

Capital 4 Training Limited

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

Unique reference number:	1278614
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Capital 4 Training Limited was inspected in October 2021. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

At the time of the visit, there were 182 apprentices on a programme. The large majority of apprentices were on level 2 construction plant operations apprenticeships. In addition, there were nine apprentices on level 2 groundworker, six on level 2 road surfacing operative, 16 on level 3 team leading and fewer than five on level 4 operational/departmental manager programmes.

Themes

To what extent do leaders and managers ensure that apprentices benefit from high-quality, off-the-job training? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have improved the way that they plan and deliver off-the-job training to apprentices. They have supported tutors to review the apprenticeship curriculum, leading to a more proactive approach to planning training activities. As a result, apprentices benefit from focused training that enables them to develop new skills that they can apply at work. For example, plant operations apprentices develop skills in driving rollers and using machinery to lay asphalt on roadways.

Managers and tutors work closely with employers to plan off-the-job training. Staff organise the theory and practical elements of the course well and clearly identify the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices will develop through each training activity. Tutors ensure that apprentices have sufficient time to read and understand the instruction manuals for the plant machinery that they use. As a result, apprentices develop their understanding of the machinery that they operate and can troubleshoot issues alongside repair technicians when there are faults with their vehicles.

Tutors work closely with employers to organise the content of training sessions. Employer managers understand the commitment to off-the-job training and work well with tutors to ensure that workplace supervisors and apprentices are clear on what can be included in training. As a result, apprentices quickly develop new skills through their off-the-job training as well as when at work.

Tutors ensure that apprentices have access to appropriate off-the-job training activities. They use a variety of teaching methods such as online tutor-led sessions and face-to-face sessions at work or during training on specialist construction sites.

For example, team-leading apprentices complete additional training in conducting research and complete online mandatory learning set by their employers in safeguarding and health and safety.

Leaders and managers do not have clear enough oversight of the amount of off-the-job training that apprentices receive. Until recently, they did not monitor this closely enough to identify potential issues or hold tutors to account if apprentices were at risk of falling behind.

How well do leaders and managers involve employers in the review of apprentices' progress and ensure that swift action is taken when apprentices fall behind? Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers do not review apprentices' progress well enough to enable them to identify swiftly apprentices who fall behind. As a result, too many construction apprentices are beyond their agreed end date, and the large majority of those waiting for end-point assessment (EPA) still need to take their functional skills examinations.

Tutors in construction do not use reviews well enough to identify clearly the specific knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices develop on their programme. Tutors do not tailor feedback to individual apprentices. Too often, they make similar comments for different apprentices based on the off-the-job training attended, and do not identify specifically enough what each apprentice needs to do to improve. As a result, apprentices do not have a clear enough understanding of what they have achieved or what they need to do next to develop their knowledge and skills.

Managers and tutors do not ensure that apprentices know when their EPA is planned to take place. A few apprentices are not aware that they are already beyond their expected end date, and many think the date is flexible. As a result, staff do not take sufficient action or plan interventions to help prevent apprentices from falling behind or to get them back on track.

Leaders and managers have appropriate governance arrangements in place and work closely with educational experts who provide external scrutiny. However, the information provided by managers lacks sufficient detail to allow those in governance positions to challenge effectively. Managers provide insufficient detail about apprentices who have passed their expected end date or the action taken to address this.

Most tutors involve employers in reviews to identify what apprentices know and can do. They identify apprentices who are not getting enough off-the-job training and plan additional sessions to help address this. For example, apprentices on road surfacing operative programmes must stay on site when the asphalt road surface is delivered and sometimes miss their sessions with the tutor. Employer managers intervene to ensure that additional time is organised for apprentices to catch up on what they miss.

How much progress have staff made in ensuring that apprentices receive high-quality and impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance during their programme? Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers do not oversee the quality of careers advice and guidance that tutors provide. They have implemented a new approach with the intent to provide apprentices with careers education, information, advice and guidance at the beginning, middle and end of their programme. However, managers do not check whether tutors follow this new model, and a few tutors are not providing the planned support to apprentices.

Most apprentices do not receive high-quality careers advice and guidance. Tutors on construction programmes do not provide precise enough careers advice and information and, in a few instances, career discussions do not relate to the industry in which apprentices are working or their level of study.

Tutors for the small number of apprentices on team leading and operational manager programmes provide useful and helpful careers advice and guidance. They provide specific sessions to help apprentices consider how to search for further opportunities and new roles in leading teams. Tutors highlight helpful resources such as the intranet and internal jobs bulletins and identify how apprentices might use them.

Leaders and managers have designed and implemented a careers information page on the company website. They provide useful information for apprentices in areas such as how to apply for work, develop work-related skills and perform well in interviews.

How well do tutors prepare apprentices for their English and mathematics examinations? Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have been slow to improve the delivery of functional skills courses. They did not recruit functional skills staff quickly enough to support apprentices. As a result, too many apprentices, mainly in construction, are beyond their agreed end date and have yet to achieve one or both of their functional skills qualifications.

Leaders and managers recognise the negative impact that staffing changes have had on ensuring a consistent approach to improvements. However, they have not focused on existing apprentices when implementing changes to teaching in English and mathematics. For example, staff introduced workbooks for functional skills, but apprentices who have been on the programme for eight months have only completed a small number of activities. As a result, apprentices' progress in the development of English and mathematics skills is too slow.

Tutors have recently been out to the workplace to deliver functional skills sessions. Employers value these sessions as apprentices have benefited from revision and examination preparation. However, for a significant number of construction plant operations apprentices, this is too late in their programme, and the fact that they

have not achieved functional skills qualifications is preventing them from progressing to EPA.

Tutors effectively identify the English and mathematics skills that apprentices use in the workplace. For example, apprentices use measurements extracted from technical drawings and calculate areas and volumes for stone and hardcore. However, tutors do not link this learning to the functional skills curriculum well enough to identify apprentices' strengths or gaps in their knowledge in preparation for examinations.

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