

# Consulting Principles Ltd

Focused monitoring visit report

---

Unique reference number: 58288

Name of lead inspector: Nigel Bragg HMI

Last day of inspection: 9 June 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 5a Upper Street  
Tettenhall  
WV6 8QF

Telephone number: 01902 745 214

## FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

### Context and focus of visit

Consulting Principles Limited (Consulting Principles) was established in 1987 and has its head office in Wolverhampton, in the West Midlands. The company works with a range of industrial and service sector companies including multi-nationals and small employers with less than 20 staff.

Train to Gain funding supports a range of level 2 engineering and manufacturing technologies NVQs including performing manufacturing operations, metal processing and allied operations, distribution, warehousing and storage, chemical, pharmaceutical and petrochemical operations and business improvement techniques.

Consulting Principles was inspected in September 2008. The quality of the engineering and manufacturing technology provision was graded as satisfactory. The overall effectiveness and main aspects of the provision were judged to be satisfactory, with achievement and standards assessed as good.

This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit, which include the two mandatory themes of outcomes for learners, self-assessment and improvement planning. In particular, inspectors explored the progress made in improving both the promotion of equality of opportunity and management of training.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has Consulting Principles made in improving the effectiveness of the self-assessment process to bring about improvements? Insufficient progress

Since the previous inspection, the provider has not sufficiently developed its self-assessment arrangements as an effective contribution to quality improvement. The current self-assessment process does not provide for adequate quality assessment of all key aspects of the learners' journey. There is no appropriate link between self-assessment and other quality assurance processes. Insufficient use is made of data and the views of key stakeholders, including the subcontractor, to inform judgements.

The associated report, was primarily written for marketing purposes and gives a good overview of the ethos of the organisation as well as summarising actions carried out since the previous inspection. However, the report is overly descriptive and contains insufficient evaluative statements to assess the quality of programmes from the learners' perspective.

The self-assessment process includes the formulation of an action plan. However, many actions are not specific or detailed enough to address identified areas for development. The provider has not always implemented timely actions to improve the quality of the learners' experience. The action plan does not include clear challenging targets and milestones to aid monitoring. Consulting Principles has not adequately identified and addressed some key areas for improvement, including significant weaknesses identified at the previous inspection.

#### Outcomes for learners

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| What progress has Consulting Principles made in improving timely success rates? | Significant progress |
|---|----------------------|

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified low timely success rates for Train to Gain programmes as a key area for improvement. Since then the rates show an improving trend. In 2007/08, the rate was well below the national average. However, the 2008/09 rate improved and was significantly above the national rate. Regional variations were evident in this two-year period. This reflects changes in manufacturing capacity as well as the placing of training in abeyance as a response to employers' operational priorities. Timely success rates for the current year up to period nine are generally high and above the national rate.

The overall success rates for Train to Gain programmes were high and significantly above the national rate for 2007/08 and 2008/09. This pattern was reflected in the region's satisfactory rates though the trend over the two years shows a small decline.

#### Quality of provision

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| What progress has Consulting Principles made in improving Skills for Life assessment and support? | Insufficient progress |
|---|-----------------------|

At the previous inspection, inspectors judged the provider's arrangements for Skills for Life as weak. Since this time, Consulting Principles has not taken sufficiently effective actions to ensure the identification of learners' additional learning needs and the provision of appropriate learning support. Learners complete a simple self-analysis of their information technology, literacy and numeracy skills on recruitment to the programme. This process does not adequately identify learners' development needs or ensure they have the necessary skills to participate in the programme. Since the previous inspection, Consulting Principles has contracted with a further education college to provide learners with assessment and support. Liaison between the college and Consulting Principles is inadequate. The provider does not monitor the service level agreement with the college to assess the take-up, quality and success of the service provided. Consulting Principles' tutors receive no feedback from the college on learners' progress. Provider staff offer informal help in the workplace but have not received training to meet the needs of those learners whose literacy and language skills are weak. The provider does not use data to measure the impact of support arrangements.

## Leadership and management

What progress has Consulting Principles made in improving the management of training? Significant progress

At the previous inspection management of training was judged to be insufficiently developed. Since this time, Consulting Principles has carried out much effective work to improve the management of its training programmes. Staff responsibility for improvement in this area is now clear. The provider has introduced high quality, standardised training materials for use when delivering NVO programmes. Consulting Principles effectively employs video technology to support learning. It has implemented a comprehensive and flexible training plan that well supports programme delivery. The plan includes clear objectives that focus effectively on learner progress, health and safety, and outcomes. Recently Consulting Principles has introduced a systematic approach to obtaining feedback from learners and employers on the quality of training, assessment and progress reviews. The provider collects appropriate achievement data and effectively uses its evaluation for contract compliance purposes. The provider has improved its information, advice and guidance arrangements and now holds a nationally recognised quality standard for its provision.

What progress has Consulting Principles made in improving the promotion of equality of opportunity? Insufficient progress

Equality of opportunity was graded satisfactory at the previous inspection however it was insufficiently promoted. Since then little progress has been made to improve the promotion of equality of opportunity. Consulting Principles has not given this area a sufficiently high priority. As at the previous inspection, no staff equality and diversity training has taken place. Monitoring of equality and diversity is not effective. The provider has carried out insufficient action to identify achievement gaps between different groups of learners. An equality and diversity strategy has been agreed but this has yet to be developed into equality and diversity policies and procedures that address harassment, bullying and unfair discrimination. The provider does not tailor individual strategies to promote learners' understanding of equality and diversity or make use of contextualised training strategies to reflect the experience of learners within the workplace. The promotion of equality and diversity during training, assessment, progress reviews and with employers is inadequate.

What progress has Consulting Principles made in introducing effective quality improvement arrangements? Insufficient progress

Consulting Principles does not have a quality assurance process that effectively covers all aspects of the learner journey. The provider has introduced improvements to its feedback arrangements. Consulting Principles canvasses the views of different

user groups and analysis of the outcomes of this process has recently been carried out. However, the provider does not effectively use this activity to improve the provision's quality. Analysis of learners' feedback on individual assessor's performance has recently been introduced but this is not used systematically to identify good practice and areas for improvement. Learners and employers are not adequately involved in the decision-making of the organisation. The provider does not systematically use the identification of areas for improvement to inform an action planning processes that can be effectively monitored and contribute to improvements. Consulting Principles places an over reliance on informal activities to secure quality improvement. The provider now ensures that the internal verifier carries out observations of training, assessment and progress reviews but has not developed this into an effective system for improving quality across all of the provision. Outcomes from quality assurance processes do not adequately support the self-assessment process.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this report in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010