

CMS Vocational Training Ltd

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Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider.....	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement.....	6
Effectiveness of provision	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	7
Key areas for improvement.....	7
Main findings	8
Achievement and standards	8
Quality of provision.....	8
Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	9
What learners like	12
What learners think could improve.....	12
Sector subject areas.....	13
Preparation for life and work.....	13
Business, administration and law	16
Learners' achievements	19

Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Preparation for life and work
- Business, administration and law

Description of the provider

1. CMS Vocational Training Ltd (CMS) is a limited company and was established in 1982. CMS is located in the Kirklees and Calderdale area of West Yorkshire and has five centres across Huddersfield, Batley and Halifax. The head office, and main administrative centre, is in Huddersfield. CMS contracts with West Yorkshire LSC for the provision of work-based learning. It works in partnership with 15 other providers of training in Calderdale and Kirklees to deliver Entry to Employment (E2E). Train to Gain provision is delivered through a sub-contract arrangement from West Yorkshire Learning Providers Ltd (WYLP). It is also a subcontractor for the delivery of New Deal programmes for adults for BEST Ltd, who is the prime contractor for New Deal in West Yorkshire. All programmes are government-funded.
2. The company offers LSC funded programmes in retailing and warehousing, information and communications technology, preparation for life and work, business administration, team leading and customer services. Inspectors examined evidence from programmes in retailing and warehousing and in information technology, which were not reported on separately, to support judgements in leadership and management. There are 76 E2E learners, 27 apprentices, five advanced apprentices and three Train to Gain learners on national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes. In addition, six key stage 4 pupils are working primarily towards key skills units and four learners are on a learning agreement pilot aimed at young people aged 16-24 who are in employment but not in training.
3. CMS is owned by two directors. The finance director/company secretary has specific responsibility for finance and quality assurance. The managing director has specific responsibility for training and contract delivery. It currently employs 90 staff of which 27 are directly involved in the delivery, management or administration of the LSC funded programmes. There are senior managers for youth, adult, E2E, and quality and development and team leaders in each centre. LSC funded provision is delivered through two centres, one in Huddersfield in South Kirklees and one in Batley in North Kirklees. CMS has held the Investors in People standard since 1992 and the Customer First standard since 2005. Both are due for re-accreditation in autumn 2007. The 2007 self-assessment report was the eighth produced by CMS.
4. Figures produced by Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council showed unemployment at the end of 2006 to be 2.7% of the population of Kirklees. This was against a regional figure of 2.9% and a national figure of 5.4%. The 2001 census showed the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups to be 14.4% in Kirklees compared with 9.1% nationally. The percentage of 16 year olds gaining five GCSEs grades A* to C in 2006 was 48.7% for North Kirklees and 59.4% for South Kirklees against an overall figure of 54.1 for Kirklees Local Authority and 59.2% for England.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business, administration and law	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates on the business administration apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships are outstanding. Timely success rates show year on year improvement and are significantly above the national rates. Progression for E2E learners and the number achieving their key objectives is satisfactory. Skills development is good in both business administration and E2E.
6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In business, the involvement of employers in the planning and delivery of training is particularly effective. Well planned E2E training sessions engage learners' interest and provide participation in a wide range of activities. Induction is well planned and thorough. Initial assessment of literacy and numeracy and the resulting support are satisfactory. Progress reviews are satisfactory however, targets, in too many instances, are insufficiently specific or measurable. The use of the E2E passport is weak in planning and recording training activities or specific learning needs for individual learners.
7. CMS is good at meeting the needs and interests of learners. For apprentices, the employer engagement strategy has been particularly effective. In E2E, a clear strategy for developing the programme meets the needs of learners and employers.
8. Support is satisfactory overall. E2E learners and apprentices receive personal support as appropriate and feel comfortable talking to trainers about personal issues and problems. Assessors work with apprentices to plan an appropriate level of individual support. Employer support is good or better for both E2E learners and apprentices.
9. Leadership and management are good. Strategic management is good. Partnership working is particularly effective in extending training opportunities for young people and adults. Communication strategies within CMS are strong. Staff development is good. CMS's approach to quality improvement is good. The observation of teaching and learning is well established. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The use of learner and employer feedback is underdeveloped.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

10. CMS demonstrates good capacity to improve. Success rates are outstanding in business, administration and law and have improved incrementally over three years. Progression rates on E2E programmes show improving trends over the same period and are

satisfactory. The development of learners' skills is good. Quality improvement processes are well established and thorough. CMS has maintained good provision throughout a time of rapid expansion and change.

