

Inspection of Contracting Services (Education and Skills) Limited

Inspection dates: 8–10 December 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Contracting Services (Education and Skills) Limited (CSES) was established in 2017 and is based in Warminster. CSES offers levy-funded management and customer-service related apprenticeships under the name of Management Training Plus. More recently it has started providing apprenticeships for non-levy employers.

At the time of the inspection, there were 29 apprentices studying on standards-based apprenticeships. Five were studying level 5 management-related apprenticeships and 16 were studying level 3 customer service or team leading apprenticeships. Two apprentices were studying business-related apprenticeships at level 2. Leaders have recently introduced a level 2 apprenticeship for express delivery operatives. Six apprentices are studying on this new apprenticeship.

Most of the apprentices are employed by two large, levy-paying employers based in Wiltshire and Devon. All apprenticeships are offered within the South West. All apprentices are aged 19 or older.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Apprentices enjoy their apprenticeship and have a very positive attitude to their studies. This is reflected in their high attendance and enthusiasm for their courses. Most apprentices progress into new roles, take on extra responsibilities or gain promotion as a result of their training. Employers value their apprentices and work closely with leaders from CSES to motivate them. For example, employers and CSES leaders organise formal celebrations, graduation ceremonies and write articles for newsletters to highlight and celebrate apprentices' achievements.

Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge and skills through their apprenticeship and apply these effectively in the workplace. Apprentices studying at level 3 and level 5 gain considerable knowledge from the work-based projects that they plan and implement. In many cases these projects enable apprentices to tackle real workplace challenges and are used by employers to improve their businesses.

A small number of apprentices do not develop their mathematical and English skills to the expected level. This is due to the use of online study packages, which apprentices struggle to prioritise in their learning. Leaders do not provide apprentices with enough teaching of English and mathematics and, consequently, a small number of apprentices struggle to successfully complete their work in these subjects.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders work with a small number of employers to fulfil their specific business needs. Leaders use their extensive experience of management and customer-focused training well to develop the high-quality apprenticeships they now offer. They work effectively with employers to identify how to best use apprentices' skills and aspirations to enhance their businesses.

Leaders use apprentices' career goals effectively to set up tailored apprenticeships with employers. Employers ensure that apprentices are in a job that allows them to apply the new knowledge they acquire. They carefully plan apprentices' workloads to reduce the demands of the apprenticeship during busy periods of the year and to provide ample time for study during quieter times. Apprentices can quickly put their new skills into practice in the workplace. As a result, a few level 3 team leader apprentices gained promotion while in training because of their newly acquired skills and confidence in managing their teams.

Leaders and coaches support apprentices well to build resilience and strength of character. Apprentices take on challenges at work that they would have not been able to do previously. Others act as ambassadors to promote the benefits of their learning to colleagues. Level 5 management operations apprentices explained how they had 'found their voice at management meetings', due to the knowledge and confidence they developed through the apprenticeship. Several apprentices who

spoke to inspectors described how the apprenticeship has raised their aspirations for their future career.

Leaders took effective action to keep their apprentices engaged during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. They ensured apprentices continued to make progress by adapting their teaching well to online sessions. Apprentices continue to make effective use of online resources, which enables them to complete their studies flexibly around the busy periods at work. Leaders listen carefully to the views of their apprentices and recognise that online training and support are not always the most effective methods of learning. They have thoughtfully reorganised the curriculum to strike an effective balance of face-to-face and online teaching.

Coaches are well qualified and experienced in the management and customer service sector. They use this knowledge and experience to plan apprenticeships in a logical way that builds apprentices' knowledge quickly. Apprentices reflect on what they have learned and apply this new knowledge well in the workplace. For example, level 3 team leader apprentices resolve conflicts and adopt positive approaches to customer complaints as a result of the knowledge they have gained and the confidence they have developed. However, coaches do not have enough experience of the express delivery driving industry to provide level 2 apprentices with the same technical and vocational knowledge that they provide for other apprentices.

Coaches are highly skilled in teaching apprentices the knowledge they need to demonstrate in their final assessments. For example, they conscientiously teach apprentices how to plan and take part in formal discussions. Through this, apprentices develop the professional behaviours required within their job role and prepare well for the assessment of their professional skills. As a result, the vast majority achieve high grades.

Leaders monitor their apprentices' progress closely and work collaboratively with their coaches to maintain high standards. They use an external specialist well to bring an impartial view of the business, to provide appropriate checks on the quality of apprenticeships and to challenge leaders to continually improve their apprenticeships. Leaders identify areas for development and act quickly to deal with the vast majority of these. However, they have not been swift enough to improve the English and mathematics curriculum, particularly for apprentices who need to develop these skills from a low starting point.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders establish a supportive culture of care and well-being within their organisation. They implement their safeguarding policy and procedures effectively to keep their apprentices safe. The senior leader responsible for safeguarding is appropriately trained and experienced for their role. They use their knowledge to support apprentices and provide a comprehensive induction package on

safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and well-being. Apprentices feel confident to raise concerns about their welfare or safety with CSES staff or with their employer.

Leaders carry out the necessary checks on staff to ensure they are suitable to work with apprentices. They frequently update staff on matters relating to safety and well-being, including training on mental health.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders need to raise the importance of the curriculum for English and mathematics for all apprentices. Leaders need to ensure that apprentices who need to work towards English and mathematics qualifications are given the specialist support they need to deal with the gaps in their knowledge.
- Leaders should further develop the curriculum for express delivery operative apprentices to ensure they learn from coaches with expertise in, and experience of, this work.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1278664
Address	11A George Street Warminster BA12 8QA
Contact number	07905 535266
Website	https://managementtrainingplus.com/
Managing Director	Lewis Blain
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring visit report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting apprentices in the workplace, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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