

Construction Gateway Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

5–7 June 2019

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers do not know enough about the quality of teaching and learning for apprentices, and cannot therefore plan effective improvements.
- Adult apprentices do not get enough opportunities to practise and consolidate in their workplace the new skills they develop in off-the-job training lessons.
- Trainer–assessors do not use their knowledge of what apprentices can already do to plan challenging off-the-job practical training for apprentices.
- Apprentices are unclear about the progress they make with their apprenticeship. Too many do not understand how they will be assessed at their end-point assessments.
- Too few apprentices improve their English and mathematics skills in work-related lessons.
- Leaders and managers do not make sure that apprentices know how to improve their written work. Consequently, very few apprentices produce distinction-quality work.
- Despite support from leaders and managers, too many apprentices are making slow progress completing the units of their qualification.
- Apprentices do not know in enough detail how their apprenticeship will help them with their next steps.

The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders understand the housing maintenance trade in detail. They plan their apprenticeships carefully to make sure that apprentices move successfully from single- to multi-skilled work.
- Apprentices enjoy their learning. They work with enthusiasm in off-the-job training lessons and value the qualification they are studying.
- Apprentices value the support they receive from staff and the professional skills of their trainer–assessors.
- Apprentices work confidently, independently and professionally. They take pride in their practical work.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Construction Gateway Limited is a small independent learning provider based in Shefford in Bedfordshire. It gained approval as a prime contractor in May 2017 after offering private training courses in the construction and housing sectors for 20 years. Construction Gateway Limited does not work with any subcontractors.
- Construction Gateway Limited provides apprenticeships in property maintenance at level 2, with the intention of enabling single-trade workers to improve a variety of skills needed in housing maintenance. All apprentices are enrolled on standards-based apprenticeships with employers across England. There are currently 53 apprentices in learning, almost all of whom are over 19 years of age.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should continue to improve the quality of the provision, by:
 - making sure that all teaching staff have clear and measurable targets to help them improve their classroom practice, and checking that staff achieve these targets
 - ensuring that all apprentices get opportunities at work to practise the skills they are learning in off-the-job training
 - ensuring that trainer–assessors use the information they have on apprentices’ existing skills to plan lessons that interest and challenge them
 - devising ways to inform apprentices about their next steps before the end of their apprenticeships.
- Leaders and managers should make sure that all apprentices complete the units of their qualifications quickly, finish their apprenticeships and achieve the very best result they can, by:
 - developing strategies to make sure that apprentices understand the progress they are making with their apprenticeships, understand how to complete distinction-level work and know what they have to do for their end-point assessments
 - improving the quality of feedback from trainer–assessors so that apprentices know how to improve their English and mathematics skills and their written assignments.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders know their business well. They have a clear strategy for their apprenticeships, which is to improve the variety of skills of single-trade workers in the housing maintenance profession. They can describe in detail the actions that they have taken as a result of their monitoring visits. However, these actions are only recently starting to have a positive impact.
- Leaders do not assess the quality of their provision in enough detail. Although they have accurately identified most important areas of weakness, they do not identify clearly the weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They do not analyse gaps in apprentices' progress between different employers in sufficient detail or the reasons why some employers have markedly lower attendance at off-the-job training lessons. Their improvement plans lack specific and measurable actions to improve these areas quickly.
- Leaders and managers have not developed effective processes to quickly improve the quality of teaching and learning. Lesson observation procedures are unnecessarily complicated. Leaders and managers focus too much on what trainer-assessors are doing and not enough on the skills and knowledge that apprentices develop.
- Although leaders and managers agree appraisal targets with staff to improve the quality of classroom practice, these are often not clear and measurable. Leaders do not check progress on these targets quickly in subsequent observations to make sure that trainer-assessors are improving their skills swiftly. Trainer-assessors have not yet benefited from training to help them improve their classroom skills.
- Leaders and managers do not make sure that adult apprentices have sufficient opportunities to consolidate and apply the new skills they learn in off-the-job training lessons. Leaders, employers, workplace supervisors and trainer-assessors do not plan effectively to enable apprentices to practise and develop fully their new skills.
- Leaders have aligned their apprenticeship offer effectively to meet the requirements of the housing industry. They have close links with organisations in the housing sector and complete secondments with the national housing academy to improve their knowledge of current practice. They meet frequently with representatives from the housing sector across the country. They understand in detail the skills that employers need apprentices to develop.
- Leaders and managers acted quickly and positively to support apprentices disadvantaged by the lack of timely end-point-assessments. They arranged useful extra teaching lessons and developed suitable resources to help them revise and maintain their skills. Leaders worked effectively to contribute to the review of end-point assessment requirements to make sure that apprentices could benefit from this as soon as possible.
- Staff are proud to work at Construction Gateway Limited. They value the effective communication and team work which motivates them to do their best.

