

Babington Business College Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		02 – 06 March 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- the large majority of apprentices achieve their frameworks
- the arrangements for traineeships have much improved and the programme is now well planned and prepares trainees for the next steps in their education or employment well
- the provision in accounting and finance is outstanding and many apprentices progress to higher levels of learning and more responsible roles with their employers
- learners receive good support to develop vocational and English and mathematics skills to a good standard in most subject areas
- teaching, learning and assessment are good across all programmes with examples of outstanding teaching
- learners benefit from good quality information, advice and guidance enabling them to make well-informed course and progression choices
- programmes meet the needs of the employers, learners and employment sectors exceptionally well; managers and staff are particularly good at identifying skills shortages and respond by establishing additional provision promptly
- leaders, managers and staff set high expectations for learners' achievement and are successful in raising learners' aspirations
- managers deal with under-performance swiftly and ensure staff are well trained in order to provide a good-quality experience for learners.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- managers' monitoring of progression to further learning and employment is insufficient for them to assess the impact of all programmes
- the promotion of equality and diversity and managers' monitoring of participation data are not sufficient across all programme areas
- a small minority of learners do not gain their apprenticeship and too many learners do not do so within the planned duration of their programme.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Develop further the skills of subject training advisors in the teaching and assessment of both English and mathematics in order to improve success rates within the planned duration of apprenticeship programmes.
- Develop e-learning resources in subject areas where these are not well established so that all learners benefit from opportunities to undertake independent study.
- Share good practice of the outstanding aspects of the provision so that best practice can be adopted by all subject areas.
- Extend to all programme areas a system to monitor the progression of learners completing their programmes so that managers can accurately assess the impact of programmes on learners' career aspirations.
- Ensure that equality and diversity are well promoted in all subjects to enable learners to work sensitively with clients from a range of ethnically diverse groups. Undertake stronger analysis and set key indicators and improvement targets for the participation and performance of ethnically diverse groups.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Babington Business College (BBC) provision comprises apprenticeships, traineeships, workplace, and classroom-based provision. Apprenticeship programmes in eight subject areas account for approximately three quarters of the provision. Just under half of the apprentices are undertaking accounting and finance frameworks. Traineeships account for approximately 13% of provision.
- The large majority of apprentices achieve their frameworks within the planned duration of their programme at rates well above the overall national rates for similar providers. In accounting and finance, framework success is very high, but there are small pockets of weak performance in other framework subject areas, particularly for apprentices aged 16 to 18 and in subject areas with small numbers of learners.
- Performance in traineeships has rapidly improved in 2014/15, and these learners achieve well. The provider has re-structured the programme offer particularly effectively; most learners achieve their learning aims and progress to employment, further education or apprenticeship programmes. They acquire valuable work-place skills through well-organised work-experience, which prepares them well for their next steps in education or employment.
- The large majority of learners are making good progress across all programme areas. Managers undertake careful monitoring of learners' progress and intervene swiftly when they are not making the progress expected of them.
- Learners' work is often of good or better quality, demonstrating good skill development in the technical aspects of their programmes, particularly in accounting and finance. Staff raise learners' aspirations and support them well.
- Male and female learners and people with disabilities achieve equally well but learners from Caribbean and Pakistani heritage do not perform as well. During 2013/14, apprentices aged 16 to 18 in administration and older apprentices did not have the same high levels of success as other groups of apprentices.
- Apprentices are developing very good vocational skills, which are enabling them to perform well in their job roles and undertake higher levels of responsibility. Apprentices in health and social

care work in a variety of care settings enabling them to develop skills in very challenging environments. Apprentices in accounting and financial services achieve high first-time pass rates in their examinations and many progress to higher levels of learning.

