

The Care Learning Centre

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 51002

Name of lead inspector: Janet Rodgers HMI

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. The Care Learning Centre (CLC) is a private limited company with a head office in Newport, on the Isle of Wight. Since the last inspection, CLC has opened a further office in Southampton. The CLC was formed in May 2001 to offer training in care for the elderly. The company is led by a managing director, supported by a quality and human resources director and two senior managers. The CLC has 22 staff. It has a contract with Hampshire and the Isle of Wight local area Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes in health and social care and literacy and numeracy. Most Train to Gain learners take literacy and/or numeracy qualifications alongside their health and social care National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). Both subject areas were included in the inspection. The CLC has 64 apprentices, 122 advanced apprentices and 66 Train to Gain learners. Approximately 90% of CLC's provision is funded by the LSC. In 2008/09, 10% of learners declared they had a disability, 15% were men and 89% registered their ethnic group as being White. All learners work in care settings. Learning and assessment are delivered by a team of training advisers, usually in the workplace.
2. The care assistants and home carers workforce in England is predominantly women. Approximately 80% of the workforce is White. High proportions of the workforce have qualifications below NVQ level 2. Staff turnover tends to be high, particularly in the private sector. The Isle of Wight has higher proportions of the population being White British than the South East and England, whereas Southampton is more typical of the population of England as a whole. Unemployment rates for the Isle of Wight and Southampton are higher than in the South East and England.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Employer provision:	
Train to Gain	162 learners
Apprenticeships	284 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Areas	
Health and social care	2
Literacy and numeracy	2

Overall effectiveness

3. The overall effectiveness of CLC's provision is good. Advanced apprentices and Train to Gain learners consistently achieve qualifications successfully. Apprentices' achievements are satisfactory, but only half complete their programmes by their agreed deadline. The programmes that the CLC offers meet the needs of learners and employers well. Training advisers make sure that learning is highly relevant to each learner's workplace. Learners receive satisfactory and frequent individual coaching sessions. They develop skills well and use these confidently at work. Some learning activities are too rushed and learners do not have sufficient time to think through their own answers. Assessment is effective and well planned. Learners receive satisfactory care, guidance and support from training advisers.
4. Directors and managers provide good leadership and set a strong emphasis on improving learners' achievement. The CLC has made significant improvements since the previous inspection. In particular, the planning of teaching and learning and target setting for learners are much better. Managers and training advisers meet regularly and use data to evaluate and agree actions to improve learners' progress. Arrangements to safeguard learners are satisfactory and

learners feel very safe. Learners and training advisers have a good awareness of equality and diversity.

Main findings

- Overall success rates for advanced apprentices and Train to Gain learners are high and well above national rates. Advanced apprenticeship success rates have improved steadily over the last three years, and are consistently good. Literacy and numeracy learners have good first-time pass rates when taking tests.
- Learners develop good skills and knowledge that they use confidently at work. Health and social care learners provide better care to service users as a result of their training. Employers value learners' increased awareness of legislation. Many learners progress to further training or gain promotion. Learners enjoy their learning and are highly motivated.
- Overall success rates for apprentices are satisfactory, having slightly declined over the last three years. Only half the learners complete their courses by the agreed timescale. In 2008/09, success rates were lower for learners in Hampshire than on the Isle of Wight, being affected by the closure of three care homes and changes in the training adviser team at Southampton.
- Learning programmes are well structured and all aspects are completely integrated into the NVQ. Learners make good use of individual learning plans, schemes of work and interim targets to judge their progress. Assessment is linked effectively into learning sessions. Literacy and numeracy learning is carefully planned to provide realistic and relevant opportunities for learners to practise their skills.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the better learning sessions, learners participate fully. They complete learning activities that are very relevant to their work. The weaker learning sessions are rushed, with insufficient time for learners to think through tasks and find their own solutions. Training advisers do not have sufficient literacy and numeracy teaching qualifications.
- Learners' and employers' needs are met particularly well through the well-designed, and often innovative, learning programmes. Key skills, literacy and numeracy are delivered very effectively in the context of care. Training advisers use learning activities and visits very flexibly to meet the needs of learners and their work commitments.
- Partnership working is very effective. Employers' views are used well to develop new provision. All aspects of the learners' programme, including activities at work, are well coordinated. Communication with employers is frequent and generally good. The CLC successfully works with employers to promote the benefits of health and social care learners taking literacy and numeracy qualifications.
- The CLC has a very strong focus on improving learner success rates. Managers and training advisers make raising success rates a priority during meetings, in self-assessment and through monthly performance reviews. CLC has a good 'at