The governance of the provider

- Current governance arrangements are insufficient. Leaders do not benefit from independent scrutiny of the quality of training that apprentices receive. They do not concentrate sufficiently on improving teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders do not receive the necessary support and challenge from impartial external bodies to ensure that the quality of provision improves quickly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders acted quickly and successfully after the monitoring visit to improve safeguarding arrangements for apprentices. Well-trained safeguarding officers deal effectively with the small number of safeguarding concerns. They involve local agencies as required. Leaders make sure that all staff undergo relevant training in both safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They check that all staff are suitable to work in education and training.
- Leaders and managers use helpful 'toolbox talks' to improve apprentices' understanding of topics such as safeguarding, bullying, British values, discrimination and addiction. They test apprentices' understanding of these topics with practical end-of-topic quizzes. As most apprentices have only completed one or two of these tests, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of the training.
- Apprentices know how to stay safe and how to report safeguarding concerns. Staff check their understanding of safeguarding frequently and quickly follow up any concerns.
- Leaders and managers have a useful 'Prevent' duty risk assessment. Most apprentices have a basic understanding of how to keep themselves safe from the risks of extremism and radicalisation. However, staff and apprentices are unclear about the local threats facing them in their geographically diverse locations. Apprentices struggle to contextualise these topics to see how they apply to their working lives.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Trainer–assessors do not take enough account of apprentices' prior knowledge when planning off-the-job training. Too many apprentices complete the same tasks at the same level and repeat skills they learned in the past. As a result, they find the work basic and lacking challenge, for example apprentices carrying out basic painting exercises that they already have many years' experience of doing.
- Trainer–assessors do not extend apprentices' knowledge further. They do not check that apprentices are developing the skills they need. Employers are often not present at progress reviews. Consequently, they are not always clear about the areas that apprentices need to develop to improve their skills and knowledge.
- Although apprentices receive feedback on their written work, trainer–assessors do not make it clear how they can improve or indicate the standard they are working at. Few apprentices know how to amend their work so that they can achieve higher grades. Consequently, very few apprentices produce high-quality written work which enables them to aspire to achieve a distinction grade.
- Too many apprentices are unclear about the processes for, and grading of, their end-

point assessments. Staff have not made sure that all apprentices and employers understand how and when they will complete their assessments. Few apprentices understand how to gain a distinction grade.

- Apprentices work with autonomy and independence in practical training lessons. They remain committed to their training throughout their apprenticeship and speak positively of the benefits of their training. They work effectively with each other and with their trainer–assessors.
- Apprentices use their prior experience and knowledge to work to professional standards. They conduct themselves with purpose. For example, apprentices completing painting exercises inside an empty housing void work with little need of help from their trainer–assessors.
- Trainer–assessors use a wide range of assessment methods which enable apprentices to show the extent of their learning. Trainer–assessors model good practice through detailed demonstrations that apprentices then follow to practise and improve their skills. They question apprentices effectively to check what they have learned.
- Apprentices benefit from the clear oral feedback that they receive on their practical work. Trainer–assessors check apprentices’ practical work carefully and say clearly whether it is of a professional standard. This helps apprentices understand how to improve their work to ensure that they meet the standards of the housing maintenance industry.
- Trainer–assessors have extensive experience in their trades. They use their detailed knowledge to help apprentices gain new skills. They help apprentices develop their confidence to tackle new tasks. Trainer–assessors support apprentices struggling with practical tasks effectively, enabling them to catch up quickly. They explain important features of practical tasks clearly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Apprentices do not receive detailed information, advice and guidance about the content of their apprenticeships at the start of their programmes. As a result, they do not understand how the skills they learn will help them in their current and future job roles.
- Apprentices do not benefit from information during their apprenticeships to help them plan their next steps. Although they value the qualification they will achieve, they are not clear how the new skills they have gained will help them with their next steps. Too many apprentices see the learning they complete as irrelevant to their future careers.
- Trainer–assessors do not use information about apprentices’ prior knowledge effectively to develop apprentices’ English and mathematics skills. They do not emphasise in enough detail the importance of developing these skills to enhance their current and future work roles. As a result, apprentices do not see the relevance of these skills within their job roles.
- Apprentices’ attendance at off-the-job training is too variable. Although apprentices attend well at around half of the locations across the country, attendance at other locations is too low. Too many apprentices have training lessons interrupted by requests from employers to respond to work pressures. Although leaders and managers provide extra learning opportunities to help these apprentices catch up, their irregular attendance

