

External review of Modern Apprenticeship delivery by

Cairellot Learning Centre Limited

A report by HM Inspectors

15/08/2023

CEO/Principal	Rosemary Elliot
External review date	27th June 2023
Provider type	Independent Training Provider
Lead HMI	Barbara Nelson
Apprentice numbers	18

1. Background

External reviews of Modern Apprenticeship providers are planned collaboratively between the provider and HM Inspectors. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) provide information regarding provider performance including key data to support this process.

During the review, a team of HM Inspectors evaluated the quality of training provision and the experiences of apprentices and key stakeholders such as employers. During the visit, the team met with staff, learners and other stakeholders and explored the quality of training delivery, how well the needs of apprentices are met, and approaches to improving quality of provision.

This report summarises the findings from the visit, award grades for the three elements and highlights areas of positive practice, areas for development, and any associated main points for action. The report will be shared with the provider, Scottish Government, and SDS. For colleges, the report will be shared with the College Principals and Board or Regional Strategic Body, and SFC. An accompanying short report will be published on Education Scotland's website.

2. The provider and its context

Cairellot Learning Centre is a specialist private training provider within the Early Learning and Childcare sector. The centre provides training and qualifications to people working in the Early Learning, Childcare, and School care sectors. They work with various local authorities, private and partnership nurseries, childminders, support workers, childcare practitioners and lead practitioners. They have been established in training for over 25 years, offering a range of entry-level and CPD programmes. They are a registered centre for delivering Modern Apprenticeships in Childcare. The team is composed of five assessors who are qualified internal verifiers too.

3. Outcome of external review

The grades for each of the three elements are:

Leadership and Quality Culture	Good
Service Delivery	Very Good
Safeguarding and meeting the needs of apprentices	Good

4. Summary of review findings

A summary of the findings of HM Inspectors are set out below.

4.1 Leadership and Quality Culture - Grade: Good

4.1.1 Securing improvement of quality and impact of training

Areas of positive progress

- Learning centre staff work well as a team and demonstrate a culture of reflection and evaluation. They work collaboratively to identify areas for growth in provision and implement changes that benefit apprentices.
- The management team has undertaken data analysis to identify areas of concern, focusing on enhancing achievement. This enables them to agree on appropriate priorities and support staff and candidates to work together to improve outcomes for apprentices. However, it is currently too early to measure the impact of these interventions.
- Almost all employers are positive about their relationships with learning centre staff. They are satisfied with the training provided and the progress apprentices are making in enhancing their skills, which prepares apprentices well for their chosen careers.
- Centre staff communicate with employers to provide updates on apprentice progress. Regular reports are provided to ensure employers are aware of assessment arrangements and can play an active role in developing their apprentices' knowledge, skills, and behaviours.
- The management team values the role of mentors in helping apprentices develop their knowledge and skills. Learning centre staff provide development opportunities for mentors to help them better understand their responsibilities and how to support their apprentices effectively.
- Staff contact apprentices who withdraw from their programme and offer them the opportunity to complete their award. This approach ensures that all apprentices can achieve the qualification.

Areas for development

- Employers and apprentices have limited opportunities to participate in evaluation to enhance and improve the programmes.