risk' system alerting them to learners making slow progress. Managers use data well to identify issues and evaluate progress.

- Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Training advisers place a high emphasis on health and safety and learners feel very safe. Safeguarding policies, including Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for staff, are appropriate. Managers have good recognition of their vulnerable learners and carry out additional risk assessments where appropriate. Staff routinely discuss safeguarding but have not had recent training.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity. Training advisers use questions very effectively during learners' progress reviews to reinforce and extend their understanding. Staff training in equality and diversity is good. The CLC uses data very effectively to monitor and improve success rates across different groups of learners.
- Quality improvement arrangements are good and particularly effective. The self-assessment process, which is central to CLC's quality improvement, is broadly accurate and drives improvement. Managers and staff use informal quality improvement systems well to improve the learners' experience. Some of CLC's quality improvement activities focus too much on compliance and audit rather than on identifying improvements.

What does CLC need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall and timely success rates by apprentices, through maintaining the monthly performance reviews with each training adviser and the 'at risk' strategy.
- Make better use of quality improvement tools, including observations of assessment and learning sessions and the sharing of best practice, to increase the consistency and quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all training advisers.
- Deliver staff training to meet identified needs, including in safeguarding and in teaching literacy and numeracy.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- being given the opportunity to improve their mathematics and English skills while doing the NVQ
- the help they are given by CLC with their career progression and towards getting promotion
- the training advisers, who inspire and motivate them and are flexible and supportive
- the training they receive, which is enjoyable
- using the skills they learn, which helps to make them better carers

- the schemes of work, which tell them what, when and how they will complete their programme.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the learning activities, some of which could be more thorough and in-depth
- the information they receive about initial assessment tests before the start of their programme, as some learners were not aware they would have to take these.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the training provided by CLC, which improves staff morale and the standard of care they deliver
- the communication from CLC, which keeps them well informed about their learners' progress and updates to programmes and funding
- the flexible approach of the learning programme, which is responsive to their needs
- the bespoke training that CLC can provide, including the equality and diversity training delivered in the workplace
- the training advisers, who are flexible and give a professional standard of service
- the improvements to learners' literacy skills, impacting on the quality of care plans they write and how they interact with their children at home.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the continuity in keeping the same assessor, to ensure minimal disruption to learners' progress
- the knowledge that some training advisers have of the care environment, so they can extend the knowledge of learners
- the management of appointments with training advisers; some employers have experienced difficulties in making appointments, cancellations or have not been informed about pre-booked appointments.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

5. The CLC has made significant improvements since the previous inspection. Inspection grades have increased since the last inspection and many areas for improvement are now satisfactory or better. Teaching and learning are now well organised. Learners experience good target setting during their progress reviews. Managers have improved resources and motivated staff through a period of redundancy. Managers place a strong focus on improving achievement. Advanced apprentice and Train to Gain success rates are high and above national rates. Managers make good use of data, performance management and target setting to reduce underachievement. This is improving timely success rates. Directors have carefully planned the provision, informed by effective partnership working and local priorities.
6. The self-assessment report is accurate, clear, and concise. Staff contribute fully to the process, which includes gathering learners' and employers' views. The report is well structured but does not separately evaluate literacy and numeracy. Managers closely monitor the resulting development plan for improvement. Quality improvement systems, including those that are informal, are good. However, there is an over reliance on compliance and audit.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

