

Inspection of Clarkson Evans Training Limited

Inspection dates:

13 to 16 February 2024

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	Good

Information about this provider

Clarkson Evans Training Limited (CET) is one of three subsidiaries of Clarkson Evans Limited (CEL). Founded in 1981, CEL installs electrical wiring systems in new house builds. The newest division is Clarkson Evans Solar Ltd. At present, the overall business employs over 800 staff and operates from 21 branches nationwide. CET trains apprentices in the following locations, Gloucester, Birmingham, Exeter, Bracknell, and Milton Keynes. It employs nine electrical lecturers and seven assessors. At the time of the inspection, 264 apprentices were studying the level 3 installation and maintenance electrician standard. Almost all apprentices were male, with four female apprentices. All apprentices were aged 18 or over.

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

Apprentices gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. This is because of the effective teaching they receive in the CET college and at work. For example, apprentices develop skills such as wiring installations and CCTV systems. This enables them to contribute to and take on new responsibilities in the workplace. All apprentices who stay on programme until the end pass their qualification.

Apprentices have a positive attitude to their learning. Most take on increased responsibility as they progress through their apprenticeship. Apprentices' attendance at college is high. This is because the training staff are positive role models and have high expectations for them. Training staff are ambitious for their apprentices to become expert electricians. Apprentices mirror this high ambition and are respectful, polite and articulate.

Apprentices are taught in calm and professional learning environments. Female apprentices are particularly well supported in the male-dominated environment. They are treated with respect by lecturers and fellow apprentices. Leaders and managers have set up a working group for female apprentices so they can openly discuss any challenges they might have at work. As a result, apprentices enjoy the time spent at college and make at least the expected progress in learning the curriculum.

Apprentices have access to a wide range of well-being services. For example, CET works with a construction charity, 'Lighthouse', which provides apprentices with support services and help with their mental health, work-related illness and financial support. Apprentices also have access to free counselling sessions. As a result, apprentices are well supported by CET staff to deal with the modern pressures of life.

Apprentices are rightly proud of their work and the company they work for. They develop the confidence, organisational skills and resilience to work effectively. Apprentices feel safe in college and at work and know who to contact if they have concerns.

Apprentices do not develop a deep enough knowledge of fundamental British values and how these relate to them at work. This is because leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices are sufficiently taught enough about life in modern Britain.

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

Leaders and managers have developed an ambitious apprenticeship programme. This is part of a broader leadership commitment to recruit, train and retain staff to fill a potential gap in skills due to the pending retirement of many electricians. Consequently, this is also helping to fill a skills shortage, both regionally and nationally. Most apprentices who complete their training progress on to positive destinations, such as a promotion to become a team leader. Leaders and managers

ensure that the programme they offer meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers have developed and planned the curriculum effectively. This ensures that apprentices have the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to work on commercial and domestic installations. For example, after only 18 months of training, and starting with little prior knowledge, many apprentices become trusted to install a fuse board and to wire a house to a high standard. As a result, apprentices add value to their workplace and become active team members quickly.

Lecturers and assessors are well qualified and are industry experts. They use their electrical technical experience well in lessons. This helps apprentices to relate the knowledge and skills they are gaining to what they do at work. For example, lecturers explain abstract theories such as Ohm's law by describing their use in the context of working on site. As a result, apprentices acquire the contextualised knowledge and skills they need at work.

Leaders and managers ensure that the training apprentices receive takes place in high-quality facilities. Training centres are well resourced, clean and tidy. Training rooms replicate the types of tools, equipment and consumables used on site. As a result, apprentices practise the new skills they acquire in a realistic work environment.

Lecturers and assessors consider carefully what apprentices already know and can do at the start of their training. For example, most apprentices who have previously achieved an electrical qualification at levels 2 and 3 join a fast-track learning group. As a result, individualised training plans and completion target dates are adjusted to address the needs of apprentices.

Most lecturers teach the curriculum well. Apprentices learn the electrical fundamental topics side by side rather than in a block. For example, health and safety, electrical installation and electrical principles are taught alongside each other rather than separately. As a result, apprentices sequentially build on new knowledge over time and link it well to activities in the workplace.

Lecturers reinforce and build on apprentices' prior learning by using assessment effectively. For example, they use question sheets at the end of each session to check apprentices' knowledge and understanding of key concepts. Lecturers mark and return them to the apprentices at the start of the next session. Lecturers use assessment findings to adapt their programme and promptly fill in any knowledge gaps the apprentice may have.

Leaders and managers have developed a highly effective web-based application. Apprentices use the app to record their on-the-job development, such as the skills they have acquired and the tasks they have mastered during the apprenticeship. Team leaders update the app to confirm when an apprentice has completed a task to a high standard. As a result, team leaders use the app to measure and monitor the progress apprentices make on site and in their skills development.

Leaders and managers do not ensure a strong link between the tasks that apprentices undertake at college and on site. Assessors and team leaders at work do not routinely know what knowledge and skills apprentices are learning at college. They are not always able to plan and coordinate apprentices work on site with learning at college. As a result, apprentices do not always have opportunities at work to practise and apply what they are learning in college.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that the review of the progress that apprentices make provides them, the training staff and site team leaders with enough detail. Apprentices are set targets by staff that lack detail and do not help them to know what they need to do to achieve the highest grade. While conversations during a progress review include components of personal development, they are not sufficiently developed to help apprentices deepen their understanding of these topics.

Leaders and managers have carefully planned the functional skills curriculum, which is taught to apprentices at the start of their training. A high proportion of apprentices who study English and/or mathematics functional skills pass the test first time. As a result, these apprentices quickly improve their literacy and numeracy skills early in their apprenticeship.

Governance arrangements are effective and conducted within CEL corporate structures. CEL has developed a governance board that focuses on the delivery of the apprenticeship programme. Those responsible for governance are highly skilled and experienced professionals. For example, the CEO of CEL is the chair of the board, which other members, such as the finance director, also attend. This ensures that wider elements of the apprenticeship programme, such as apprentice outcomes and performance, are dealt with effectively. However, the CEO rightly recognises that the board does not include a member with educational knowledge who can help to ensure that the education the apprentices receive improves continuously. As a result, the quality of education the apprentices receive is not yet explored in any depth.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices receive effective advice on career opportunities within CEL. As a result, most apprentices progress into roles with more responsibility within the company. However, apprentices are not always aware of, or how to access, the progression opportunities within the wider construction sector, such as progressing on to higher education programmes.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices develop an in-depth knowledge of a wide range of personal development topics, including how to stay safe online and an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and equality of opportunity and diversity.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation and extremist views. Although lecturers teach these topics to apprentices during induction, they do not revisit them well enough over time to enable apprentices to develop a deep comprehension.

However, leaders and managers recognise rightly the need to do more to extend apprentices' knowledge of personal development, and plans are in place to address this promptly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

During the inspection, leaders took prompt action to improve and update CET safeguarding policies and procedures.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Improve the content and teaching of the personal development curriculum.
- Improve the link between on- and off-the-job training and the effectiveness of the reviews of the progress made by apprentices.
- Recruit a governance board member with educational expertise.

Provider details

Unique reference number	59217
Address	Meteor Business Park Cheltenham Road East Gloucester GL2 9QL
Contact number	01452 530336
Website	www.clarksonevans.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Lindsey Young
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Currently not working with any

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of training, 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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