

BCTG Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

12–15 June 2018

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Adult learning programmes	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders provide clear strategic leadership and are ambitious for learners. Leaders and managers work effectively with local and regional partnerships to identify and provide education and training that meet the needs of employers, learners and apprentices.
- Leaders manage the performance of subcontractors well. They communicate and monitor subcontractors' performance targets effectively and provide valued support.
- Most learners and apprentices achieve their qualifications by the planned end date. Most progress towards employment or gain promotions in their jobs; most current learners are making good progress.
- Experienced and knowledgeable assessors and tutors provide high-quality professional discussions and coaching sessions that help learners and apprentices to progress.
- Learners and apprentices develop good personal skills that prepare them well for employment. They are respectful, punctual, take pride in their work and work well in teams.
- Learners and apprentices develop good practical skills in engineering and construction, care, business management and accounting. Employers value their contribution to the business.
- Leaders' strategy for the development of mathematics and English lacks clarity and impact. A minority of tutors and assessors do not improve learners' and apprentices' mathematics and English skills well enough.
- Where tutors and assessors provide written feedback to learners, it does not specify precise actions for improvement.
- A minority of tutors and assessors do not challenge learners and apprentices sufficiently through target-setting and questioning.

Full report

Information about the provider

- BCTG Limited (BCTG) is a not-for-profit organisation, which was established in 2001 as a limited company. Based in Oldbury, BCTG is one of the largest training consortia operating in the West Midlands. It works currently with 27 subcontractors who provide work-based learning. Most BCTG consortium members are in the West Midlands, with some provision in the East Midlands and North West of England.
- Currently, apprenticeships are the largest provision type. BCTG offers apprenticeships in seven subject areas. The largest numbers of apprentices are in health and business administration; a smaller but significant number of apprentices are in engineering and construction. BCTG also offers short study programmes, programmes for unemployed adults and those on advanced learner loans.
- At the time of inspection there were 3,279 learners. Of these 2,893 were apprentices, 38 were on study programmes, almost 160 unemployed adults were on a range of short adult learning programmes, and 189 learners were on advanced learner loan programmes.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - increasing the level of detail in the strategy for the development of English and mathematics by clarifying the expectations of subcontractors and tutors, and defining the desired impact on learners
 - developing tutors and assessors so that they are more able to help all learners to improve their English and mathematical skills through their vocational courses
 - increasing the level of detail in the tutors' written feedback, so that learners are clear about the actions they need to take to improve
 - ensuring that assessors set more challenging targets to develop further the skills and behaviours of apprentices and enable them to make greater progress from their starting points
 - developing assessors and tutors further so that they use their questioning more effectively to check and extend learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders provide clear strategic leadership and have a strong ambition to provide relevant high-quality training for employers, learners and apprentices. Staff and subcontractors understand and share this ambition.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have set a clear priority to improve the provision. Leaders have invested substantially in new staffing, information systems, and training to shift the culture of the organisation to one that focuses on the quality of learners' experience. As a result, leaders and managers have rectified most of the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Leaders and managers have established positive partnerships and working arrangements with their subcontractors. Subcontractors value the relationship with BCTG. They speak highly of the good support and challenge they receive from managers. They particularly value the expertise and sector knowledge of leaders at BCTG. They value the frequency of managers' visits and their accessibility. They make good use of the good range of resources to enhance learning. Managers organise monthly consortia meetings for subcontractors. These meetings provide a range of staff training workshops and are valuable opportunities for them to share good practice.
- Leaders ensure that management information is available and accessible to managers and subcontractors alike. Managers set realistic and challenging key performance indicators at whole-company level. They adapt them for subcontractors where required. Managers use the information well to hold subcontractors to account.
- Performance management arrangements for subcontractors are effective. Where leaders identify underperformance within a subcontractor they take prompt and appropriate management actions. In the current year, nearly half of all subcontractors have been subject to some form of intervention. If they do not respond positively to the support offered, BCTG managers end their contract. Managers have decided to end nearly a third of contracts in the last year as a result. Two subcontractors have responded positively and are now working well. New contract holders are performing well.
- Leaders have strengthened arrangements for teaching, learning and assessment. They have appointed new relationship managers whose job is to work closely with subcontractors' quality assurance leaders. For example, they observe teaching and learning and monitor the different stages of learners' experience. They are responsible for ensuring that the subcontractors meet BCTG's high standards. As a result, most assessors receive observations of their teaching, and these identify appropriate staff training to improve their practice. Managers are aware of the need to further develop teachers' skills through targeted staff development. It is too early to judge the full impact of this recent support in further improving outcomes for learners.
- The self-assessment process is well established. Leaders have redesigned the self-assessment report so that they now focus on evaluating the key issues that have an impact on the quality of provision. Relationship managers work with subcontractors to produce their own self-assessment report, which informs the company's overall report. However, they do not support subcontractors in devising and following up action plans from their self-assessment report to ensure that in-year actions are timely and lead to