7. Advanced apprenticeship overall and timely success rates are high and well above national rates. Overall success rates increased steadily from 72% in 2006/07 to 81% in 2008/09. Train to Gain overall success rates are high and above national rates. First-time pass rates by learners in literacy and numeracy tests are high. For the last two years, men's overall and timely success rates are better than women's. Achievement by learners with a disability is comparable with the overall learner group, although they tend to achieve in more timely fashion. Overall success rates are lower for the small number of 16 to 18-year-olds.
8. Learners enjoy their learning and are well motivated. Current learners make satisfactory progress towards achieving targets, and some are making good progress.
9. Overall success rates for apprentices are satisfactory, but have declined slightly to 63% in 2008/09, which is just below national rates. Timely success rates slowly improved to 49% in 2008/09, which is low. Overall and timely success rates are lower in Hampshire, and have been affected by the closure of three care homes and changes in the Southampton training adviser team.
10. Learners develop good skills and knowledge that they use confidently at work. In particular, learners improve their written communication resulting in better care plans for their customers. Health and social care learners provide better

care to service users through increased awareness of such issues as providing choice and promoting independence and dignity. Employers value the learners' increased awareness of legislation. Many learners gain promotion and additional responsibilities at work. Learners also progress to further qualifications, including in nursing.

11. Learners feel very safe. Training advisers place a high emphasis on health and safety during training and learners' progress reviews. Learners remember and use this training towards developing safe working practices.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

12. Learners' programmes are well planned with all aspects being integrated into the NVQ. Learners' individual needs, identified through a thorough initial assessment, are incorporated well into a carefully-planned scheme of work. Learners' progress reviews, their individual learning plan and scheme of work are used well to plan and monitor progress. Learners have clear interim targets setting out work they need to complete between training advisers' frequent visits. Although employers do not routinely attend progress reviews, they have a reasonable awareness of learners' progress and any issues.
13. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the better learning sessions, learners participate fully and subjects are thoroughly discussed. Training advisers introduce learning activities that are highly relevant to each learner's care home. Health and social care learners are encouraged to research and develop ideas. The weaker learning sessions are often too rushed, with insufficient time for learners to think through the tasks themselves. Some training advisers place insufficient emphasis on developing the independent study skills of literacy and numeracy learners. Learners are too reliant on their training advisers to organise their work and evaluate their progress.
14. Learners have access to good-quality learning resources. They make good use of the attractive corporate branded portfolios, learning resources and bag provided at the start of their programme. Health and social care training advisers make good use of CLC's laptops with learners during learning sessions. Employers provide good working environments and training that complement the CLC coaching.
15. Assessment practice is effective and well planned. Training advisers produce well-written and cross-referenced observations of learners' performance. Health and social care learners develop a portfolio of appropriate evidence but, at times, training advisers are too prescriptive in the way they check learners' knowledge and understanding. Some training advisers do not correct learners' grammatical or spelling mistakes sufficiently, including in key skills work.
16. Learners' and employers' needs are met particularly well through the well-designed programmes. Literacy and numeracy learning is very effectively delivered in the context of care working. All aspects of the learners' programme are well coordinated, and activities in the workplace are used productively

towards training and assessment. Learners and employers have high levels of satisfaction with CLC's programmes, citing many benefits to work practice. Training advisers are very flexible in the days and times they visit learners, around shift and weekend working.

17. The CLC works very effectively with partners, especially employers, to develop the provision. Managers make good use of employers' feedback to develop new programmes. The CLC works successfully with employers to promote the benefits of health and social care learners taking literacy and numeracy qualifications.
18. Learners receive satisfactory care, guidance and support. They value the advice they receive from training advisers relating to career progression. Literacy and numeracy learners receive good individual support to help them to overcome initial barriers or reluctance to take these subjects. The CLC has appropriate partnerships with local and national organisations to refer learners for specialist support or guidance. Learners feel well supported by their training advisers and employers.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

