

Inspection of Cambridge Marketing College Limited

Inspection dates: 21 to 24 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

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

Information about this provider

Cambridge Marketing College Limited (CMC) is an independent learning provider. It has offered marketing and public relations apprenticeships nationally since September 2018. CMC specialises in online training. At the time of the inspection, there were 335 apprentices in learning. More than half of apprentices study marketing executive at level 4 or marketing manager apprenticeship at level 6. CMC currently does not work with any subcontractors, and no apprentices are in receipt of high-needs funding.

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

Apprentices learn new and specialist marketing and public relations knowledge. For example, marketing apprentices learn how to plan and deliver successful marketing campaigns. They learn how to focus on long-term growth of their organisation, considering factors beyond individual products and services. These campaigns enable businesses to increase their income and improve their brand image.

Apprentices feel that leaders and tutors listen to their suggestions. For example, level 6 marketing manager apprentices attend marketing strategy sessions in which they choose the topics of discussions. Furthermore, apprentices feel that tutors patiently listen to any concerns and frequently check in with them. This allows apprentices to be independent learners and to succeed on their course.

Most apprentices enjoy their studies and rapidly become confident in studying online. They benefit from the one-to-one learning that tutors provide.

Apprentices benefit significantly from the expertise and knowledge of their tutors. Apprentices study current and future marketing and public relations subjects. For example, they learn about new, online marketing analytics techniques. Apprentices' use of innovative marketing techniques helps their businesses stay competitive.

Apprentices with additional learning needs receive appropriate support from tutors. Course tutors and specialist staff provide learning materials and strategies to apprentices to overcome their barriers to learning. Despite this, a small minority of apprentices with additional learning needs do not progress through their qualifications swiftly.

Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe. They have a deeper understanding of the dangers to look out for when working and studying online. For example, most know how to protect clients and their own personal information when they are online and using social media for marketing campaigns. However, level 3 marketing assistant apprentices have a limited understanding.

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

Leaders have designed a highly effective marketing and public relations curriculum. The curriculum offers individuals, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, access to high-quality education. Around half of the apprentices who study the marketing manager apprenticeship at level 6 do not have a previous higher qualification. As a result, apprentices can improve their work practice and add value to the organisations for which they work.

Leaders have planned effectively programmes that meet the current and future skills needs in the marketing and communications industry. They frequently review these programmes to ensure that they take account of the changing skills needs of

employers. Employers value the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices develop.

Apprentices swiftly learn significant new skills on their courses and apply these in the workplace. Level 3 marketing assistant apprentices learn about effective presentation skills early in their course. They use these skills to pitch marketing ideas successfully to external clients. Apprentices improve their confidence and become independent employees.

Apprentices benefit from high-quality teaching resources. They have access to a wide range of resources, including study guides, videos, webinars and podcasts. Level 3 marketing assistant apprentices make good use of these resources, which explain key concepts, such as product life cycles and analytical dashboards. Apprentices are clear about what they need to do to progress through their qualifications.

Tutors use a range of highly effective techniques to check apprentices have understood concepts. This allows apprentices to retain the knowledge they learn on their courses. Tutors introduce technical concepts adeptly, such as the situation, objectives, strategy, tactics, action and control model, when they teach marketing campaigns.

Apprentices develop good English and mathematical skills. Level 3 marketing assistant apprentices use their mathematical skills to analyse the success of social media posts. Level 6 marketing manager apprentices improve their communication skills through creating effective marketing plans to pitch to senior leaders.

Leaders and tutors do not take swift and timely actions to ensure that apprentices continue with their studies. As a result, too many apprentices change their job roles and do not complete their qualifications. Most apprentices who complete their qualifications achieve high grades in their final examinations.

Employers highly commend the behaviour of apprentices. They are positive about how well apprentices integrate into the workplace. Therefore, apprentices receive additional responsibilities, including at management level. They become key contacts for their clients.

Apprentices rapidly develop and model appropriate, professional behaviours. They increase their confidence in challenging businesses to consider ethical behaviour in marketing practices. Apprentices are well respected by their staff, peers and managers in the workplace.

Most apprentices deepen their knowledge and understanding of equality and celebrate diversity. Level 6 marketing manager apprentices design and lead on campaigns to recruit more women into construction. Apprentices are confident to work effectively with, and lead, diverse teams.

Leaders and tutors do not ensure that apprentices routinely receive impartial and ongoing careers advice and guidance. Tutors do not have discussions with sufficient frequency to ensure that apprentices understand and fulfil their career aspirations. Furthermore, tutors do not ensure that apprentices benefit from accessing high-quality resources to further their career choices.

Leaders and tutors do not teach a curriculum that extends beyond the requirements of the apprenticeship. Tutors do not encourage apprentices to participate in projects in the communities where they live and work or to develop their wider interests and talents.

Governance arrangements are effective. Governors have appropriate experience and expertise to support and challenge senior leaders. Governors challenge senior leaders to analyse information on the quality of education and training, to look for patterns and to be more proactive in their actions. As a result, senior leaders can identify potential issues and take appropriate actions to improve the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and tutors recognise that apprentices can feel isolated due to their online learning model. They have taken several steps to ensure that apprentices have ongoing opportunities to network with their peers and tutors. For example, leaders have put on additional weekly team-building sessions for apprentices. Apprentices have the choice to discuss topics that are of personal interest to them. Furthermore, leaders have established social media channels to allow apprentices to share ideas and concerns.

The safeguarding team works effectively with partner agencies. For example, the safeguarding lead works effectively with local doctors to provide support for apprentices who suffer from eating disorders. Apprentices develop a deeper understanding of the risks that might affect them in their personal and professional lives. They have a secure knowledge of acceptable behaviour at work. They are confident to report any incidents of bullying or sexual harassment in the workplace.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must ensure that apprentices remain in learning, value their studies and complete their apprenticeships.
- Leaders must ensure that apprentices receive ongoing and impartial careers advice and guidance to help them achieve their personal and professional ambitions.
- Leaders must ensure that they teach a curriculum beyond the technical qualification, enabling apprentices to develop their wider interests.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2539224
Address	1 Cygnus Business Park Middle Watch Swavesey Cambridge CB24 4AA
Contact number	01954 234940
Website	www.marketingcollege.com
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Kiran Kapur
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive officer, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans 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

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