swift improvements.

- Leaders and managers work well in partnership with local and regional organisations and employers to deliver relevant training for people in the locality. They adapt their training well to meet the needs of often small- and medium-sized enterprises. Leaders take good account of national and regional priorities and employment trends in determining the shape of the courses they offer. They offer courses that match the needs identified by the local enterprise boards in the region. Managers make good use of employer and learner surveys to improve their provision. Most employers acknowledge that BCTG's training for their apprentices adds value to their businesses.
- Managers recognise that too many learners and apprentices do not make sufficient progress in developing their English and mathematics skills. The English and mathematics strategy identifies the need to improve the quality of delivery and support for learners. However, it does not set out clear expectations in term of learners' performance, so that subcontractors know what they are aiming for, and the expected impact on learners.

The governance of the provider

- After the previous inspection, leaders set up a new advisory board to provide governance and oversight. The board members have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the company and are clear about what the company needs to do to improve teaching and learning, and outcomes for learners.
- Board members have good access to performance data and relevant reports. They make good use of these to challenge leaders and hold them to account. They receive regular updates and an annual report on safeguarding.
- Board members are appropriately involved in the moderation of self-assessment reports and in ensuring that managers implement the corporate quality improvement plan.
- The board supports the managing director well in determining the future strategic direction of the company.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff, including subcontractors' staff, have had appropriate safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training. Designated safeguarding officers in BCTG and subcontracted providers receive enhanced training.
- Learners have appropriate training at induction. The majority have also accessed online training on fundamental British values and the 'Prevent' duty. A regular monthly newsletter supports trainers and assessors in developing and checking learners' understanding of fundamental British values and radicalisation and extremism by highlighting current news stories. As a result, the majority of learners and apprentices have a good understanding of these issues.
- Learners and apprentices know how to keep themselves safe in their personal lives, at work and online. They know how to stay safe when using social media. Learners articulate well the signs associated with online grooming. Following a visit by the local police support officer, learners were able to explain the risk of child sexual exploitation.

They feel safe and know how to report any concerns they may have.