19. Directors set clear strategies that carefully match the company's aspirations to local priorities. Training advisers and managers focus very strongly on improving learners' success, making this a priority during meetings, in self-assessment and through monthly performance reviews. The CLC has a good 'at risk' system alerting them to learners making slow progress. Managers use a variety of methods to trigger a learner being placed at risk and implement good initiatives to improve learners' progress. They use data well to identify issues and evaluate success. The last reorganisation was specifically structured to give greater emphasis to tracking learners' success. The CLC operates a satisfactory appraisal scheme and staff are appropriately rewarded in line with their learners' timely success. Communication is good and staff are involved and included in the running of CLC through regular meetings.
20. The CLC has satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding. All staff who have contact with learners are CRB checked. Managers have appropriately identified their vulnerable adults and young learners and strengthened risk assessments of employers. The CLC liaises effectively with external agencies, where appropriate, to help support vulnerable learners. Safeguarding is routinely discussed at staff meetings, but training advisers have not had recent safeguarding training.
21. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The CLC's policies and procedures are up to date and managers are developing a single equality statement. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity, which they remember well from induction. Training advisers make good use of questions during learners' progress reviews to reinforce and extend learners' understanding. Managers use their partnership network well to target and increase participation from under-represented groups. They have successfully

raised participation from men and minority ethnic groups, despite the latter having a very low representation locally and in the sector. Managers use data very effectively to monitor success rates across different groups of learners. During 2008/09, managers noted that success rates dipped for men and implemented effective action that redressed this. Staff training in equality and diversity is good, well planned and organised. Two members of staff also provide equality and diversity training to managers and staff at some care homes.

22. Managers make effective use of their links with employers and care agencies to develop the provision and to meet the individual needs of the care homes. Learners' views are satisfactorily collected, evaluated and used by managers to effect improvement.
23. The self-assessment process is good and central to CLC's quality improvement arrangements. Managers and staff make effective use of quality improvement arrangements. Internal verification and the observation of teaching and learning systems are satisfactory. However, where training advisers are observed, the focus is towards compliance and audit rather than identifying improvements. Sharing of good practice is satisfactory through meetings, internal verification and a recently introduced peer observation system.
24. Staff and learners have access to good resources. Training advisers are well supported by managers. Staff training and development are generally good, although training advisers do not have specific literacy or numeracy teaching qualifications.

Subject areas

Health and social care

Grade 2

Context

25. The CLC has 64 apprentices, 122 advanced apprentices and 66 Train to Gain learners taking qualifications in health and social care. Learners are employed in a range of residential and domiciliary care environments. Training and assessment are carried out by training advisers, usually in learners' workplaces.

Key findings

- Overall success rates for advanced apprentices are consistently high and above national rates, having improved from 72% in 2006/07 to 81% in 2008/09. Train to Gain overall success rates are also high at 82% at level 2 and 80% at level 3 in 2008/09. Timely success rates by advanced apprentices are much improved and are satisfactory at 63%.
- Learners' knowledge is extended well to support learners at work. They experience significant increases in confidence. Learners provide better care to service users with increased awareness of such issues as providing choice and promoting independence and dignity. Learners' literacy skills improve, increasing their effectiveness at work. Employers value the learners' increased awareness of legislation. Learners enjoy their training.
- Overall success rates for apprentices are satisfactory, although they slightly declined in 2008/09 to 63%. Timely success rates in 2008/09 are low at 49%. Apprentices' overall and timely success rates were affected by the closure of three care homes and changes in the training adviser team in Hampshire.
- Learners' and employers' needs are met well through the programme. Learners have a well-structured and innovative programme that effectively links the technical certificate, NVQ and key skills. They receive a clear scheme of work and individual learning plan, detailing their training, learning and assessment activities. Training advisers use this very flexibly to meet individual learners' needs.
- Learners' progress is monitored very well through regular reviews, where learners are set clear, challenging and achievable targets. Current learners make satisfactory or better progress. Although employers do not always attend progress reviews, they have a good awareness of learners' progress and particularly of any problems arising.
- Learners receive satisfactory and frequent individual learning sessions from training advisers. Learners complete tasks and activities well, making use of CLC's laptops where appropriate. Most training advisers set effective tasks that encourage learners to research and develop ideas. However, some learning sessions are too rushed, with insufficient time for learners to think through tasks and find their own solutions.