causes disruption to their learning.

- Apprentices take pride in their practical work during off-the-job training lessons and in the workplace. They are proud of their achievements and are keen to show what they have learned.
- Most apprentices benefit from the extra qualifications and knowledge that they gain during their apprenticeships. This improves their efficiency at work and their future employability. For example, apprentices gain qualifications and experience in manual handling, safeguarding training and handling hazardous materials, such as asbestos. They undertake training on working with vulnerable clients and those with disabilities. This enables them to work safely and understand the needs of their customers.
- Apprentices are confident and self-assured in their job roles. Most appreciate how they can apply the new skills they develop during their apprenticeships to their current work. Most have not gained qualifications in the past and they value the opportunity to follow a recognised learning programme while at work.
- Staff make sure that apprentices recognise the importance of health and safety in workshops and in their workplaces. They understand the legislative requirements relating to their sector and the importance of adhering to safe practices at work. Apprentices are confident about raising concerns, if an unsafe situation occurs.
- Most apprentices communicate effectively with their colleagues and clients during property maintenance works. They show empathy and consideration when dealing with residents of the properties they are repairing. Apprentices reassure them about the work they are completing. They explain in detail the improvements they will make to their property.
- Apprentices develop their information and communications technology (ICT) skills effectively. Employers make sure that apprentices use a tracking and workflow application throughout their working day, which develops their ICT skills. As apprentices use this to log their hours for each job, order materials and make adjustments where additional time is required, they become more adept in using the technology they need in the workplace.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Too many apprentices make slow progress with their apprenticeship. They have not completed enough of their units to enable them to easily achieve their apprenticeship by their planned end dates. Leaders are confident that the support they provide will enable almost all apprentices currently on programme to achieve their apprenticeship. However, it is too early to judge the impact this will have on apprentices' achievement.
- Leaders and managers do not analyse information about their apprentices in enough detail to identify gaps in the performance of different apprentices. They know anecdotally about progress by different groups in different areas of the country, but do not formally analyse this or plan to close gaps which they have identified.
- Most apprentices produce written work that meets the requirements of their qualifications. However, apprentices find it difficult to articulate in detail how their work benefits them in their employment. Although they recognise the need to complete their research assignments to help them gain their qualification, they are unclear about how

their written work supports the development of their practical skills.

- Apprentices enjoy their practical work and develop new skills that help them in their day-to-day employment. For example, electricians learn how to plaster a wall to make good after their work. Plumbers learn basic brickwork skills to understand better the order of works for their team's housing refurbishment projects. However, only very small numbers of apprentices are working at distinction standard.
- Most apprentices who start their programmes continue with their apprenticeships. No apprentices have yet completed their apprenticeship because the awarding body has not yet determined the content of the end-point assessment. Most of those waiting for these assessments have completed their portfolios of evidence and research assignments to an appropriate standard. Leaders make sure that they are meeting the requirements of an apprenticeship.
- Almost all apprentices pass their level 1 functional skills English and mathematics examinations at the first attempt. Although all apprentices can take English and mathematics qualifications at level 2, only small numbers of apprentices achieve these qualifications.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1278588
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	106
Principal/CEO	Stephen Makowski
Telephone number	01462 857277
Website	www.constructiongateway.org.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	2	51	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring visit reports. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Andy Fitt, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ian Frear	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Blowman	Ofsted Inspector

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