

Inspection of Chiltern Training Limited

Inspection dates:

8 to 11 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Chiltern Training Limited (CTL) is an independent learning provider based in Reading. CTL provides apprenticeships, education programmes for young people and adult learning programmes across the Thames Valley. At the time of the inspection, most learners, 236, were apprentices, 77 on level 2 early years practitioner, 139 on level 3 early years educator, 13 on level 3 business administration, three on supporting teaching and learning and four apprentices have joined the recently introduced level 5 children, young people, and families manager. A small majority of apprentices, 123, are 16 to 18 years old.

CTL has seven 16 to 18 year olds studying on a traineeship programme as a route into apprenticeships. Fourteen adult learners were studying early years educator of whom seven were also completing at least one functional skill in mathematics or English.

The provider does not currently subcontract any of its provision.

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

Learners and apprentices participate effectively in the classroom. They enjoy sharing experiences from their early years setting through group discussions and effective questioning. They do not benefit sufficiently well from interactive activities online. As a result, when learning online, learners and apprentices are gaining the knowledge required to complete assignments, but they are not able to develop skills beyond the qualification criteria. Too many apprentices do not achieve their apprenticeship within the planned time.

Learners and apprentices have positive attitudes towards learning, attend well and are respectful in the classroom and work environment. For example, early years apprentices feel inspired when working with children, as they quickly see the positive impact they have on children's development. As a result, employers value how quickly learners and apprentices make a positive contribution in the workplace.

Learners and apprentices benefit from working alongside skilled practitioners. For example, workplace mentors support apprentices to interact positively with the children they care for and become more confident to liaise with parents about their child's development. As a result, effective role models share their expertise and develop learners' and apprentices' skills well in the workplace.

Learners completing traineeships benefit from a curriculum that supports swift and positive progression. For example, trainees learn about childcare practices and safeguarding through a blended learning model and then apply this in a meaningful work placement. As a result, trainees quickly develop a good knowledge of the sector, and the large majority move on to an apprenticeship.

Adult learners value the skills and knowledge they are learning and can quickly apply them in their placements. For example, adult learners learned how to implement impactful activities to support child development. They then applied this learning quickly to the benefit of the children in their care. As a result, adult learners enjoy their learning and recognise how it is supporting them in becoming more effective in their work.

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

Leaders and managers have not ensured a comprehensive transition from offering apprenticeship frameworks to teaching apprenticeship standards. For example, teaching and assessing staff focus on the unit and qualification completion. They do not routinely concentrate on the wider knowledge, skills and behaviours the apprenticeship standards demand. As a result, employers and apprentices do not fully recognise the knowledge, skills and behaviours apprentices are required to develop. Consequently, off-the-job training completed in the workplace does not always relate directly to the apprenticeship standards.

Leaders and managers are slow in supporting apprentices to achieve functional skills, particularly mathematics. Leaders recognise this and have implemented additional

support and extra taught functional skills sessions. This has had some positive impact, but too many apprentices have not yet achieved. As a result, apprentices are slow to complete their mathematics qualification, leading to too many not making timely progress overall with their apprenticeship.

Assessors do not ensure all apprentices are aware of the expectations of the final assessment early enough in their apprenticeship programme. For example, assessors are not providing opportunities throughout the apprenticeship for apprentices to practise the skills needed for the final assessment. As a result, not all apprentices are aspirational or motivated to achieve a distinction grade, particularly those studying the level 2 early years practitioner.

Leaders do not offer a comprehensive personal development curriculum or fully understand the impact of the opportunities employers provide. Leaders significantly reduced the personal development curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders recognise that they have been too slow in reintroducing it fully. As a result, learners and apprentices are not being provided with sufficient opportunities to explore or develop their passions or interests.

Leaders have not provided impartial careers advice and guidance to all learners and apprentices, although the large majority are clear on their intended next destination due to constructive conversations with their employers. For example, adult learners are aware of the benefits of achieving the early years educator programme, such as being able to become a room lead. However, leaders are not consistently ensuring or supporting all learners and apprentices to be aware of the wider career opportunities open to them.

