

Inspection of Cips Corporate Services Limited

Inspection dates:

28 to 31 March 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

CIPS Corporate Services Limited (CIPS) was awarded a contract to provide levy-funded apprenticeships in January 2018. It began enrolling apprentices in November 2018. It currently has 337 apprentices in learning. There are 320 apprentices on the level 4 commercial procurement and supply apprenticeship standard. There are 17 apprentices on the level 3 procurement & supply assistant apprenticeship standard. The vast majority of apprentices are adults. There are no apprentices in receipt of high-needs funding. CIPS works with one subcontractor that provides functional skills English and mathematics training on its behalf.

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

Too many apprentices do not gain substantial new knowledge or skills beyond completion of the diploma qualification. The current curriculum is too narrowly focused on apprentices preparing for their exams and therefore does not give them a broad and rich learning experience.

Most apprentices are positive about their experience in the workplace, and their relationship with their workplace mentors and tutors. Apprentices develop good levels of confidence and resilience in the workplace. Many gain promotion on completion of their course.

Apprentices receive training from very experienced and vocationally competent tutors. Tutors use their knowledge of procurement well to teach and support apprentices to develop the knowledge they need to pass their exams.

The large majority of apprentices value the high-quality learning resources and online teaching sessions. They feel they would benefit from more regular teaching and support from their tutors to help them prepare more effectively for their exams.

Too many apprentices do not benefit from appropriate ongoing impartial careers advice. Very few apprentices have a sufficient understanding of the opportunities available to them in the wider employment market.

Apprentices feel safe at work and in their online training sessions. They feel assured to report safeguarding and welfare issues to their tutors. They feel confident that staff will deal with their concerns promptly.

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

Tutors do not plan and teach a curriculum that is sufficiently ambitious or broad enough. Tutors have designed a course that relies heavily on apprentices' self-study. Apprentices receive sufficient off-the-job training but would benefit from more teaching to support them to make rapid progress to learn the knowledge content of the curriculum.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the procurement sector. They understand the local, regional and national procurement needs across a wide variety of different organisations. Leaders actively work with employers and other key stakeholders to develop and make purposeful changes to the new procurement apprenticeship standards.

In the previous academic year, too many apprentices left their course too early. Leaders accurately identified that apprentices leave the course once they have achieved their procurement diploma. Leaders have taken active steps to ensure that apprentices and employers understand the full commitment to complete the whole

apprenticeship and not just the diploma qualification. In the current year, very few apprentices have left the course early.

Leaders do not ensure that tutors provide consistent support for apprentices with additional learning needs such as dyslexia or other forms of neurodiversity. Tutors do not provide appropriate strategies to support these apprentices. Leaders do not provide suitable training for staff, so that they understand how to effectively identify and support apprentices with these needs. As a result, these apprentices make slow progress compared to their peers. Leaders have recently appointed specialist staff to focus on staff training and support for apprentices with additional needs. It is too early to see any impact of these actions.

Tutors are all very experienced practitioners in the procurement sector and are knowledgeable about the topics they teach. They have relevant industry standard qualifications at a high level. Apprentices benefit from the professional experience and knowledge of their tutors, who use relevant examples from the industry to explain key concepts.

Tutors do not consistently check learning before moving on to the next topic. Consequently, many apprentices remain unclear about what they are learning and rely on self-study to deepen their understanding of the topic content.

Tutors at the subcontractor teach well-planned functional skills English and mathematics sessions. They provide good-quality resources and activities in sessions that encourage apprentices to participate and develop their skills. Apprentices become confident in applying their mathematics skills when learning about cost management and budgets. They understand how to use this information to negotiate costs with suppliers in order to save money and get the best return on their company's investment in the most efficient way.

Leaders have not developed a coherent and comprehensive personal development curriculum for apprentices. Apprentices do not receive planned and purposeful sessions in order to develop their personal skills and understanding of British values. Additionally, apprentices do not receive effective ongoing careers information, advice and guidance. They do not understand the range of opportunities available to them in the wider employment market.

Tutors set clear expectations for attendance and conduct. In most cases, attendance at online sessions is good. Tutors promote a positive culture for learning and create a professional learning environment in their online workshops. Most apprentices have good attitudes towards their studies and are motivated to complete their procurement diploma.

Tutors do not ensure that apprentices are prepared early enough for their final assessment. For example, tutors do not effectively develop the ability of apprentices to undertake presentations or to write extended pieces of work. Tutors leave the preparation and planning for the final assessment to the very end of the course. In

the previous academic year, too many apprentices did not successfully complete their apprenticeship.

Leaders do not have effective oversight of their performance data. Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken active steps to implement new systems to accurately collect and evaluate their data on retention, achievement and attendance. However, this still remains underdeveloped. They are not yet able to use this information to improve quality or share good practice.

Leaders have recently introduced a new governance panel. Governors do not yet have sufficient oversight of weaknesses across the entire curriculum, such as the lack of a broad and rich procurement apprenticeship curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a suitably trained designated safeguarding lead and deputy in place. Safeguarding and welfare concerns are accurately recorded. Apprentices receive relevant support or are signposted to relevant agencies if needed.

Tutors ensure that apprentices are clear about the person to whom they can report their safeguarding and welfare concerns. As result, apprentices are clear about the different types of safeguarding support and guidance available.

Leaders introduce apprentices to the risk of radicalisation and extremism as part of their induction process, but this is not purposefully revisited or discussed. As a result, apprentices' understanding of these risks are underdeveloped.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders need to provide a broad and rich curriculum that extends learning beyond the preparation for the procurement diploma exams. They must provide more frequent teaching to help apprentices broaden their understanding of procurement and retain knowledge in their long-term memory.
- Leaders must provide training for tutors so they can provide effective support to apprentices with additional learning needs.
- Leaders must develop and implement a comprehensive personal development curriculum for apprentices. They need to ensure that apprentices receive effective careers education, information, advice and guidance so they understand the range of opportunities available to them in the wider employment market.
- Leaders must improve their oversight of their performance data. They must ensure that they have enough data to accurately evaluate the effectiveness of the provision and support managers to provide rapid intervention to improve performance over time.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2539288
Address	Easton House Easton on the Hill Stamford PE9 3NZ
Contact number	01780 761 498
Website	www.cips.org
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Malcolm Harrison
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Runway Apprenticeships Limited

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of apprenticeships, 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

Michael Worgs, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ann Minton	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Martin	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Blowman	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Loxton	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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