4.2 Service Delivery - Grade: Very Good

4.2.1 Delivery of training

Areas of positive progress

- Assessors and Internal Verifiers (IVs) participate in peer observations to help develop their assessment practice and pedagogy. This helps ensure ongoing application of professional knowledge and skills to support training delivery.
- Almost all apprentices have a positive training experience with their assessors. They describe their working relationship as supportive and helpful. Assessors communicate clearly the progress they are making and provide practical guidance for further work.
- Almost all apprentices confirm that the MA programme has enabled them to grow in confidence. Apprentices acknowledge that their training has equipped them with the knowledge and skills required for their job role.
- Almost all apprentices receive a one-to-one induction, which prepares them well for their MA programme. Apprentices clearly understand what their programme involves and the activities they will be required to complete.
- Apprentices are supported well to reflect on and learn from their workplace experiences. Assessors actively encourage apprentices to lead their learning using a variety of resources, including apps, websites, and centre-devised workbooks.
- Upon completion of their award, apprentices will achieve a qualification that is recognised by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSC). As a result, apprentices can register as a Practitioner in Day Care of Children's Services.
- Cairellot staff attend events to promote the MA programme to potential candidates interested in the childcare sector. These events provide a platform to showcase the range of available career opportunities and effectively encourage more people to consider pursuing a career in childcare.
- Almost all employers confirm that programmes meet their needs effectively and add value to their business. Employers report apprentices are more dedicated to their roles when compared to those who enter employment via other routes.
- Apprentices are supported well on their programme and know who to contact should they have any wellbeing issues or concerns. Where these are raised, assessors and managers provide tailored support and signpost specialist support services.

Areas for development

- Arrangements for staff to gather and use programme feedback is not yet systematic or comprehensive.

4.2.2 Staff reflection on provision to improve training

Areas of positive progress

- Assessors and IVs complete 16 hours of work experience each month within a nursery setting. This ensures they remain occupationally competent and conversant with industry standards and practices.
- Assessors and IVs participate in standardisation and internal verification activities. This ensures that assessment and verification arrangements are managed effectively, and quality concerns are identified to support actions for improvement.
- Apprentices are active participants in the design of their programmes. Assessors encourage apprentices to choose optional units that align with their career aspirations and meet the needs of their employer. This empowers apprentices to take responsibility for their development and feel valued as team members.
- Quality assurance processes and systems are in place, and these help assessors and IVs understand standardisation and delivery requirements. This ensures that assessors meet the required awarding body standards and provide the best possible apprentice outcomes.
- Employers report high confidence in centre staff and their ability to develop the skills required for their apprentices. They value the partnership approach and recognise the need to work closely with Cairellot to address national staff shortages.

Areas for development

- There are inconsistencies in the way that employers are recruiting apprentices.

4.3 Safeguarding and meeting the needs of apprentices - Grade: Good

4.3.1 Achieving and maintaining high levels of service delivery

Areas of positive progress

- The number of female apprentices, apprentices with a disability and care-experienced apprentices are all above the sector norm.
- Assessors conduct formal progress review meetings every 12 weeks to discuss apprentice progress. This approach ensures employers and apprentices have a shared understanding of the progress being made against the apprenticeship framework.
- Assessors maintain open and frequent communication with employers regarding their apprentice's progress. This supports apprentice progression and helps identify where extra support would be beneficial or improvement is required.
- Learning centre staff schedule drop-in sessions, where apprentices come together and participate in professional dialogue and shared learning opportunities. These sessions help expand apprentices' knowledge in a supportive and collaborative environment.
- Almost all apprentices who complete their MA programme gain employment.

- Assessors and IVs work well with employers to ensure high-quality provision, with a clear focus on developing apprentices' skills, knowledge, and the attributes required to maximise their career aspirations.

Areas for development

- The total successful completer/leaver ratio for the last three years has declined and is below the national SDS benchmark of 75%.

4.3.2 Adherence to statutory principles and guidance

Areas of positive progress

- Staff ensure that appropriate risk assessment arrangements are in place for apprentices who are enrolled on the MA programmes.
- All assessors are protection vulnerable group (PVG) registered. Staff members have all completed relevant safeguarding training, and they are confident in their roles.
- Staff implement health and safety policies and procedures effectively. Apprentices understand their role in relation to health and safety. These arrangements are explained at induction and reinforced by assessors during one-to-one sessions and progress reviews.
- All employers complete an SQA's site selection checklist which ensures the environment is safe and appropriate for assessing the award. This confirms adherence to health and safety, legal and insurance requirements.
- Assessors understand well the requirements of equality and diversity procedures and policies. They signpost these effectively at induction to apprentices and are proactive in ensuring they are promoted as part of the MA programme.
- All apprentices undertake learning in relation to health and safety as part of their apprenticeship. This enhances their understanding of the regulations and legislative requirements for a safe and secure workplace.