11. Since the previous inspection, most of the strengths identified have been maintained and all key weaknesses have been rectified. CMS has increased the range of provision to meet local needs. Recruitment on E2E and the Department for Work and Pensions programmes has significantly increased the numbers of learners who require additional personal and social support. The company's approach to support and initial advice and guidance is satisfactory. Overall, the steps taken to maintain and improve the quality of provision since the previous reinspection in 2005 have been good.
12. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and is integrated well with the development planning. The grades identified by the provider in its most recent self-assessment report matched those of the inspection. However, some judgements in the report are not sufficiently based on the objective evidence readily available from a range of quality assurance reports. The report failed to evaluate the standard of teaching and learning and how well the programmes meet the needs and interests of learners.

Key strengths

- Outstanding success rates in business administration
- Good skill development
- Very good employer engagement
- Very effective partnerships to benefit learners and employers
- Good strategic management
- Good quality improvement arrangements

Key areas for improvement

- Weak use of the E2E passport
- Underdeveloped use of employer and learner feedback

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

13. Achievements and standards are good. Overall success rates in business administration are outstanding. Timely success rates show year on year improvement and are significantly above national rates. Overall success rates in retailing and warehousing, customer service and information and communication technology are good or better. Train to Gain has very good success rates.
14. Occupational skills development is very good in business administration. On E2E programmes the acquisition of relevant workplace and social skills is good. Business administration apprentices are highly valued by their employers and many take on significantly increased responsibility within their workplaces. E2E learners are well motivated with a clear sense of career direction.
15. Progression for E2E learners is satisfactory rising from 41% to 51% over the past three years. The number of learners achieving their key objectives has also increased year on year and is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

16. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In business administration, the involvement of employers in the planning and delivery of training is particularly effective. Off-the-job training for technical certificates and key skills is satisfactory. Well-planned E2E training sessions engage learners' interest, provide participation in a wide range of activities and develop their key and basic skills. However, they focus too heavily on task completion rather than learning. The use of the E2E passport is weak. It is not used sufficiently in planning and recording training activities or specific learning needs for individual learners.
17. Induction is well planned and thorough. Arrangements for the initial assessment of literacy and numeracy and the resulting support are satisfactory. Apprentices receive very frequent workplace visits and satisfactory assessment. Progress reviews for both programmes are satisfactory. However, too many instances of written targets are insufficiently specific or measurable.
18. CMS is very good at meeting the needs and interests of learners and employers. A comprehensive employer pack gives employers a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the training programme. In E2E, a clear strategy supports programme development to meet the needs of learners and employers.
19. Support is satisfactory. E2E learners receive personal support as appropriate and feel comfortable talking to trainers about personal issues and problems. Most sessions are led by two tutors who provide individual support to learners. Assessors work with apprentices to plan an appropriate level of individual support. Employer support is good or better for both E2E learners and apprentices. Apprentices receive good information,

advice and guidance before and during their programmes. Literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

20. Leadership and management are good. Strategic management is good. Directors set a clear direction for the company which is responsive to regional and national priorities. Business planning is good and takes account of these priorities. Partnership working is

used particularly effectively to extend training opportunities for young people and adults. The managing director is chair of WYLP and there is strong involvement in the activities of its 14-19 transition team. CMS is a very active member of the E2E partnership. Local business networks are used effectively to increase employer engagement and provide employment opportunities for learners. An established partnership with another provider enables collaboration on best practice with self-assessment and the observation of teaching and learning.

