

# Central Training Academy Limited

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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**Unique reference number:** 51072

**Name of lead inspector:** Derrick Baughan, Her Majesty's Inspector

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Central Training Academy Limited was inspected in February 2018. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision as requires improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. In February 2018, inspectors judged the quality of adult learning programmes and 16 to 19 study programmes to be good. Therefore, this inspection focused on apprenticeship provision, which was judged as requires improvement.

### Themes

**What progress have leaders and managers made in urgently improving quality assurance arrangements by ensuring that they set and monitor robust actions for improvement, and what impact is that having on apprentices?**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders have introduced a range of effective new ways in which they monitor the quality and outcomes of the apprenticeship provision. Leaders now review these aspects frequently and in detail, setting clear actions for improvement. Managers regularly monitor progress towards completing these actions effectively. Managers' success criteria focus strongly on improving outcomes for apprentices.

Leaders ensure that staff record meetings well and have clear actions for staff to follow. For example, the minutes of the monthly focus group meetings are detailed and show a good focus on monitoring progress against actions for improvement.

Improvement actions are having a demonstrable impact on apprentices. Leaders have been successful in quickly increasing the proportion of apprentices who achieved within their planned timescales. The proportion of apprentices who achieved overall has also increased. Leaders have been successful in reducing the number of apprentices who have left their programme without achieving their qualifications.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in urgently improving quality assurance arrangements by thoroughly monitoring the quality of subcontracted provision?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders have implemented a range of actions to improve the rigour with which they monitor the quality and outcomes of subcontracted provision. Leaders changed the contract to provide a greater focus on managing these aspects and set clear improvement actions for subcontractors. Reports to the board provide members with

much greater detail on the performance of subcontractors, particularly relating to apprentices' achievement.

Managers work closely with subcontractors and have improved the effectiveness of communications with them. Leaders give clear advice and guidance to subcontractors on how to improve their performance. Leaders and managers provide robust challenge to subcontractors and take swift and effective action to deal with underperformance.

Leaders ensure that subcontractors focus more closely on monitoring and improving the progress apprentices are making. The proportion of apprentices in subcontracted provision judged to be making expected or better progress is higher than at the same point in the previous year.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for learners by ensuring that tutors use effective teaching practices and by monitoring the effectiveness of these practices? Reasonable progress**

Leaders have introduced a good range of strategies which have improved the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. These include online teaching resources for staff development; frequent reports on the quality of teaching practice; lesson observations leading to feedback for individual teachers; and support from mentors.

Staff rightly recognise the improvements in how managers help them develop their teaching practices, such as the help to improve tutors' use of questioning. As a result, tutors now use questioning effectively to check apprentices' understanding and help them make progress.

Staff make good use of online resources to help them improve their practice. These resources focus on typical scenarios that tutors might encounter in teaching situations. As a result, managers and tutors work well together to review and improve how the programme is delivered. For example, as a result of this staff development, tutors have successfully encouraged apprentices to take responsibility for their own learning.

Leaders have provided training for staff to help them set targets for their own professional development. Managers provide staff with feedback on the quality of their targets, which is improving. However, targets for improvement still focus too much on compliance with awarding body requirements as opposed to the development of teaching skills.

Staff have introduced daily planners which learners use to reflect effectively on their progress. Staff use planners to improve apprentices' written work through giving detailed feedback on their writing. Tutors have introduced structured discussions with apprentices based on a 'topic of the day', to improve apprentices understanding of British values. Apprentices interviewed had a good understanding of how British values impacted positively on their lives and work.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for learners by ensuring that teachers set challenging targets for apprentices and use these to monitor thoroughly the progress that all apprentices are making, and what impact has this made on apprentices' achievements?** Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have developed a comprehensive system for tracking apprentices' learning and progress accurately. Leaders use this system well to monitor apprentices' progress closely and intervene earlier when apprentices make slower than anticipated progress. As a result, considerably more apprentices stay in training and achieve their qualifications by their planned end date.

Tutors challenge hairdressing apprentices to develop advanced skills through their practical work. This helps them prepare effectively for the next stage of their training. Apprentices make good use of 'mood-boards' to illustrate the creative process in designing hairstyles and to carry out colour correction services that will be required when they move up to the next level of training.

Tutors and assessors have high expectations for apprentices. They meet frequently with their apprentices to discuss their progress and help them to improve further. Most apprentices are making the progress expected of them. Assessors' monitoring is effective in measuring apprentices' progress towards achieving their qualifications; however, it is less effective in evaluating the development of the skills, knowledge and behaviours required by their specific workplaces.

Tutors and assessors work closely with apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships to identify their target grade and to establish whether they can achieve a high grade. Apprentices have a good awareness of their targets and the requirements of the end-point assessment. However, leaders do not have a company-wide system to set targets which encourage the most able apprentices to aspire to high grades. They do not analyse high-grade target-setting across the provision to monitor the effect of this work.

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