

Inspection of Capita PLC

Inspection dates: 23 to 26 July 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Capita PLC provides training to apprentices across England. At the time of inspection, around 280 apprentices were studying the operational firefighter apprenticeship at level 3. These apprentices attend the Fire Service College in Moreton-in-Marsh, where they take part in training using exceptional resources, including simulated tower block, aircraft and domestic accommodation.

In July 2023, leaders ceased recruiting for apprentices for standards other than the operational firefighter at level 3. At the time of inspection, 40 apprentices were in the final stages of completing the other standards. Thirty-seven apprentices were studying commercial procurement and supply at level 4. The remaining apprentices were studying standards in policy officer at level 4, operational delivery at level 3, and customer service at level 2.

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

Apprentices enjoy their training and appreciate the excellent resources and personalised training they receive. Tutors of firefighter apprentices are highly effective in using the exceptional resources at the Fire Service College to ensure that the apprentices learn the skills and knowledge needed to be safe and confident in their roles at work and during training. They adapt training to meet the needs of specific employers, ensuring that apprentices are well equipped for their job roles. For example, tutors tailor training for Shropshire-based firefighter apprentices to include the specific breathing apparatus used by their brigade, equipping apprentices with specialised skills and making them more valuable employees and well prepared for their roles.

Apprentices value working with community groups, sharing the new skills and knowledge they develop. Leaders and managers effectively promote the personal development of apprentices, ensuring that they take part in a wide, rich set of experiences that teach them the importance of contributing actively to society. Leaders collaborate well with employers to ensure that apprentices engage in valuable opportunities with local communities, such as attending school fetes and working with charitable organisations like the Brownies and Cubs. These experiences help apprentices to understand their social responsibilities and their roles within the wider society.

Tutors and delivery staff have high expectations of apprentices and teach complex content in a highly supportive manner. Apprentices swiftly develop complex new skills and knowledge, meeting the expectations of their tutors. Because of this, apprentices grow in confidence as they recognise what they have learned. They take pride in the progress they make in their learning and become more resilient as they tackle challenging scenarios, such as entering simulated building fires.

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

In July 2023, leaders completed a review of the training they provide and decided to phase out underperforming provision. They streamlined the training they offer, and now only recruit to the level 3 operational firefighter apprenticeship. Leaders' focus on this apprenticeship has allowed them to build on the previously high achievement rates, with two in ten apprentices achieving distinction grades. The few apprentices who do not complete the level 3 operational firefighter apprenticeship typically leave because they exit the firefighting sector.

Leaders provide valuable training for delivery coaches to enhance their teaching skills. However, they recognise rightly the need for a more structured and consistent teaching development programme for tutors so that they also have access to the same high-quality training.

Tutors and delivery coaches plan and teach well-sequenced and thoughtfully designed curriculums effectively. They ensure that basic skills are taught before

moving on to more complex theory and practice. For example, firefighter apprentices start their training with an eight-week residential programme. During this period, tutors begin by teaching the fundamentals of being a firefighter, such as basic knots and how to complete precise risk assessments. This training culminates in teaching advanced skills like fire suppression and road traffic collision response. This helps to ensure that apprentices are well-equipped with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to integrate into fire station watches effectively.

Leaders and managers have fostered an inclusive culture where staff feel valued. They carefully manage the number of apprentices each staff member works with, ensuring they have the time to provide them with high-quality support. Staff feel appreciated, and apprentices value the time and support they receive. This inclusive approach helps apprentices develop a strong sense of belonging and become highly motivated to be successful with their training and job roles. They have high rates of attendance at training.

Tutors employ a variety of effective teaching methods. They use constructive feedback from practical sessions to boost apprentices' confidence and highlight areas for improvement. Tutors demonstrate new techniques by breaking them down into manageable components, which helps apprentices master complex skills and knowledge quickly. This approach ensures that apprentices make substantial progress in their learning and become more effective in their roles.

Tutors and delivery coaches use ongoing assessment effectively in order to check apprentices' understanding and plan future teaching. Delivery coaches use workplace visits well to identify and address the personal development needs of apprentices. This personalised approach ensures that most apprentices develop new skills, knowledge and behaviours rapidly, taking on additional responsibilities in their workplace.

Leaders and managers have improved the teaching provided to apprentices who need to study functional skills in English and mathematics. Tutors now teach these subjects well, helping apprentices to focus on the areas they need to improve. Additionally, tutors make effective use of opportunities to teach mathematics and English throughout the training, linking new learning to apprentices' jobs, such as calculating the volume of gas in a cylinder. Because of this, apprentices become more proficient in these skills, supporting their professional competence. Although the number of apprentices who have achieved these qualifications has increased significantly, leaders recognise rightly that this as an area for continued development.

Governors are effective in their roles and support leaders' ambition for high standards. They bring valuable expertise, providing insightful guidance and challenge and are well versed in the provider's strengths and weaknesses. They use timely, useful reports to inform their discussions on improvements to the quality of training. For example, they were pivotal in supporting the streamlining of the curriculum to eliminate underperforming training programmes.

Leaders ensure that support for apprentices with additional learning needs is robust and well implemented. Tutors put in place useful strategies to support apprentices in developing the necessary skills and knowledge. For example, they provide written information for apprentices who struggle to remember new knowledge, allowing them to revisit and repeat learning in their own time. This support ensures those apprentices feel well supported and make at least the same progress as their peers.

Tutors and delivery coaches provide apprentices with well-informed career advice and guidance, ensuring that they understand the pathways available to them at the end of their training. Part-time tutors who work in the fire service industry provide useful workshops that not only enhance apprentices' technical skills but also educate them on diverse career options, such as roles on cruise ships or positions in fire safety consulting firms. This comprehensive guidance helps apprentices make informed decisions about their future careers and motivates them to excel in their current training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure the timely completion of apprenticeships for those studying on the non-operational firefighter standards.
- Ensure that all apprentices studying functional skills in English and mathematics achieve their qualifications.
- Ensure that all teaching staff receive training designed to enhance their teaching skills.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58177
Address	The Fire Service College London Road Moreton-in-Marsh Gloucestershire GL56 0RH
Contact number	07761 011 440
Website	www.fireservicecollege.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Adam Tindal
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Dates of previous inspection	12 to 15 September 2017
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the apprenticeship director, 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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Judy Lye-Forster	His Majesty's Inspector
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