21. Communication strategies within CMS are strong. Staff opinions are valued and they contribute to management decisions. Meetings take place frequently and are well attended. Monthly performance management meetings between managers, trainers and assessors review learner performance effectively. However, at senior management meetings, the agenda is not always followed and some key elements of company performance are not always formally reported on or resulting actions resolved in a timely manner.
22. Staff development is good. Commitment to develop and improve staff experience and qualifications for the benefit of the learner is strong. The appraisal system accurately identifies areas for improvement to further develop areas of expertise and support career progression. Staff opportunities to extend their skills and areas of responsibility are good. CMS has a good focus on improving teacher-training qualifications.
23. CMS's quality improvement arrangements are good. The quality improvement group monitors performance regularly. A detailed quality improvement cycle identifies when key learning and management processes are audited and reviewed. The quality improvement group provide frequent progress updates to the senior management team on identified areas for improvement. Data reports give good information on learner performance. The observation of teaching and learning is well established. However, some reports focus too greatly on teaching rather than teaching and learning. The process is currently being reviewed. The range of policies and procedures is satisfactory. Key policies, such as equality and diversity, health and safety and disability were reviewed and updated this year.
24. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. A working group has been established to review current procedures and to further embed equality and diversity within the curriculum. All learners receive a diary that states CMS's approach to equality and diversity and identifies themes that will be addressed each month through training and learner reviews. Most learners and staff have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities, and of key legislation. Staff training on equal opportunities is planned and takes place annually. Data is analysed to monitor the recruitment and success rates of different groups of learners. Two centres are inaccessible to learners with restricted mobility although reasonable steps are taken to provide alternative accommodation. CMS has appropriate policies and procedures for protecting young people and vulnerable adults and a designated reporting officer. Staff who work with learners undergo a criminal records bureau check.
25. The use of learner and employer feedback is underdeveloped. Collection of feedback through questionnaires and focus group meetings is satisfactory and identified issues resolved. However, results are not aggregated over a period of time to inform management of the views of employers and learners or used to set improvement targets.

What learners like:

- Learning on the job while earning money
- The support from the tutor, assessor and employer
- 'Being able to study at my own pace'
- Getting a work based qualification equal to A levels
- Being treated as an adult
- Being treated the same as other staff in the work placement
- Working in small groups
- Being able to talk to the tutors in confidence
- 'Building up my confidence and self-esteem through the course'

What learners think could improve:

- More short courses such as first aid
- 'More individual help with my learning'

Sector subject areas

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

26. Provision is managed by the E2E manager who is supported by a team of trainers. Each trainer has a specific area of responsibility. The E2E programme offers training mainly for retail and business occupations but can offer training in other occupational areas. There are 76 learners on the programme. Learners have the opportunity to complete literacy, numeracy and other qualifications such as NVQs. Most learners complete Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications. Learners also can gain work experience through placements. Learners are recruited through referrals and direct applications.

Strengths

- Good development of skills
- Good partnership working

Areas for improvement

- Weak use of E2E passport

Achievement and standards

27. Learners develop good and relevant workplace and social skills. On work placements they respond well to being given responsibility, work effectively with other members of staff and enjoy helping customers. During training sessions, learners develop skills such as working with others and communication which they apply effectively on placement. A significant number of learners have progressed from being trainees on placement to permanent employees. Learners are well motivated and have a clear sense of career direction. During the programme their confidence and self-esteem is developed. Some learners complete qualifications in first aid and health and safety.
28. Progression rates are satisfactory and have risen over the past three years from 41% to 51%. The number of learners achieving their key objectives is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

29. Training is satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified. Clear schemes of work and session plans for all sessions contain identified learning outcomes. Sessions are planned to engage learners' interest, give them the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities and to develop their key and basic skills. Trips and external activities are planned that offer new experiences for learners and enable the development of social skills. However, the focus on promoting learning during training sessions is insufficient. Sessions tend to be planned around tasks to be completed rather than learning to be achieved.