- Most learners have a good understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. They have a good understanding of how extremists take advantage of isolated young people. They understand the dangers that relate to their local communities and therefore reduce the risks of danger to their safety.
- Leaders have clear procedures for reporting incidents. BCTG and subcontractors have effective links with external agencies, such as the police, local safeguarding children boards and 'Channel', which they use effectively to resolve issues and support learners and apprentices.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Most learners and apprentices enjoy their learning and develop the knowledge and skills required to achieve their qualifications and secure employment.
- Learners and apprentices benefit from tutors' and assessors' experience and technical knowledge of their subjects. They develop very good practical skills in well-resourced, industry-standard working environments. At Peter Pyne Ltd, hairdressing learners confidently complete client consultations. They shampoo clients' hair using professional massage techniques effectively. Learners gain valuable work-related skills. Apprentices also acquire good practical skills. They benefit from assessors' knowledge of up-to-date technology and the industry-standard equipment to refine these skills.
- At Further Training Ltd, learners studying level 5 management qualifications rapidly gain high-level skills and develop confidence in their roles because of the high-quality professional discussion and mentoring provided by their trainers.
- Most tutors work well with employers to plan interesting activities and coaching sessions that link closely to learners' and apprentices' job roles and career aspirations. Tutors relate new learning well to practice on the job. As a result, learners and apprentices link theory to practice well and improve their contribution in the workplace. During an advanced learner loans session, the learner was able to reflect on the effectiveness of their planning for a teaching support session. This was because of the expert support of the tutor and detailed feedback from the employer. On employability programmes, tutors create interesting activities, including team challenges and 'in-tray exercises', which motivate learners and reflect modern commercial practice.
- In a small minority of sessions, assessors do not develop apprentices' understanding and skills beyond the requirements to pass a qualification. Assessors' questioning of learners is too often superficial and does not encourage learners to demonstrate a deeper understanding of their subject or develop their skills further. On study programmes, a small minority of the most able learners are not challenged sufficiently to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Tutors provide learners with very effective individual support to help them to progress well in their studies. Learners value tutors' availability and quick responses to their requests. For example, some adult learners are returning to education after a long time and are combining family and work responsibilities with learning. Tutors provide them with flexible academic, and often emotional, support. This helps them to overcome issues

and barriers to completing their work.

- Leaders have invested significantly in an online learning platform and a wide range of learning resources, so that learners and apprentices can access additional learning outside of the classroom. The majority of learners use these resources well to develop their learning further.
- The majority of tutors and assessors use information on learners' starting points effectively to plan work that helps learners to make at least expected progress in their vocational courses.
- Tutors on adult courses help learners develop mathematical and English skills well. However, in a minority of teaching and assessment activities tutors and assessors do not extend learners' and apprentices' skills in mathematics and English sufficiently. For example, an advanced apprentice had prepared a presentation which had been reviewed by the assessor. The final draft included spelling and grammatical errors, and some poor written expression.
- During induction, tutors identify learners' additional support needs and ensure that they benefit from individualised learning activities that meet their specific requirements. Tutors work closely with the parents and carers of learners with complex needs to enable them to make a smooth transition into their study programmes.
- Managers, tutors and assessors ensure that assessment practice is effective and meets awarding organisation requirements. Learners and apprentices receive frequent and helpful verbal feedback, enabling them to reflect on their achievements and make further improvements to their work and skills. Tutors provide effective written feedback to learners on study programmes and adults that helps them to improve their work and develop broader employability skills. However, assessors' written feedback to apprentices, particularly in their reviews, is not sufficiently precise and is sometimes too positive. Assessors do not identify how the apprentice could perform even better.
- Most employers help to plan apprenticeship and adult provision so that it matches closely to their specific needs. Apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers value. In adult provision in schools, employers ensure that the course for teaching assistants will prepare them to work effectively in their role on completion of the programme.
- Teachers use regular updates from managers very well to promote topics such as equality, fundamental British values and the 'Prevent' duty. Consequently, learners and apprentices demonstrate a good understanding of these themes; they show respect and work collaboratively with each other and their colleagues.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners and apprentices develop confidence and demonstrate pride in their work and appearance. Adult learners demonstrate high levels of commitment to their work and are highly motivated. Learners on study programmes wear uniforms that are appropriate to their vocational sector. Learners and apprentices demonstrate respect for themselves and others through effective discussion and teamwork.
- Most learners and apprentices produce work of a standard which is in line with, or better

than, that which is expected, given their time on the programme and their starting points.

