

Inspection of CT Skills Limited

Inspection dates: 11 to 14 July 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

CT Skills Limited is an independent training provider based in Beeston, Nottinghamshire. It offers part-time courses for adults, apprenticeships, and full-time courses for young people. Adult learners and apprentices are based throughout England. Young people live and study in the East Midlands.

Since the last inspection, CT Skills has significantly changed its adult provision. It now offers mostly remote adult learning courses. Almost all adult learners study via an online learning platform.

At the time of the inspection, there were 912 adult learners, 561 apprentices and 79 young learners. Adults mostly studied level 2 courses in childcare or health, information and communication technology. Most apprentices were aged over 18. The majority followed level 2 or level 3 standards in business, early years education, or management. Young learners studied level 1 courses in construction or light vehicle maintenance.

CT Skills works with two subcontractors. Many adult learners study their part-time courses through Learning Curve Group (Learning Curve). All young learners study via Chameleon School of Construction Limited (Chameleon).

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

The large majority of learners and apprentices rightly feel very satisfied with their courses. They find that they get valuable support from staff when they struggle with new topics, as well as to meet their pastoral needs. A few apprentices, however, would prefer more in-person classes so that they can build stronger professional links to both their tutors and their peers.

Leaders and managers work well with employers to benefit both learners and apprentices. Young learners who study level 1 construction at the subcontractor Chameleon cover additional health and safety units, which employers identify as particularly important for the workplace. Tutors work particularly well with employers to ensure that they teach topics that match closely to apprentices' development at work.

Learners and apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to make progress in their careers. Adult learners studying mental health awareness can spot the symptoms of well-being challenges that their colleagues experience. They make appropriate workplace adjustments to help these colleagues. Young learners on level 1 courses understand well the importance of good timekeeping at work.

Both learners and apprentices build their confidence and characters through their studies. On apprenticeship courses, such as business administrator level 3, tutors include a well-planned focus on interpersonal skills, which enables apprentices to adapt their approach to working with various colleagues. As a result, they can speak more confidently to senior people in their organisations.

Adult learners, the majority of whom have not studied for many years, value the positive impact of tutor feedback on their confidence levels. For example, those who study business at level 2 gain confidence in their ability to run a business and produce tangible business plans.

Learners and apprentices rightly feel safe during their studies. They identify a positive and supportive culture at CT Skills. This enables them to confidently disclose any concerns they have about safeguarding and to obtain help with any well-being issues they have.

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

Leaders provide a well-considered curriculum to both learners and apprentices. They offer adult courses that address national skills shortages, such as in healthcare and cyber security. Through the subcontractor Chameleon, leaders offer full-time courses that meet the needs of local young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Tutors refine apprenticeship curriculums so that they closely match the industry in which apprentices work. For example, they make health-specific adaptations to courses for business administrators who work for the NHS.

Most tutors are subject specialists with highly relevant industry experience. They plan the courses they teach well. For example, tutors on level 2 adult business courses break down well challenging topics, such as tax, to help learners grasp individual aspects of the subject. Young learners on level 1 construction courses initially study health and safety in the workshop environment so that they can apply this directly to their subsequent practical activities.

Tutors meet the specific needs of learners and apprentices well. For example, where they identify that apprentices would benefit from more direct experience of a topic at work, they arrange for apprentices to shadow relevant colleagues.

A significant minority of apprentices need to study mathematics and English as part of their courses. Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices receive ample teaching in these subjects through, for example, thoroughly planned online classes.

Tutors plan well for the small number of learners and apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), such as autism spectrum disorder or dyslexia. Adult learners benefit from useful assistance from a specialist tutor, as well as accessibility tools on the online learning platform. Apprentices' tutors work particularly well with employers to plan adaptations to curriculums, which helps apprentices with SEND to make strong progress.

In most cases, tutors check effectively that learners and apprentices understand the new knowledge and skills they teach. They use these checks to provide precise support and guidance and to adjust future lessons where they identify gaps in knowledge. However, in a small minority of cases for both adult learners and young learners, tutors do not provide specific enough guidance to enable learners to improve their work.