Leaders and managers do not fully ensure the effectiveness of all aspects of the quality of education and training. Leaders ensure effective sampling and verification of work-based assessors' practice but do not ensure that classroom sessions are as systematically reviewed. As a result, leaders are not fully aware of the quality of teaching, so they have not targeted training towards the improvement of teaching practice, online or in the classroom.

Leaders and managers have created strong partnerships locally through employer networks and steering groups to understand the local need. Leaders have a clear commitment and rationale to offer qualifications for the early years sector. Employers value the communication they receive and the flexible approach leaders provide towards training. Employers benefit from a curriculum that is designed to support continuous recruitment with regular starting points. As a result, employers value their relationship with leaders and assessors and the positive impact the programmes have on the childcare sector.

Leaders positively promote and encourage new entrants into the early years sector. For example, leaders interview learners carefully and use assessment effectively to ensure they are directed to the most suitable programme. Leaders work with employers to provide work-experience trials for individuals who do not have

placements. As a result, leaders prepare individuals well before they move on to a traineeship, apprenticeship, or adult learning programme.

Teachers and employers support learners and apprentices to implement professional behaviours quickly and effectively in the workplace. For example, teachers set out professional behaviours expected in the workplace in induction and follow up in reviews with employers. As a result, apprentices and learners model positive professional behaviours quickly and become valued members of staff.

Apprentices' and adult learners' written assignment work is at the expected standard. Most work is well presented and shows reflection on their workplace practices. Feedback is generally motivational and gives confirmation of meeting the criteria. Where the assignment work does not meet the criteria, assessors give more detailed feedback, and resubmitted work shows that this has been beneficial. As a result, adult learners who are enrolled on the standalone level 3 early years educator programme make good progress, and the large majority achieve.

Teachers and employers develop learners' and apprentices' understanding of fundamental British values well. They ensure learners and apprentices develop an understanding at induction, which is then reinforced through training within the learners' workplace. Learners demonstrate these values consistently, both at work and in classroom environments. As a result, learners value inclusive and respectful cultures, helping them to work very well with their peers and colleagues.

Leaders communicate well with staff and recognise the pressures that they are under. They consider the workload of staff, which the majority feel is manageable. Leaders have recently introduced a four-day week to help support staff with their work-life balance. As a result, staff are positive about leaders and managers and their commitment to staff well-being.

Leaders have appointed two external governors who are experienced trainers in the early years sector to offer oversight and challenge. Leaders and managers have not accurately identified their strengths and weaknesses; consequently, governors are not fully aware of these. Governors advise and support effectively on the strategic direction of CTL and challenge leaders about progress towards targets.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Learners and apprentices receive training on how to keep themselves safe at work and in training. Learners and apprentices rightly feel safe at both the provision and the workplace. They have a good understanding of how to keep the children they care for safe. They know how to report any concerns about themselves and those who they may be responsible for in their work settings.

The vast majority of learners and apprentices recall useful learning about safeguarding and British values, which teachers introduce at induction and reinforce

through their learning. Learners do not as consistently recall learning about radicalisation but recognise the risks following 'Prevent' duty training in the workplace.

Leaders have put in place relevant policies and procedures that they use to keep learners and apprentices safe.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must ensure that all those involved are better able to implement all elements of the apprenticeship standards.
- Leaders and managers need to support teaching staff to improve their pedagogical skills, particularly in relation to the quality of online learning.
- Leaders need to provide all apprentices and learners with a comprehensive personal development curriculum that includes effective careers advice and guidance.
- Leaders need to continue to improve the support and teaching of the functional skills elements of the apprenticeship.
- Leaders need to ensure apprentices are prepared well for their end-point assessment.

Provider details

Unique reference number	51149
Address	15 Station Road Reading RG1 1LG
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Website	www.chilterntraining.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Katy Edwards
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	6 to 7 December 2016
Subcontractors	None

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 the previous inspection 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 learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Richard Kirkham, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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