30. Initial assessment is satisfactory. All learners are assessed for literacy and numeracy support needs. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.
31. The programme meets the interests and needs of learners and the needs of employers in preparing learners for work. There is a clear strategy for developing the programme in response to the needs of young people who are not engaged in training, education or employed. Induction is well planned. It has been developed to allow E2E learners to meet other learners on different programmes. All learners have the opportunity to complete qualifications in key and basic skills and in retail. Additional qualifications such as first aid and health and safety are available.
32. Learners receive satisfactory support from trainers. Trainers and learners develop good relationships. Learners receive personal support as appropriate and feel comfortable talking to trainers about personal issues and problems. Tutors treat learners with respect and provide a prompt response to learners who have personal problems. Financial, travel and childcare support is provided as appropriate. Most sessions are led by two tutors providing individual support to learners during sessions. All learners are screened for additional learning support needs and satisfactory arrangements are in place to offer support internally or externally through other partners.
33. Use of the E2E passport is weak. The planning and recording of training and learning activities for individual learners is weak. For example, the literacy and numeracy support needs identified for some learners are not reflected in the passport. The passport does not record what specific learning is needed to enable a learner to achieve a specific learning goal. Areas for improvement in relation to specific learning targets are not recorded in the passport. Progress reviews reflect on general goals, activities or tasks rather than on specific targets. Target-setting is weak and often insufficiently specific or measurable.

Leadership and management

34. Links with partners and employers are good. The E2E manager is an active member of a local E2E partnership and is involved in the ongoing development of the E2E programme. A clear strategy for developing the programme which is informed by local partnership initiatives. CMS responds well to locally set targets for positive outcomes on the E2E programme. Work with other partners is effective. For example, a local college conducts dyslexia screening for all E2E learners and arrangements are in place to provide support through the college. Arrangements are in place for joint activities for learners with other partners when appropriate.
35. Links with employers are good. Two members of staff have specific responsibility for liaising with employers and developing opportunities for learners to gain placements. Employers offer good support during placement. Some have offered permanent employment to a significant number of E2E learners. Communication with employers is good and any problems with placement are dealt with promptly and effectively.
36. Staff are appropriately qualified for their roles and have, or are working towards, training and teaching qualifications. There is a clear strategy to develop the knowledge and skills of staff and to ensure the team makes the best use of the occupational experience and personal strengths of staff. Equality of opportunity for learners is satisfactory.

37. Arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory. Regular meetings are held with staff and issues relating to achievement of learners and the operational management of the programme are regularly discussed. One member of staff has specific responsibility for auditing files and identifying areas for improvement. Management information and data relating to the E2E programme is regularly discussed at team meetings. Destination data is monitored up to nine months after the progression of a learner. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate in its judgements and grades, although in parts it is too descriptive.

Business, administration and law

Good: Grade 2

Context

38. CMS provides apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship training in business administration and customer service NVQs through Train to Gain. In total there are 25 learners. Of these, 14 are on apprenticeships in business administration and four on apprenticeships in customer service. Three are on advanced apprenticeships in business administration and two on advanced apprenticeships in customer service. One learner is taking an apprenticeship in team leading. One learner is taking an NVQ level 2 through Train to Gain. Most business administration apprentices are recruited directly, normally through Connexions, and then found employment.

Strengths

- Outstanding success rates for business administration
- Very good development of occupational skills
- Particularly effective involvement of employers in training
- Good management of programme

Areas for improvement

- None identified

Achievement and standards

39. Success rates for business administration are outstanding. Overall success rates for apprentices were 100% in 2005-06, and 96% for 2006-07. Between 2004-05 and 2006-07 timely success rates for apprentices improved from 26% to 75%. Success rates for advanced apprentices are outstanding at 100% for 2005-06 and 2006-07. Success rates for customer service are good at 83% in 2006-07.
40. Learners develop very good occupational skills. Many learners take on significantly increased responsibility within their workplaces. For example, one has been promoted from office junior to partners' secretary within two years. Other learners have broadened their skills base by working on projects, such as designing and implementing a new database, or have reviewed and implemented procedures that have made significant improvements to their work place. Learners are highly valued by their employers.
41. Progression of learners onto other and higher qualifications has improved and is at a satisfactory level. Learners have progressed from E2E to apprenticeships, from level 2 to 3 in administration and in a few cases to professional qualifications in higher education.