- In most subject areas learners are developing their English and mathematics skills well. Managers have improved this aspect of provision and pass rates in functional skills for apprentices are high. The re-structured traineeship programme is integrating and individualising the development of English and mathematics well within the overall programme.
- Progression rates to further learning or employment in accounting and finance are good, but are much lower in other subject areas.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in the consistently good outcomes. Most learners benefit from high levels of support from experienced training advisors and industry-standard assessors who use their commercial experience well. Their expectations are high and this motivates and inspires learners to do better and make good progress.
- Learners on traineeships benefit from enthusiastic employers, high-quality work placements and improving employability skills. They improve their skills in communication and teamwork. Most employers are actively involved in the design of the programme that is delivered in the workplace by BBC training advisors. Many offer additional job specific training, such as call-centre telephone techniques, that helps learners to become more employable.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding in accounting and financial services, where there is a strong ethos of independent learning and personal development. Most lessons are planned well and training advisors use a wide range of particularly effective, interesting and responsive teaching strategies. For example, they provide a variety of work-related learning activities that develop well learners' knowledge and understanding. As a result, learners actively participate in the lessons and progress well. In financial services, training advisors use effective questioning techniques to check understanding and as a result apprentices make excellent progress. However, in the less effective lessons, for example, in administration, the pace is too fast, with little time for reflection or explanation of the technical terms used. In a few health and social care lessons, the challenge for learners who are more able and ambitious to progress quickly is insufficient.
- 'Babington Online', BBC's virtual learning environment, has excellent finance and accounting learning materials that include pre-recorded lectures, interactive videos and a chat room facility for training advisors and apprentices. Learners use this well to develop independent learning skills. However, learning resources for administration and health and social care learners are limited.
- Learners benefit from good information, advice and guidance that have much improved for learners aged 16 to 18, particularly at the beginning of their programmes. BBC holds open advice evenings for potential apprentices and their parents on employers' premises. This ensures that the programme meets learners' needs and aspirations and enables them to make informed choices about future career opportunities.
- Initial assessment of learners' prior knowledge and experience is thorough. Additional learning support arrangements are good. A small specialist functional skills team provides good support for those needing additional help with English and mathematics.
- Workplace assessments are mostly frequent. Training advisors plan these well and monitor learners' progress rigorously in the achievement of the NVQ component of the framework. Assessors use their sector-specific knowledge very well to challenge apprentices to achieve their frameworks in time. They use a good range of assessment methods such as professional discussions, voice recordings and observations to complement written assessment. Most

learners use their e-portfolios well to record their evidence so that tutors and learners can monitor progress. Tutors provide constructive and developmental feedback to learners in good time, so that they can make further improvements to their work.

- The well-planned progress reviews are frequent and effective. Short- and long-term targets and constructive feedback ensure that apprentices improve their skills and knowledge to progress through their qualifications. Employers are fully aware of the learners' progress as they contribute fully to most reviews and monitor their progress well.
- The development and promotion of vocational English and mathematics are good and have improved. Finance and accounting learners hone their skills in English and mathematics very well alongside their technical skills to progress in their chosen career. However, administration learners do not receive a level of support beyond the minimum level required by their framework. Health and social care learners do not develop their mathematics skills well, which is hindering their progress.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is improving but not yet good in all vocational areas. For example, apprentices in business and accounting have high levels of understanding of cultural and linguistic diversity that they use to develop a culturally sensitive approach to working with customers. Learners in health and social care do not develop a sufficiently deep level of understanding to deal sensitively with clients from diverse groups.

Health and social care

Apprenticeships

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care are good because:

- the large majority of intermediate apprentices achieve their frameworks and acquire good-quality care industry skills
- training advisors have good industry-standard experience; they use this particularly effectively to teach and assess learners to develop high levels of person-centred caring skills and good knowledge of the care sector
- training advisors use well-developed coaching skills to develop apprentices' confidence and communication skills; this benefits service users, such as those with dementia
- learners gain excellent experience of working in a broad spectrum of care settings; the development within areas such as dementia care and working with homeless people enables learners to aspire to specialist areas such as social work, nursing and counselling
- training advisors monitor learning and learner progress in the workplace very effectively in regular reviews with employers; learners benefit from the extensive range of short courses provided by their employers that enhance their skills and knowledge in specialist care settings
- learners enjoy their programme of study and appreciate the flexible approach of training advisors; learners working unsociable hours benefit from assessments taking place in the evening and at weekends
- training advisors are highly proficient in ensuring learners develop in-depth knowledge and skills to keep both themselves and service users safe in the workplace; learners articulate and demonstrate this very effectively when working in challenging environments such as working with people from rehabilitation settings and those at risk of homelessness
- the majority of training advisors develop learners' vocational English language skills well and provide learners with a glossary of technical terms to aid their learning.

Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care are not yet outstanding because:

- training advisors do not effectively stretch and challenge all learners, including the more able, to achieve their qualifications on time and meet their full potential
- the completion of frameworks within the planned timescale requires improvement
- the majority of training advisors do not fully prepare learners to work with ethnically diverse people; learners do not have a full appreciation of the diversity of the population
- training advisors do not develop learners' mathematical skills sufficiently and aspects of planning to develop learners' formal reading, writing and spoken English are also insufficient.

Accounting and finance

Apprenticeships

Outstanding

Teaching and learning in accounting and finance is outstanding because:

- apprentices make excellent progress and they take on extra responsibility as they develop good accounting and financial services skills; the very large majority of apprentices gain their apprenticeship within the planned duration of their programme
- staff have established exceptionally productive partnerships with employers resulting in careful management of teaching, learning and assessment; many young and new apprentices make considerable contributions at work very quickly
- outstanding teaching in the accounting sessions motivates and stimulates learners to make progress and succeed according to their potential; teaching activities are highly engaging and varied with extensive use of role-play to consolidate learning
- training advisors give constructive and helpful feedback promptly to help learners know how they can excel
- apprentices are highly motivated and adept at using high-quality learning resources and technology to extend their knowledge in their own time and at work
- learners take part enthusiastically in simulated activities, and with technology, to enhance their understanding of accounting and insurance terms; topics such as petty cash and production line roles are brought to life
- training advisors are highly skilled at questioning and use this particularly well with apprentices to elicit their full knowledge and understanding; they check learning regularly with real examples to help learners understand complex topics
- in financial services, staff give excellent individual coaching in the workplace during which apprentices demonstrate a good depth and breadth of knowledge; apprentices complete considerable elements of their learning independently and in good time
- training advisors plan learning very well in accounting, taking full account of individual learning styles; they teach sessions at an appropriately challenging pace with a very large majority of learners passing their external assessments first time
- staff review learners' progress very effectively drawing on their expertise and knowledge of the industry and on the employer to plan and monitor progress; learners take full control of their learning and set themselves challenging targets
- staff promote English and mathematics well in all aspects of the programmes so that apprentices understand the importance of these skills in the workplace; learners particularly

recognise the value of these and develop good skills in ensuring the accuracy of their work with clients

- advice and guidance provided by staff inform learners very well about programme expectations and motivate them to progress to higher levels; employers are particularly well informed; for example line managers access the e-portfolio system to view their learners' progress
- staff integrate equality, diversity and safeguarding well into their teaching, using very topical and relevant examples to encourage discussion and debate; learners are knowledgeable and learn how to protect themselves better.

Administration

Apprenticeships

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in administration is good because:

- the large majority of apprentices successfully achieve their frameworks; they develop good business skills and knowledge which lead to continuing employment and promotion at the end of the apprenticeship
- apprentices benefit from varied and stimulating teaching and learning methods which engage and maintain their interest and meet their individual learning needs well
- employers plan learning particularly well with training advisors and provide specific time for learners to study at work; they monitor the progress of their apprentices carefully and act as good role models
- apprentice progress reviews are comprehensive, contain clear targets and encompass good-quality feedback; regular monitoring of the on-the-job training ensures that apprentices acquire the skills needed for their framework achievement
- apprentices develop good study and research skills through well thought-out homework tasks and research assignments set by skilled training advisors
- English and mathematics skills are both reinforced particularly well; this is enabling apprentices to develop in their job roles and prepare them for the next stages of their careers
- assessors are highly skilled at identifying areas for improvement in learners' work while motivating and engaging learners to achieve high standards
- apprentices ably articulate the meaning of equal opportunity and diversity through good-quality induction and reinforcement during the review process; they use their knowledge to develop a culturally sensitive approach to working with customers
- the provider's new 'safe and sound' team is widely promoted to learners; this is ensuring that apprentices know whom to contact if they have a safeguarding concern and helps keep them safe.

