

Inspection of CIPS Corporate Services Limited

Inspection dates:

12 to 15 August 2025

Overall effectiveness**Good**

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Information about this provider

The Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) is the leading international membership body for procurement and supply professionals. CIPS Corporate Services Limited provides professional training courses for members and began training apprentices in November 2018. It currently trains 479 apprentices. At the time of the inspection, there were 398 apprentices on the level 4 procurement and supply chain practitioner standard and 81 on the level 3 procurement and supply assistant standard. Forty-two apprentices were under 19 years of age and 48 had an additional learning need. Most teaching takes place online, although a few apprentices are taught face to face at their employer's premises.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

The vast majority of apprentices are very satisfied with the training that they receive. They find lessons to be well organised and teaching to be clear, although a few would like shorter, more frequent lessons. Apprentices are keen to learn and are proud of their achievements.

Most apprentices develop their knowledge and skills well. Tutors help them to grow in confidence and resilience. Apprentices develop workplace traits, such as respect and tolerance. This helps to prepare them well for their careers. To date, all apprentices have remained with their employers after completing their studies, and more than half have secured promotions.

CIPS staff mostly work well with apprentices' managers to ensure that apprentices have ample opportunities to practise using their new knowledge and skills. Most employers participate well in progress reviews and provide apprentices with effective on-the-job support.

Apprentices feel safe. They are confident that staff will deal with any concerns they may have.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a very clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the procurement and supply profession. While the apprenticeships are designed around the professional examinations, managers and tutors successfully link the content of these qualifications to the apprenticeship standards and the needs of the profession.

Tutors plan their teaching well. They organise modules in a sequence that reflects the stages of the procurement and supply process. Each module builds on the preceding one, and apprentices quickly become useful to their employers. Tutors organise material in each module well. For example, in the level 4 supplier relationships module, they teach apprentices about the dynamics of relationships in supply chains followed by processes and procedures for working successfully with stakeholders and the concept of partnering.

Tutors make sensible adjustments to support learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They take account of any needs that apprentices declare and make suitable use of assessment tools to identify any learning difficulties of which apprentices are unaware. They use this information to plan useful support for apprentices.

Tutors use their expert knowledge and professional experience well to help them explain key concepts. They make effective use of real-world examples that bring their explanations to life. They make clear links to previous topics, facilitate useful discussions and use probing questions that challenge apprentices to think hard.

They provide apprentices with useful additional resources that help them to consolidate their learning.

Tutors set suitably challenging tasks for apprentices to complete in their workplaces. Coaches use their expertise well to help apprentices understand how to apply theoretical knowledge in their roles. Staff mark work carefully and ensure that apprentices make improvements. Most apprentices develop their knowledge and expertise well as a result. However, a few apprentices struggle, and managers and tutors do not consistently provide them with enough personalised support.

The proportion of successful apprentices has steadily increased, particularly at level 4. However, it remains too low for level 3 apprentices. In some cases, apprentices leave after taking their professional examinations and do not complete the apprenticeship. Recent changes to the standards mean that they can no longer gain their professional qualifications without finishing the apprenticeship. At both levels, a high proportion of apprentices gain distinction grades.

Apprentices' attendance to lessons could be improved. Staff record attendance and punctuality assiduously. They take suitable action when apprentices fail to attend or are late. They contact employers and provide apprentices with 'missed learning plans' to ensure that apprentices catch up on missed work.

Tutors provide apprentices with industry-specific careers resources, and coaches discuss career progression during progress reviews. However, this is not consistent, and a few apprentices are unaware of the full range of training and employment options available to them on completion.

Leaders have high expectations for the quality of their provision. Their quality assurance arrangements are mostly effective and, as a result, leaders are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their apprenticeships. They implement suitable improvement actions to tackle weaknesses. They have effective oversight of the subcontractor that provides English and mathematics functional skills training for a very small number of apprentices.

Governors understand sector needs and work closely with leaders to explore challenges, such as retention and pass rates. Governors challenge managers well over the effectiveness of improvement actions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Provide additional training and support to those apprentices who struggle so that more of them complete their studies and achieve their apprenticeship, especially at level 3.
- Improve apprentices' attendance to lessons.
- Provide effective careers information, advice and guidance to all apprentices.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2539288
Address	WestPoint Lynch Wood Peterborough PE2 6FZ
Contact number	01780 461480
Website	www.cips.org
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Zoe Kadi
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	28 to 31 March 2023
Main subcontractors	Runway Apprenticeships Limited

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of teaching, learning and quality as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Russ Henry, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Biddulph	His Majesty's Inspector
Patricia Rogers	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Helkenberg	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Greenhalgh	Ofsted Inspector
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