- Attendance and punctuality are good. On study programmes attendance is high, and where authorised absence is high, for example at Landau Ltd, it is supported by evidence of medical appointments.
- Learners and apprentices develop behaviours that are appropriate to their roles or intended careers. Learners develop good team-working and decision-making skills that help them to be more effective in the workplace and in their personal lives. For example, at one provider, learners in security programmes worked in teams to plan and cost paper towers before building them. They worked well together with some learners emerging as confident leaders. However, assessors do not systematically record or assess personal skills and professional behaviours. As a result, learners are not able to state precisely how they have improved their professional behaviours, or how their behaviours link to their future careers.
- Learners use technical language and develop their speaking and listening skills well. Learners develop mathematical skills as they are needed on their courses. Learners and apprentices on functional skills courses develop their skills well, but learners who already have the English and mathematics qualifications that are needed to start a course do not continue to develop their skills. As a result, not all learners develop their English and mathematics skills at the rate at which they are capable.
- Apprentices achieve appropriate additional vocational qualifications that enhance their employment prospects. For example, apprentices on transportation operations and maintenance courses gain certificates in automotive and technical training. Apprentices on child development and well-being courses achieve certificates in infection control, nutrition and health, and safe handling of medicines.
- Managers ensure that learners and apprentices receive timely information, advice and guidance from well-qualified staff. They have access to impartial guidance prior to, and throughout, their course. Managers direct learners and apprentices appropriately to an impartial careers service. As a result, learners and apprentices stay on courses and the majority progress to employment and apprenticeships.
- Most learners have a good understanding of fundamental British values in the context of their vocational learning. For example, learners in childcare understand the importance of listening to children and their right to be heard. Learners and apprentices demonstrate respect and tolerance of others at work and listen to each other in group discussions.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The standard of most learners' work on apprenticeships, study programmes and adult programmes meets or exceeds that expected for the level of their course and the relevant industry. Learners can explain how they have developed vocational skills and what they have learned.
- Most learners complete their courses and achieve their qualifications.
- In 2016/17, the large majority of apprentices completed their apprenticeship qualification on or before the planned date. Apprentices' results were very strong for learners at Sutton Coldfield Training Ltd, Plato Training (UK) Ltd and Impact Training Solutions Ltd. However, outcomes were weak for a small minority of apprentices at Ability Professional

Training Ltd, and Ashley Hunter. Apprentices achieved well in retail, business administration, and health and social care sectors at level 3. Outcomes were lower for apprentices at level 2 in engineering and construction and need to improve.

- In 2016/17 most learners on study programmes achieved their qualifications within the planned dates. Most learners were on courses in engineering and manufacturing, health and social care, and employability skills. Outcomes improved significantly from 2015/16. However, too many learners who took functional skills mathematics and English at level 2 did not achieve the qualification. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities did not achieve as well as their peers.
- In 2016/17 most adult learners achieved their qualifications within the planned dates. Achievements for adults on pre-employment courses in engineering and manufacturing, employability, and construction were good. They were particularly strong at CPC Training Ltd, Construction Skills College Ltd and Mercury Training Services Ltd. The large majority of learners on advanced learning loans achieved their qualification in line with the planned end date.
- Learners are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training and employment. A high proportion of apprentices remain with their employer and almost half gain promotion or an additional responsibility. Around a quarter of apprentices progress to a higher apprenticeship level. A high proportion of learners on study programmes progress to apprenticeships. Job outcomes for adults on employability courses have improved; about a quarter of these learners progress immediately into employment. Learners on these courses are well prepared for employment.
- Across all provision types, the large majority of current learners are making strong progress from their starting points. They are developing appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, study programme learners at Swift ACI Ltd and Lean Engineering and Manufacturing Academy Ltd are making strong progress. Learners on advanced learner loans are making positive progress. Apprentices at Mercia Management Ltd and GTG Training Ltd are making positive progress. On study programmes, the actions of managers are narrowing the gap effectively between learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their peers.
- At a small minority of subcontractors, for example Mercury Training, apprentices are not making appropriate progress.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- BCTG currently has 38 learners on study programmes with five subcontractor partners. Learners are working towards qualifications in engineering, hairdressing, childcare, and preparation for work at entry level and level 1. Most learners are on short programmes of between eight to 12 weeks. A small number of learners are on programmes at Landau Ltd that last for 24 weeks. Many of these learners have complex needs.
- Managers have appropriately high expectations. They plan and manage study programmes well.
- The assessment of learners' starting points is thorough. Most tutors use this information

well to set individualised targets for learners. As a result, most learners make at least expected progress.