Areas for development

- There are no formal opportunities for staff managing safeguarding issues to discuss the emotional impact of handling these incidents.

4.3.3 Apprentice progress and achievement of individual outcomes

Areas of positive progress

- Assessors are flexible in terms of working hours and locations, which benefits both apprentices and employers. This approach enables apprentices to manage their work patterns effectively and work towards achieving their goals.
- Assessors discuss the relevance and range of unit options with apprentices. These conversations ensure units align with the employer's job specification requirements and apprentices experience learning that matches their career aspirations.

- Progression pathways are clearly signposted. Apprentices are aware that the qualification they attain is nationally recognised, which supports them in planning for progression to employment or further study.
- Cairellot staff supports nurseries well in recruiting apprentices. This helps employers find candidates with the qualities, skills, and motivation needed to succeed. This is helping to address staff retention challenges in the sector.
- Most apprentices have the opportunity to participate in industry-relevant training alongside their MA programme. Professional learning opportunities help build apprentices' confidence and competence.
- All apprentices have the option to choose either a paper-based or online portfolio. This allows apprentices to use a platform that best suits their learning styles and preferences. Cairellot induction arrangements are delivered collaboratively between the apprentice, employer, and assessor. During this stage, core skills that the apprentice has previously achieved are evaluated based on the evidence from their SQA certification.

Areas for development

- The development and monitoring of apprentice meta-skills are not yet fully embedded within the delivery of the MA programme.

5. Main points for action

The following main points for action are required:

- The provider should ensure that self-evaluation outcomes underpin ongoing action-planning tools for improvement.
- The centre should take immediate action to improve attainment rates.

6. Examples of highly effective practice

- There are no examples of highly effective practice.

7. What happens next?

HM Inspectors identified that the provider has the capacity to improve further the areas of important strength. However, action is required to address the identified areas for improvement. We will ask for a report on progress to be provided to the HM Inspector within agreed timescales. Taking account of the progress report, we will then decide what further engagement with the provider may be required.

Barbara Nelson
HM Inspector

Appendix 1 Grades used in reporting

A common grading scale is used in making judgements for provider reviews:

- Grade 1 EXCELLENT – Outstanding and sector leading
- Grade 2 VERY GOOD – Major strengths
- Grade 3 GOOD – Important strengths with some areas for improvement
- Grade 4 SATISFACTORY - Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
- Grade 5 WEAK – Important weaknesses
- Grade 6 UNSATISFACTORY – Major weaknesses

Summary

- An evaluation of **excellent** applies to training which is of a very high quality. An evaluation of *excellent* represents an outstanding standard of training which exemplifies very best practice and is worth disseminating beyond the current provision. It implies that very high-levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.
- An evaluation of **very good** applies to training characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish apprentices' experiences. While an evaluation of *very good* represents a high standard of training, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to provide training without significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the provider will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.
- An evaluation of **good** applies to training characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh any areas for improvement. An evaluation of *good* represents a standard of training in which the strengths have a significant positive impact. However, the quality of apprentices' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the provider should seek to improve further the areas of important strength but take action to address the areas for improvement.
- An evaluation of **satisfactory** applies to training characterised by strengths which just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of *satisfactory* indicates that apprentices' have access to a basic level of training. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on apprentices' experiences. However, while the weaknesses will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of apprentices' experiences. It implies that the provider should take action to address areas of weakness while building on its strengths.
- An evaluation of **weak** applies to training which has some strengths, but where there are important weaknesses. In general, an evaluation of *weak* may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strengths, the important weaknesses will, either individually or collectively, be sufficient to diminish apprentices' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the provider.
- An evaluation of **unsatisfactory** applies when there are major weaknesses in training, requiring immediate remedial action. The training experience for apprentices is at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, staff responsible for training evaluated as unsatisfactory will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside other staff or agencies in or beyond the immediate support given by the provider.

Appendix 2 Evaluative Terms

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.