

Inspection of BCTG Limited

Inspection dates:

13 to 16 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Education programmes for young people	Inadequate
Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Provision for learners with high needs	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

BCTG Limited (BCTG) was established in 2001 as a limited company and is based in Oldbury, West Midlands. They are a national independent learning provider.

BCTG currently works with 26 subcontractors who provide adult work-based learning via short courses. BCTG also offer adult courses in a variety of sector areas, the largest being in health, public services and care and in construction, planning and the built environment.

BCTG teach apprentices nationally in several sector areas, the largest being health, public service and care and in retail and commercial enterprise. They also offer education programmes for young people in the West Midlands, which includes provision for learners with high needs.

At the time of inspection, there were 2,243 learners. Of these, 1,297 were apprentices, 74 learners were on education programmes for young people, of which 21 had high needs. There were 872 learners on adult courses, of which 392 were on advanced learner loan programmes.

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

Learners are not suitably prepared for their next steps in education, training or employment. Adult learners who aspire to study at a higher level do not develop the knowledge and skills that they need to do so. Too few young learners have the opportunity to practise their skills in a work placement setting.

Too few apprentices and learners receive impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance to help them make informed decisions about their future careers.

Apprentices and learners are not sufficiently well prepared for life in modern Britain. They do not develop an understanding of fundamental British values and why they are important at work and in their personal lives.

Learners on education programmes for young people, including learners with high needs, do not develop the punctuality and attendance behaviours that they need for the workplace.

Training advisers create an inclusive environment. Apprentices and learners understand that difference is a positive and not a negative. Adult learners on the level 3 construction contracting operative course learn how to challenge discriminatory language used on construction sites to create a more inclusive environment for their staff.

Apprentices and learners value the support they receive. Training advisers create a positive and respectful culture where learners can discuss any difficulties or concerns that they may have.

Apprentices and learners develop safer working practices because of their courses and apprenticeships. For example, apprentices studying level 3 early years educator use their learning on child protection and safeguarding to be more proactive at work. They are better able to identify potential risks and take appropriate steps to prevent harm. Learners with high needs studying hairdressing learn about the importance of keeping the salon clean, mixing hair dyes safely and keeping the workspace tidy to reduce potential risks.

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

Since the previous inspection, senior leaders and board members have made significant strategic decisions to restructure their business. Senior leaders have moved from being a lead provider who works solely with subcontractors to one where they provide their own training for apprenticeships and longer-duration adult learning courses. During this period of change, leaders rightly recognise that there has been a lack of focus on the quality of education that learners on education programmes for young people and learners with high needs receive.

Senior leaders have recently introduced additional advisory board members. Through this arrangement, they have benefited from a more detailed scrutiny of the quality of education and safeguarding. This has led to changes in adult courses and apprenticeship curriculums and a halt to recruitment in some subjects. Where senior leaders have focused on improvements, it is evident that early improvements have begun to be made. However, the quality of education across subjects and learner groups remains inconsistent. The quality of education for learners in receipt of high-needs funding and those on education programmes for young people are poor.

Leaders do not sufficiently risk assess their subcontractors to ensure that their curriculums are being implemented appropriately to develop learners' knowledge, skills and behaviours. Leaders do not conduct visits to their subcontractors frequently enough to ensure that they continue to provide high-quality education. As a result, leaders do not have a clear oversight of the quality of education that subcontractors provide.

Leaders have not been successful in designing and implementing ambitious curriculums for education programmes for young people and programmes for learners with high needs. The curriculum design does not allow learners to study purposeful curriculums that challenge them to develop their knowledge and skills for which they are capable. The curriculums do not allow all learners to undertake meaningful work experience, industry placements or non-qualification activities. As a result, these programmes do not support learners to move on to further training or employment.

For learners with high needs, training advisers place too much emphasis on the completion of units for qualifications. Learning is not sufficiently personalised and does not focus on learners' learning needs or their planned education, health and care plan outcomes. As a result, learning is not pitched at the right level to ensure learners are motivated, build resilience and make good progress towards their goals.

Too few learners on education programmes for young people and programmes for learners with high needs have the opportunity to experience a work placement. For the small minority of learners who do have a work placement, this comes too late in the programme and does not support them to develop, practise and refine their skills in a work setting. For example, at the time of the inspection, learners studying hairdressing who plan to move into barbering had not yet been in a workplace.

Most learners on education programmes for young people develop their communication skills and confidence, and a minority of learners who progress onto an apprenticeship develop professional behaviours to work with clients. However, in too many instances, learners do not make sufficient progress towards achieving their learning goals, including in English and mathematics. Too many learners do not find the work they complete sufficiently challenging.

Leaders have a clearly defined purpose for the adult learning curriculums that they offer. They work effectively with key stakeholders to design curriculums that provide adults with a route to employment or further training. The curriculums respond to

significant skills shortages in the local economy, such as in heavy goods vehicle driving, construction and health and social care. The curriculums provide adult learners with meaningful work experience that gives them an insight into the world of work and prepares them well for their next steps.

Most adult curriculums are designed effectively to ensure that learners learn important core skills for their sector first, before moving on to more difficult concepts. For example, in level 2 health and social care, learners learn about safeguarding and the duty of care before moving on to infection prevention and dementia awareness. As a result, learners learn in a logical order.

Leaders do not ensure that the content of the level 3 diploma in construction contracting operations curriculum is sufficiently ambitious for all adult learners. Training advisers do not provide sufficient challenge for learners to enable them to achieve their potential, particularly those learners with prior experience in supervisory roles.

Most learners on adult short courses, such as sector-based work academy programmes and skills boot camps, develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, learners on short health and social care courses learn key clinical terms such as deep vein thrombosis, ectopic pregnancy and floaters in the eye and can identify symptoms of these conditions accurately. As a result, they are well prepared for job interviews as care navigators. However, the proportion of learners who move into employment following completion of their short course is low.