- Most tutors plan and deliver lessons well. They make good use of their industry experience to deepen learners' knowledge. They provide relevant examples to add points of interest and to extend learning. They use a good range of resources and activities to reinforce learning points, such as video clips and quizzes. As a result, most learners actively participate in lessons and enjoy their learning.
- Almost all study programme learners benefit from meaningful work experience placements that are closely matched to their career aspirations. They speak confidently about how their placements help them to develop their practical skills as well as increase their confidence in the workplace. At Landau Ltd learners with complex needs develop their work-related skills well on employability courses before going out on work placement. As a result, learners work well with colleagues in the workplace and progress quickly.
- Learners develop very good practical skills in well-resourced, industry-standard working environments. At Swift ACI Ltd, learners in childcare settings carefully plan activities, such as finger painting, that successfully support young children through the early stages of development. Learners gain valuable work-related skills that enable them to progress quickly in their chosen career. In a few cases, tutors do not challenge the most able learners sufficiently well. As a result, these learners do not always demonstrate the skills and knowledge of which they are capable.
- At Landau Ltd, staff provide a good level of support for learners with complex needs. They work closely with parents and carers to enable learners to make a smooth transition onto their study programmes. Learners value working in small groups. As a result, they gain significantly in confidence and work well in new situations.
- In most lessons, tutors use an effective range of methods to assess learning, such as role play and small-group activities. As a result, most learners make good progress. However, in a few cases, tutors do not use questioning techniques effectively. They do not routinely ensure that all learners understand new concepts or assess accurately their progress in the lesson. Consequently, it is not clear that all learners have fully understood learning points.
- Learners use technical language confidently. At Lean Engineering and Manufacturing Academy during group discussions engineering learners developed their speaking skills well. They spoke confidently about the risks associated with religious and political extremism. A small minority of vocational tutors do not develop or reinforce learners' English and mathematics skills effectively.
- Most learners are well prepared for progression to employment and higher levels of study. Learners receive useful careers advice and guidance throughout their programmes. Learners have good access to impartial specialist support, enabling them to complete a curriculum vitae and to successfully develop their interview skills in preparation for progression to employment. Most study programme learners speak confidently about their next steps. The large majority progress to employment or apprenticeships.
- Managers plan enrichment activities that are varied and effective. For example, learners benefit from well-planned sessions that promote the benefits of healthy lifestyles, illustrate the risks associated with alcohol and drug misuse, and explain how to manage

emotional health and stress. Learners develop their personal and social skills well.

- Learners say they feel safe and know how to report any concerns they may have. Learners work safely and understand the importance of wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment, such as safety boots and goggles in the engineering workshops, and wearing gloves when using chemicals in the salon.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- BCTG currently has 159 unemployed adults on short, pre-employment courses and 189 learners on advanced learner loans based in the workplace. BCTG provides the training directly for learners on advanced learner loans, and works with six subcontractor partners on the pre-employment courses. Pre-employment learners are working towards qualifications in employability skills, construction, warehousing, and security. Advanced learner loans learners are working towards level 3 and 4 qualifications in business administration and leadership, education and training, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and construction.
- Leaders ensure that adult programmes reflect the local and regional employment and skills priorities. Leaders work closely and creatively with subcontractors and employers to design courses that will lead to employment after training. These programmes are effective in providing employers with new employees who are ready to work. One subcontractor, Wolverhampton Homes Ltd, employs many learners from its employability programme in roles in construction, community work, and administration.
- BCTG and the subcontractors involve employers directly in the delivery of adult programmes. They work with employers to plan realistic work-based activities. In the best cases, employers are involved in the reviews of learners' progress. At Mercury Training Services Ltd, employers are involved effectively in the recruitment process following the completion of pre-employment courses. This motivates learners to perform at their best.
- Learners work hard to meet the high expectations set by BCTG and their subcontractors. Tutors expect high standards from learners in their workbooks and will seek additional answers to extend the most able. Tutors at Mercury Training Services Ltd prepare learners for the security industry. They create a learning environment that replicates the discipline of the sector, including uniforms, professional behaviours and high standards. As a result, learners are very well prepared for employment.
- Tutors at BCTG and their subcontractors, use their technical knowledge and understanding of the industry well. They act as role models and ensure that all adult learners gain appropriate occupational knowledge and skills.
- All tutors and assessors on the adult programmes provide thoughtful and sensitive personal support for learners to enable them to manage and overcome barriers to progress. For example, tutors supported an ex-offender to come to terms with the difficult transition back into training and the competitive nature of the labour market. He has now achieved his first qualification and is soon to start on a further qualification which is highly valued in the job market.
- Tutors assess adult learners' starting points effectively at the beginning of their learning programmes and re-assess them at times within the course. Assessors and tutors develop an accurate appreciation of learners' abilities and learning needs. They use this

