. A further 18 were studying similar programmes or level 1 customer service with a subcontractor, Engage Training and Development, in Doncaster. Eight learners were enrolled on a level 1 construction programme with Portland Training, a subcontractor in Sheffield. Around four fifths of

learners are on programmes at level 1 or below, with the remainder at level 2. Around two thirds of learners are from Roma communities.

- Learners value the high-quality support that they receive from staff in and between sessions. It facilitates their successful reintegration into learning and helps them to remain on their programmes and progress well. Staff communicate well, when necessary, with parents or guardians of high-risk learners. For example, they make home visits if parents or guardians are reluctant or unable to come into the provider to discuss how best to support learners.
- Teachers develop learners' English skills well. They reinforce the use of key words and concepts over time. Learners increase their vocabulary and their ability to use their imagination and creativity in their writing. For example, learners in a GCSE English lesson used simile effectively to bring their writing to life.
- Teachers help learners to manage their behaviour well over time. Teachers set and reinforce high expectations of learners' behaviour and know how to manage instances of minor disruptive behaviour well. Learners comply with these high expectations and develop a good ability to manage their own emotions and impulses. As a result, by the end of their programmes they are well prepared for adult life.
- Most learners gain useful qualifications in, for example, English, mathematics and ICT that they need for their careers or for future study. This increases their confidence and raises their aspirations for their futures. The majority of learners progress to further study at a higher level or employment on completion of their study programmes.
- Learners benefit from helpful careers advice, work-related learning and, when appropriate, work experience that prepare them well for their next steps in education and employment. For example, they run a tuck shop at lunchtime that enables them to learn how to market goods, deal with customers and handle money. Some female Roma learners undertake work experience as mentors in their previous schools and provide positive role models. Other learners undertake work experience with local construction companies. They develop a good understanding of their responsibilities as citizens and employees. For example, learners have gained permanent employment at construction companies where they had completed work experience, gained promotion and then returned to CTS to offer work placements to current learners.
- Learners develop valuable skills for life and work. They gradually take more responsibility for their own learning and decisions so that, by the end of their programmes, they have good independent learning skills. They learn to work towards deadlines and to work well with others. They develop good problem-solving and digital skills. However, learners do not develop good patterns of attendance. They appreciate the flexible delivery of the study programmes, but this flexibility does not mirror the expectations for attendance that they are likely to face in the future, at work or in college.
- Learners enjoy their learning and almost all develop their knowledge, skills and understanding and make progress. A small minority complete their programmes early and progress to the next level. However, a few of the most able learners do not reach their full potential because teachers do not routinely provide them with challenging activities or sufficiently helpful feedback to expand their knowledge and understanding.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- CTS provides short programmes for adult learners to improve their employability, English, mathematics and ICT skills. Most adult learners are referred to CTS by Jobcentre Plus. At the time of the inspection, 112 adult learners were enrolled, of whom 103 were on programmes at level 1 or below, with the remainder studying at level 2.
- Managers of adult learning programmes maintain strong strategic and operational links with Jobcentre Plus. This facilitates responsive curriculum planning to meet local employment opportunities and the needs of local unemployed people. It also ensures that Jobcentre Plus provides accurate pre-enrolment advice and guidance. Referral and enrolment procedures run smoothly for the benefit of learners, many of whom are returning to learning after a long break.
- Managers plan the curriculum well to meet the individual needs of learners. Programmes have multiple entry points, enabling learners to start their courses as soon as a referral is made. This flexible approach ensures that learners are quickly engaged in learning. Most learners remain on their programmes and complete their courses successfully.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the provision meets the needs of learners who are furthest from education and the labour market. For example, they provide a high level of pastoral support to learners who have previously lived in institutional settings or who have recently been judged fit to work after a long period of ill health or disability. Staff ensure that these learners receive the personal and social support that they need to remain in learning and to gain the necessary qualifications and employment skills to move into employment or further study.
- Learners quickly increase their confidence as a result of the encouragement and care that they receive. Teachers celebrate learners' first small steps in learning, which helps them to improve their self-esteem. Learners develop greater independence and the ability to contribute effectively to their communities.
- Learners are highly motivated, enjoy their courses and take pride in their learning. They value the useful skills that they develop. For example, learners describe their sense of achievement in learning more about grammar and sentence structure. They are empowered by their acquisition of knowledge and skills and gain new hope for their futures.
- Teachers have a good understanding of individual needs that, in the large majority of cases, is reflected in the well-planned sessions they deliver. They break learning down into small, manageable steps so that learners with very low starting points can understand the key concepts that provide the foundations of successful learning. For example, in entry-level English, learners build compound words from simple stems and develop their understanding of the structure of language.
- Learners make good use of careers advice and guidance to help them identify suitable employment opportunities or routes into study at a higher level. The majority of learners move successfully into further study or employment.
- Learners, many of whom are very vulnerable, know how to keep themselves and others safe. They understand how to stay safe online and in their communities, including from the dangers of sexual exploitation. The great majority of learners watch an informative video during induction about the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. They recall the information in this video well and understand the basic risks associated with extremist

views.

- Most students make good progress and develop useful new knowledge, skills and understanding. However, in a small minority of lessons teachers do not plan sufficiently challenging work to enable the most able learners to make the progress of which they are capable.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not provide sufficiently accurate assessment, specific targets or helpful feedback to help learners understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Attendance at lessons and tutorials requires improvement. Many learners have multiple barriers to attendance. In most cases, staff know why learners are absent and work hard to provide extra support to help learners to catch up if they have missed a session. However, low attendance reduces learners' rate of progress.

Provider details

Unique reference number	51259
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	910
Principal/CEO	Steve Holmes
Telephone number	07720 839409
Website	www.ctstraining.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	133	103	30	9	–	–	–	–
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	–							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Engage Training and Development Portland Training							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive, 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; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions and reviewed learners' work. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

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