Teaching, learning and assessment in administration are not yet outstanding because:

- progression from level 2 to level 3 is low and apprentices aged 16 to 18 did not achieve as well as other learners until recently
- not enough apprentices benefit from outstanding teaching, learning and assessment; this is affecting the number of apprentices who complete their framework successfully
- support and assessment for apprentices are not always timely, and this is affecting the proportion of apprentices who complete their framework in the planned timescale.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Board directors are well qualified, experienced and knowledgeable. They bring a wealth of expertise gained from the education, training and financial sectors to help shape BBC's mission. Directors are highly ambitious for their learners. They expect and achieve good and often outstanding outcomes and high quality provision for their learners. All staff and managers share this passion for excellence.
- Managers evaluate the performance of all staff rigorously. They tackle poor performance swiftly to ensure that learners do not continue to receive sub-standard service. For example, managers quickly dealt with the poor performance in the health and social care provision and the provision is now good. Similarly, they handled poor performance in the traineeship programme firmly and decisively; current learners are getting good teaching and work experience. Managers have halted the decline in retention rates among the 16-18 year old learners in administration who are now achieving as well as older learners.
- Managers monitor closely the performance of their four subcontractors that make up five per cent of the total provision and subcontractors perform well. Managers have stopped working with the previously poorly performing subcontractors.
- Directors are highly committed to improving the skill levels of their staff. They have allocated substantial resources to train staff through an in-house programme of excellence in teaching and learning and talent management. This has improved the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and support and raised standards. English and mathematics training advisors work alongside the subject specific training advisors well to develop their confidence and skills in supporting learners' development of English and mathematics. As a result, the majority of apprentices achieve their framework in time. However, staff do not prepare learners beyond minimum framework requirements.
- Learners benefit from the experience of industry experts; directors have employed staff from the financial sector and support them to achieve teaching skills. A recently appointed information, advice and guidance team has made a marked improvement to the experiences of the 16-18 apprentices by focusing on their development very early in their programme. Investment in high-quality learning resources has enabled learners to access on-line resources in accounting and finance supporting them in achieving outstanding outcomes. However, the on-line learning resources are not available for learners in other subject areas although these are now being developed.
- Managers know their provision well. They develop and make improvements to the provision rapidly in response to the views of employers and learners. The quality improvement plan is detailed and robust and has assisted leaders and managers in rapidly driving up the quality of the provision. Leaders and managers demonstrate good capacity to make and sustain strong performance.
- The self-assessment process is thorough and uses a broad variety of evidence. However, the resulting report does not provide a sufficient commentary to substantiate the judgments.
- Programmes meet the needs of the employers, learners and employment sectors exceptionally well. Managers and staff are particularly good at identifying the skills shortages and respond by establishing additional provision promptly. For example, managers have extended the curriculum and established provision in hospitality, health and social care, warehousing and retail. The range and quality of work places for care, financial services and traineeship are exemplary.
- Managers do not make effective use of data to monitor the destination and progression of learners to give an accurate view of the difference they make to the learners' career aspirations and the economy.
- The promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement and has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection. Managers have not monitored well enough the participation rates

for learners from ethnically diverse groups despite working in many areas with large ethnically diverse populations. The very small number of ethnically diverse learners perform poorly. Managers have failed to narrow the achievement gap sufficiently well for these learners.

- Safeguarding arrangements are good. Managers and staff protect learners well from harm. Managers check that all teaching staff are suitable to work with young people and vulnerable adults. Staff have good understanding of safeguarding issues and deal with those raised promptly and sensitively to protect learners. Learners are aware of the ways in which they can protect themselves from harm and work safely. However, managers have not ensured that learners have received sufficient awareness training on e-safety.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Babington Business College

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2						2		
Outcomes for learners	2						2		
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2						2		
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2						2		

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and Social Care	2
Accounting and Finance	1
Administration	2

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	3,158							
Chief Executive Officer	Ms Carole Carson							
Date of previous inspection	November 2011							
Website address	www.babington.co.uk/training							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	2
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+	
	527	628	153	504	29		127	
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	5		22		27			
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ EDO■ Educ8tions■ Hybrid■ Conquer.							

Contextual information

Babington Business College is part of the Babington Business Group of companies. It holds national contracts for apprenticeship, traineeship, adult skills and learning loans. Most learners are based in the East and West Midlands. Babington's head office and local learning centre are in Derby and it has centres located in Leeds, Leicester, Lichfield, Nottingham, Sheffield and Stoke-on-Trent. With the exception of traineeships and accounting and finance apprentice programmes, most learning is undertaken in the work place. The provider holds a variety of government-funded contracts all of which were subject to inspection. However, at the time of inspection there were few learners on programmes other than apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Maxine Mayer HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of Quality as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012

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