In apprenticeships, leaders use their knowledge of the various sectors to plan and develop curriculums that meet the needs of employers. The apprenticeship curriculums incorporate wider learning topics including English, mathematics and safeguarding. The curriculums include content beyond that required by the apprenticeship. For example, level 4 children, young people and families practitioner apprentices research the work of other theorists and explore complex topics such as the impact of trauma and relocation on care and life prospects.

Managers and training advisers plan logically sequenced curriculums for apprentices. They adjust the order of teaching to meet employer needs and support apprentices' work priorities. For example, on the level 4 children, young people and families practitioner, apprentices' topic on 'leaving care' was re-ordered and taught at a time when an apprentice was supporting a young person preparing to leave care.

Too many apprentices do not complete their apprenticeship on time. These apprentices have made slow progress for too much of their apprenticeship. This has held these apprentices back from completing their apprenticeship or taking their next career or education steps. Managers and training advisers have put in place catch-up plans for apprentices who have fallen behind. However, these catch-up plans focus too much on the completion of the qualification. As a result, apprentices do not develop the broader knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to succeed.

Apprentices who are on track to complete in the required timescales gain useful new knowledge, skills and behaviours through their studies. For example, apprentices studying level 5 operations or departmental manager learn how to conduct staff appraisals, how to work collaboratively with other managers, and managing conflict and effective communication with internal and external business stakeholders

Too many employers do not contribute to discussions about apprentices' progress. Training advisers and apprentices discuss workplace learning without sufficient input and feedback from the employer. As a result, it is unclear if the apprenticeship continues to meet employer needs and the apprentices' areas for development within their setting.

Most training advisers who teach adult courses and apprenticeships are appropriately qualified and experienced in the sectors in which they teach. Managers provide appropriate training for staff and use this to ensure that teaching staff are appropriately qualified in their specialist subject.

Leaders do not ensure that training advisers on education programmes for young people and programmes for learners with high needs receive the training and development they need to improve their teaching practices. As a result, teaching is often ineffective. Training advisers do not use appropriate teaching strategies and resources to help learners to learn more and remember more.

The quality of the feedback that learners and apprentices receive from training advisers is inconsistent across provision types and curriculum subjects. In adult short courses, learners receive detailed and constructive feedback that helps them to improve the standard of their work. Learners on education programmes for young people and provision for learners with high needs receive very limited feedback. As a result, these learners are unsure of what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

Training advisers do not use the information about what learners and apprentices already know and can do sufficiently to plan learning. Learners and apprentices complete assessments at the start of their course or apprenticeship and during their studies. However, this information is not used well enough to make sure learning is challenging and helps learners and apprentices to reach their full potential in their studies and their career goals.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Those with responsibility for safeguarding, including the designated safeguarding lead, have appropriate training in place to carry out their role.

Managers responsible for safeguarding deal with referrals appropriately.

Managers and staff create a positive culture around safeguarding. As a result, apprentices and learners feel safe. They know who to report their concerns to and feel confident staff will take their concerns seriously. Learners on education programmes for young people feel confident to talk to staff about new relationships and keeping themselves safe.

Training advisers educate young female apprentices on topics such as healthy relationships, sexual harassment, consent and sexualised images. Apprentices find these sessions useful, and it supports them to consider their own safety, for example the importance of consent and how saying yes once does not mean that they cannot later change their mind.

Too few apprentices and learners are aware of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, including the local risks where they live and work.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that they have a clear oversight of the quality of education for all curriculum areas and provision types, including the quality of education that subcontractors provide.
- Leaders should establish ambitious curriculums that enable learners on adult courses, education programmes for young people and learners with high needs to gain the new knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to successfully achieve their future education and career goals and move on to their next steps.
- Leaders should create regular opportunities for training advisers who teach education programmes for young people and learners with high needs to develop their craft of teaching.
- Leaders should ensure that training advisers who teach education programmes for young people and provision for learners with high needs develop learners' punctuality and attendance behaviours they need for the workplace.
- Leaders and training advisers should ensure they make use of information about learners' and apprentices' prior learning and experiences to plan their learning so that they can develop substantial and sustained new knowledge, skills and behaviours and reach their full potential, including the planned education and health care outcomes for learners with high needs.
- Training advisers should ensure that they give feedback to learners and apprentices that supports them to know what they have done well and what they need to improve to achieve their best.
- Training advisers should ensure that they use assessment to monitor learners' and apprentices' progress and adjust their teaching so that learners and apprentices can develop the appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Training advisers should support apprentices to develop the attitudes and resilience they need to complete their studies. Where apprentices fall behind, they should ensure that catch-up plans do not impede the broad development of knowledge, skills and behaviours.

- Leaders should ensure that employers attend regular meetings to discuss apprentices' progress and areas for development to support the apprentice at work.
- Leaders should ensure that learners and apprentices are prepared for life in modern Britain, including the local and regional risks in the areas in which they live, work and study.
- Leaders should ensure that learners and apprentices receive high-quality, impartial careers information, advice and guidance to enable them to make well-informed decisions about their next steps in education, training and work.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50729
Address	European Business Park Taylors Lane Oldbury B69 2BN
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Website	www.bctg.org.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Sarah Matthews
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	12 to 15 June 2018
Main subcontractors	Landau Release Potential Skills Cert Ltd PTP Training Ltd (AEB) Yellow Tree Workforce Development Ltd In The Community Ltd GTG Training Ltd Recro Consulting Ltd PET-XI Training Ltd PTP Training Ltd (SWAP)

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality and curriculum manager, 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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