information well to provide individualised tuition and support. At Wolverhampton Homes Ltd additional one-to-one support improved learners' understanding of digital skills and written English.

- Learners on advanced learner loans courses review their skill levels and behaviours effectively. Tutors support them to develop a clear picture of areas they can improve further. For example, an assessor encouraged a construction learner to start to reflect on his interpersonal and communication skills as he prepared for a supervisor course. Through reflection on their progress, learners become more effective independent learners. As a result, they learn more swiftly and sustain their learning in their future careers.
- Tutors and assessors provide effective, regular and detailed feedback on adult learners' practical and written work. Learners know how to improve their knowledge, behaviours and skills further.
- Staff include the importance of equality and the value of diversity into learners' programmes. Assessors use reviews well to start conversations about current news topics with advanced learner loan learners. For example, in a progress review the assessor introduced the idea of tolerance by talking with the learner about the impact of locating the football World Cup in Russia.
- Most tutors are effective in integrating the development of English and mathematics skills into their subject. In an employability workshop helping learners to improve their job search skills, a tutor very effectively included calculations about how long employers spend examining applications. As well as testing mathematical skills, this served to highlight the importance of clearly presented applications. A minority of tutors do not extend the learners' skill development in mathematics and English; learners are not clearly directed ways in which they could develop these skills further.

Apprenticeships

Good

- Currently BCTG has 2,893 apprentices in learning, in seven subject areas, of which a quarter are aged 16 to 18. A third of apprentices are on level 2, a half on level 3, and around a fifth on Level 4 or 5 (higher) apprenticeship programmes. The largest number of apprentices are in the health and social care sector, followed by business administration, with a significant minority in engineering and construction. Some two thirds of the current cohort have the required qualifications in English and mathematics on entry into apprenticeships.
- BCTG is working with 82 levy-paying employers to date, of which 43 are local authorities. The new standards are being delivered in five subject areas to 327 apprentices by seven subcontractors. Subcontractors are delivering standards in adult social care, information and communication technology, customer service, accounting, and business leadership.
- Staff providing training and assessment are knowledgeable and experienced. They use coaching and professional discussion very effectively. Most of them have teaching and assessor qualifications. They use their expertise well to provide teaching and support that enable learners to make good progress, consolidate their learning and deepen their knowledge and understanding. For example, a highly knowledgeable tutor at Floorskills Ltd carefully explained the intricacies of laying floors in wet rooms. Apprentices learned

tips on how to get the job right first time to reduce wastage, save time and enhance their reputation as professionals providing a high-quality service to customers.