Most tutors plan suitable opportunities to help learners and apprentices practise their new skills and knowledge so that they remember what they learn. For example, apprentices benefit from plentiful opportunities to practise topics through challenging question-and-answer sessions. This enables them to develop a thorough knowledge across the curriculum, as well as to prepare well for their final assessments.

Both learners and apprentices demonstrate vastly increased levels of knowledge and skills as a result of their studies. Adult learners who study business at level 2 produce well-written, thoughtful assignments. They understand the importance of branding to improve their marketing strategies. Learners and apprentices who study level 3 early years education have considerable knowledge of play activities for children, including the potential health and safety issues related to these. Young learners who study construction at level 1 work to a particularly high practical standard.

Most learners and apprentices pass their courses successfully. A significant number of apprentices gain high grades in their final assessments. However, too many apprentices who study mathematics struggle to pass their qualifications at the first

attempt. Young learners also pass their level 1 qualifications. They mostly move on to study at level 2 or gain employment in the construction sector. In a small number of cases, adult learners – including a minority who study via the subcontractor Learning Curve – take too long to complete their qualifications. They do not, as a result, gain new knowledge and skills as rapidly as their peers.

At work, both apprentices and adult learners become more productive. Apprentices use their new knowledge to take on additional responsibilities. Level 2 early years practitioner apprentices provide children with additional support where they spot gaps in their development. Adult learners who study mental health awareness at level 2 start to lead workplace well-being meetings.

On all courses, tutors prepare learners and apprentices well for life and work in modern Britain. Tutors on level 2 cyber security promote British values and link these well to the world of information technology. Apprentices develop knowledge of mutual respect and tolerance in the workplace, as well as both consent and sexual harassment.

The careers programmes that most learners and apprentices follow are of a good quality. In review activities, tutors focus well on apprentices' career plans. Adult learners who study via the subcontractor Learning Curve have access to a good-quality online careers portal. However, careers guidance for adult learners who directly study with CT Skills is less consistently good. These learners do not benefit from the same in-depth support.

Learners and apprentices largely have positive attitudes towards their studies. They demonstrate resilience in the face of setbacks. Apprentices, including those with SEND, are diligent and focused. Young learners, many of whom struggled to attend school well, have good attendance rates and focus well during lessons.

However, on adult learning courses, such as counselling and cyber security at level 2, a significant minority of learners fall behind with their studies because they lose motivation. Managers and tutors do not consistently and thoroughly check on the reasons that learners fall behind or evaluate the support they may need to catch up.

Both senior leaders and governors have high aspirations for learners and apprentices. They make appropriate and timely changes to the curriculum, which ensures that they continue to offer courses that are most useful to learners and apprentices. Leaders also introduce well-planned new initiatives into the curriculum, such as challenges to encourage more learners and apprentices to engage with mathematics studies.

Leaders ensure that tutors benefit from appropriate professional development, such as the opportunity to gain level 4 and 5 teaching qualifications. However, they do not routinely ensure that all staff benefit from the opportunity to update their industry-related expertise.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers with responsibility for safeguarding complete suitable training. This enables them to deal with safeguarding disclosures promptly. They prioritise well any concerns that need urgent action. Managers also recruit new staff safely.

Staff include pertinent topics, such as e-safety and the dangers of right-wing extremism, in the curriculum. Managers ensure that staff have the knowledge and the confidence to cover these topics with learners and apprentices.

Safeguarding is an important part of learners' and apprentices' inductions. Leaders and managers ensure that all learners and apprentices, including those who study via online learning platforms, know whom to contact if they have a safeguarding concern.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should introduce appropriate measures to ensure that all adult learners receive appropriate support during their courses so that they remain motivated and do not fall behind.
- Leaders should make sure that all learners benefit from precise feedback on their work so that they can make necessary improvements.
- Leaders and tutors should ensure that all adult learners benefit from high-quality careers information, advice and guidance.

Provider details

Unique reference number	51005
Address	The Quadrant Nuart Road Beeston Nottingham NG9 2NH
Contact number	0115 959 9544
Website	https://www.ctskills.co.uk/
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Alex Ford
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	16 to 19 August 2016
Main subcontractors	Learning Curve Group Chameleon School of Construction Limited

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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