- Assessment is effective, well planned and an integral part of the learning sessions. Learners produce a portfolio of appropriate evidence under the direction of their training adviser. Learners' performance of tasks at work are assessed thoroughly and recorded in well-written and cross-referenced observations.
- Some training advisers are too prescriptive at times in assisting the learners to complete tasks, with learners not being fully clear about the knowledge they need to develop or evidence required for assessment. Learners' spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes in key skills exercises are not always corrected.
- Management of the health and social care programme is good. The training manager and training advisers regularly evaluate and monitor learners' progress using an extensive performance management spreadsheet. They initiate effective actions to deal with learners' slow progress or other issues that could put learners' success at risk. Staff are well trained and have good resources to support learning.
- Internal verification is satisfactory, planned and recorded on the performance management spreadsheet. Internal verifiers regularly observe training advisers and discuss assessment practice. However, they do not give sufficient advice to training advisers about how they can improve.

What does CLC need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve timely and overall success rates, particularly for apprentices, through the monthly performance reviews with training advisers and by taking action where learners are identified as being at risk of not achieving.
- Make better use of critical feedback and the sharing of good practice following observations of training advisers to improve the quality and consistency of training and assessment.

Literacy and numeracy

Grade 2

Context

26. The CLC has 39 Train to Gain learners taking literacy and/or numeracy qualifications alongside their NVQ in health and social care. Thirty seven of these learners are working towards national literacy accreditation and 35 towards numeracy qualifications at level 1 or level 2 . Learning is delivered by training advisers in the workplace or at CLC's training centres.

Key findings

- Overall success rates are high and above national rates. In 2008/09, 82% of learners achieved national certificates in literacy and/or numeracy. First-time pass rates by learners in literacy and numeracy tests are high. Learners gain a great sense of success in receiving formal recognition of their achievement and progress.
- Learners gain confidence in developing and using their skills in a work context, enabling them to progress to further training or promotion at work. For example, one learner has taken responsibility for managing the clients' finances in the care home. Another has improved confidence in writing care plans independently. Learners are highly motivated and enjoy their learning.
- The programme is very well designed to meet the needs of learners. Managers carefully plan the programme to provide realistic, relevant and appropriate opportunities for learners to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills within the NVQ. Learners overcome their initial reluctance to address literacy and numeracy skill deficits in a positive and useful context.
- The CLC has developed good partnerships with employers. Employers recognise the benefits of the literacy and numeracy programmes in learners' increased confidence and improved working practice. The employment partnership adviser keeps regular contact with employers and responds quickly to address issues or concerns and discuss future training needs.
- Learners receive good individual support from training advisers. Many learners have previously had poor learning experiences and have little confidence in their ability to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Training advisers approach learning activities in a very sensitive and practical manner so that learners become confident in extending their skills.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best learning sessions, training advisers make good use of open questions. They use a wide range of satisfactory learning resources to facilitate learning.
- Some learning sessions are too rushed and training advisers do not allow learners sufficient time to think through the problems themselves before providing solutions or explaining techniques. Training advisers have had insufficient training to improve their literacy and numeracy teaching skills.
- Learners complete a thorough initial assessment. Their identified individual needs are incorporated satisfactorily into the carefully-planned scheme of work.

Some training advisers place insufficient emphasis on developing learners' independent study skills. Learners are too reliant on their training advisers when organising their work and evaluating their own progress.

- Management of the programme is satisfactory. Learners' progress is closely monitored through the very effective 'at risk' procedure. Training advisers and managers meet regularly and communication is good, ensuring that the training programmes are implemented thoroughly and consistently. The self-assessment process does not evaluate the literacy and numeracy provision separately.

What does CLC need to do to improve further?

- Provide more in-depth training for training advisers in supporting learners in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Place a greater emphasis in training sessions on developing learners' independent study skills and encouraging them to take greater responsibility for evaluating their own progress and organising their work.

Information about the inspection

27. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's managing director, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local LSC, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
28. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
The Care Learning Centre

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners		
Part-time learners	252	252
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	3	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	n/a	
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	n/a	
Quality of provision	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3	
Leadership and management	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	n/a	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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