Quality of provision

42. The quality of training and learning is satisfactory. The involvement of employers in the training process is particularly effective. Supervisors are fully involved from the outset

of the qualification and often lead in discussions that cover the type of on job training that the employer will provide. The supervisor, assessor and learner discuss increased responsibilities, job rotation and projects that are available so that the learner can meet or exceed the requirements of the NVQ and enhance their skills development. Optional units are chosen to benefit both the learner and employer. Many learners benefit from additional training opportunities provided by the employer. Off-the-job sessions are held at CMS's training centres and are satisfactory. Learning sessions are well planned for learners to gain the knowledge required for the technical certificate tests and, where required, the key skills tests. Learners receive support from their employers for these and attendance is good.

43. Learners have a good understanding of their framework requirements, and are aware of the appeals and complaints procedures. Assessment is carried out in the workplace very frequently. Assessors work with their learners to plan an appropriate level of support which might include additional visits and individual coaching when needed. Assessors use appropriate methods of assessment that include observation, professional discussion and witness testimonies. The frequency of assessor visits enables effective short term target-setting and learners clearly understand what they are required to produce for the next visit. However, too many instances of written targets arising from the visits are insufficiently specific or measurable. The frequency of progress reviews is satisfactory. They are comprehensive with detailed discussions that place a clear focus on progress to date and future actions. However, these discussions are not always fully recorded.
44. Arrangements for literacy and numeracy support are satisfactory. Learners receive an initial interview, as well as initial assessment tests of their literacy and numeracy abilities. Assessors apply appropriate accreditation of prior learning. Where additional support needs are identified appropriate structured help is provided. Induction arrangements are well planned and thorough, providing an appropriate range of activities over a two week period. Satisfactory support arrangements are in place to meet the social and pastoral needs of learners. Employers provide very good support for the needs of learners.
45. Learners receive good information, advice and guidance on recruitment. They also receive further advice during their programmes on progression opportunities. Learners not in employment when recruited spend time in centre and work on key skills and technical certificates. They are offered taster sessions with employers to help with career choice. When learners reach the end of their current programme assessors discuss the options available for the next qualification and future career paths with the learner and their workplace supervisor.

Leadership and management

46. The management of programmes is good. Effective management strategies significantly increase learner success rates. Staff are well qualified and experienced and benefit from a broad and well-focused staff development programme. Management information is used well to monitor the progress of learners and to manage the performance of staff. The employer engagement strategy is particularly effective. The provision of an employer pack gives employers a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all parties to achieve successful learner outcomes. Staff resources are good. Assessor deployment is well managed to allow time for weekly visits to learners at the beginning

of programmes and, if needed, to meet learner or employer needs. Staff meetings are frequent with a strong focus on discussing learner progress and achievement.

47. CMS has well-established appraisal, training and development arrangements. Internal verification is satisfactory, with assessor observation and learner interviews taking place at appropriate intervals, and suitable records of verification activities maintained.
48. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. All learners receive equality training as part of induction. Discussion of equality and diversity and health and safety forms part of learners' progress reviews and questions are set for each month. However, progress review documents do not always record these discussions adequately. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate in its judgements and grades, although in parts it is too descriptive.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning 'apprenticeship' programmes** managed by CMS Vocational Training Ltd 2004 to 2006

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/c ollege NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider/college framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	4	50%	48%	25%	31%
		timely	4	50%	30%	25%	19%
	04-05	overall	4	50%	48%	50%	34%
		timely	4	0%	31%	0%	22%
	05-06	overall	6	100%			67%
		timely	6	100%			67%
Apprenticeships	03-04	overall	62	45%	47%	29%	32%
		timely	51	6%	24%	2%	16%
	04-05	overall	37	57%	51%	46%	39%
		timely	38	34%	29%	24%	22%
	05-06	overall	32	94%			91%
		timely	28	71%			68%

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** College and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

Outcomes on **Entry to Employment programmes** managed by CMS Vocational Training Ltd 2005 to 2007

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate*	Progression rate**
04-05	168	35%	41%
05-06	150	39%	49%
06-07 ***	154	71%	51%

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period

*** LSC data for 2006-07 has yet to be validated