- Apprentices benefit from carefully planned practical sessions that develop their technical skills to high levels. For example, engineering apprentices at Lean Engineering and Manufacturing Academy read drawings accurately. They use their machines to turn tools competently and confidently to manufacture an air-pump for leading brands in the automotive industry.
- Apprentices develop good vocational skills. The standard of their work and services they provide are appropriate and often high. Apprentices become competent workers and provide services in employment sectors that experience skill shortages, such as early years care, health and social care and business administration. Their employers value the skills of the apprentices as well as their enthusiasm for their trades. For example, apprentices working with a national car dealership, on a level 2 bus and coach body repair programme, learned to use correctly inert gas and multi-active gas to weld components of a car to high and precise standards. Apprentices on early years care courses are skilled at preparing activities for their own key group. They use their knowledge of child development to ensure that all children are developing according to their age and ability.
- Apprentices understand their employers' businesses well and talk knowledgeably about their job roles. At LMPQ Ltd, apprentices in information technology have developed knowledge and understanding that employers value. Apprentices use their initiative and knowledge well to manage their own caseload with little direct supervision. For example, an apprentice has made a huge impact in reducing the number of tasks outstanding at an information technology (IT) helpdesk. This has resulted in the way managers allocate IT jobs at other centres. Health and social care apprentices provide effective care to residents in care homes on a regular basis. Apprentices develop a good rapport with the residents, remain at work and progress in their job roles. This has reduced staff turnover and contributed to the welfare of the residents in care homes: residents enjoy the care and attention from a stable workforce.
- Achievement of qualifications, including within the planned period, has improved well and is currently above national rates. More apprentices compared to the previous year have stayed on their programmes and completed their training successfully. Almost all apprentices stay in employment following their training. Inspectors saw many excellent case studies of apprentices achieving high positions, gaining higher level skills and progressing further in their job roles.
- Assessors set apprentices targets to achieve units of qualification during progress reviews; this helps apprentices complete their qualifications within the planned period. However, assessors set too few targets to develop the wider skills and behaviours that are so important for the progression of apprentices in their careers. For example, they do not provide apprentices with targets or ways to increase their resilience when they receive critical feedback.
- Verbal feedback from assessors is effective in helping apprentices to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding. However, assessors' written feedback on learners' work is not sufficiently critical, evaluative or developmental. In a minority of cases, it is purely positive recognition of the apprentice achieving competence in a skill. This does not support apprentices' understanding of what they need to improve further. Assessors do not provide sufficiently clear guidance to apprentices following standards on how to

achieve higher grades.

- Staff conduct routine early assessments to identify gaps in apprentices' skills in English and mathematics. Assessors direct apprentices to online learning materials to fill these gaps. Staff, however, do not reinforce or develop these skills effectively in the workplace. Staff do not extend these skills for apprentices who already have the required qualifications in English and mathematics to achieve the apprenticeship.
- Apprenticeship programmes are planned well and fully meet the relevant requirements at all subcontractors, including for off-the-job training. Subcontractors such as Accountancy Learning Ltd and Floorskills Ltd have effective systems where staff and managers work closely with the employers and apprentices to record off-the-job training appropriately in learner records.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50729
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	10,618
Principal/CEO	Mr Chris Luty
Telephone number	0121 544 6455
Website	www.bctg.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+
	33	75	4	85	0	178	0	11
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	430	488	292	1,154	3	526		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Accountancy Learning Ltd Avidity Training Ltd Constructions Skills College Ltd CPC Training Consultants Ltd E-Training Ltd Eurosource Solutions Ltd Floorskills Ltd Further Training Ltd							

Global Training Ltd
GTG Training Ltd
Impact Training Solutions Ltd
Landau Ltd
Lean Engineering and Manufacturing Academy Ltd
Learnplay Foundation Ltd
LMPQ Ltd
Mercia Management Ltd
Mercury Training Services Ltd
NSPP Vocational Training Ltd
Peter Pyne (Training School) Ltd
Plato Training (UK) Ltd
Profit from Training Partnership Ltd
Solveaway Ltd
Sutton Coldfield Training Ltd
Swift ACI Ltd
Sandwell Community Caring Trust
Watertrain Ltd
Wolverhampton Homes Ltd

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls, a webinar 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

Martin Ward, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
William Baidoe-Ansah	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Deane	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rob Mottram	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Bealey	Ofsted Inspector
Harmesh Manghra	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graham Cunningham	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Fobister	Ofsted Inspector
Steven Sharpe	Ofsted Inspector

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Employer View

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