

# Apprenticeships Broadland

Independent learning provider/local authority

## Inspection dates

24–27 January 2017

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Senior leaders and elected members have taken decisive action to successfully tackle weaknesses identified at the previous inspection.
- The majority of apprentices make good progress relative to their starting points. The proportion who achieve their qualifications has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Apprentices benefit from well-qualified assessors, knowledgeable tutors and good-quality placements.
- Supportive employers use their good vocational knowledge well so that apprentices aspire to, and develop skills to a high standard.
- Staff provide good-quality information, advice and guidance, which ensures that apprentices receive the right support to help them make informed decisions about their next steps.
- The majority of assessors and tutors prepare apprentices for life in modern Britain well but this good practice is not consistent across the provision.
- Assessors do not use all the information gained in reviews to set improvement targets for apprentices' social needs and study skills.
- Quality monitoring of subcontractors is unwieldy, areas for improvement are insufficiently clear and the tracking and monitoring of apprentices' progress against units of work are not sufficiently frequent.
- Targets within service agreements between the provider and subcontractors are not consistently challenging or bespoke to the individual providers.

## **Full report**

### **Information about the provider**

- Apprenticeships Broadland is a division of the economic development department of Broadland District Council, based in Norwich, and has provided apprenticeships for over 25 years.
- Apprenticeships Broadland works with four subcontractors, with apprenticeships spanning business administration, customer service, retail, warehousing, team leading, equine, hairdressing, dentistry, healthcare and construction.
- The head of economic development is responsible for the service, which is managed day to day by three officers.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that the monitoring of subcontractors identifies the areas for improvement clearly, and tracks the improvements well.
- Ensure that subcontractors' annual targets are stretching and bespoke.
- Ensure that the information gained in reviews is well used to set high-quality improvement targets for apprentices.
- Ensure that apprentices are well prepared for life in modern Britain by sharing, and building upon, the good practice and resources that already exist.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Following a review of the provision, senior leaders and elected members restructured the service to concentrate wholly on apprenticeship provision and rebranded it Apprenticeships Broadland. The restructuring was successful in improving the proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications within the planned timescale.
- As part of the service's restructure, managers instigated a professional development programme designed to tackle known weaknesses. The programme made sure that all staff have undertaken functional skills qualifications at level 2. The qualification has increased staff's competence and insight into difficulties apprentices may face in achieving the requisite qualifications. A few managers and assessors have successfully pursued higher level qualifications, such as the Diploma in Education and Training, or bespoke information, advice and guidance qualifications. These opportunities have increased staff skills and confidence and helped improve the quality of provision.
- Managers have a good grasp of the service. Their self-assessment report accurately identifies the relative strengths and weaknesses of each vocational area. The report provides, for example, a good analysis of leavers' destinations when they complete their programme and a rationale where apprentices leave their programme early.
- Managers use the self-assessment report to inform their planning well. There is a clear line from the self-assessment report to the service's quality improvement plan. The report, however, lacks overarching, service-wide performance measures to help elected members and senior leaders to keep abreast with progress towards the intended improvements.
- Staff responded well to recent changes and the sharper focus placed on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers challenge staff to improve and are prepared to take critical decisions; for example, not engaging employers who do not meet all apprenticeship requirements fully and comprehensively.
- Recruitment staff are knowledgeable and direct learners to the most appropriate apprenticeship opportunities. Staff are skilled at allaying concerns learners may have in embarking upon an apprenticeship and will, for example, conduct mock interviews to build apprentices' confidence.
- Members of the service's leadership and management team use a newly introduced 'data dashboard' well to monitor learners' retention, progress and achievement for their own provision and that of subcontractors. Swift action is taken by managers where a programme is, or looks likely to be, underperforming. Actions from previous meetings are followed up well.
- Senior leaders engage well with employers at a strategic planning level in order that they can influence future apprenticeship provision. Day-to-day links between managers, assessors and employers are productive and contribute well to good and improving retention rates, and to apprentices securing employment.

- Managers work well with the service's four subcontractors. The subcontractors speak highly of the training opportunities provided for their staff, especially in connection with the integration of mathematics and English into the curriculum.
- Service managers carry out developmental visits to subcontractors covering aspects such as learners' induction and review and the quality of teaching and learning. These visits work well to improve the provision.
- Managers keep subcontractors well informed about strategic and national policy issues, which helps focus their future planning.
- Leaders and managers collect and scrutinise data from subcontractors and follow up on any dips in performance, but they do not monitor the progress of apprentices in all subcontractors frequently enough for prompt action to take place as necessary. Records of visits are confused and unwieldy; areas for improvement are unclear and checks on progress against previously identified issues are not sufficiently detailed.
- The annual service agreements between the provider and subcontractors do not include sufficiently clear targets, relevant to each individual subcontractor. As a result, managers do not consistently focus on improving learners' outcomes.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Senior leaders and elected members are ambitious for the service. They were pivotal in reappraising the work of the service following the previous inspection and in determining its strategic direction. They have ensured that the service is informed by, and contributes to, the council's economic strategy of increasing the skill levels and employment prospects of its residents.
- Members of the council's economic success panel have a detailed overview of the service's performance and potential, and provide exemplary support and challenge to managers. The panel receives verbal and written performance reports from service managers and routinely scrutinises trends and patterns in performance information.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All of the provider's staff and those of its subcontractors are subject to properly updated Disclosure and Barring Service checks. The recruitment team checks with employers that safeguarding arrangements are in place prior to placing apprentices.
- Staff are confident in sharing concerns with any of the three designated officers trained to deal with safeguarding issues. The designated officers consult with service managers and, if required, the council's lead officer.
- Assessors are very alert to any risks that individual apprentices could potentially face in what can be isolated settings such as equine yards. During reviews, staff discuss apprentices' well-being and understanding of, for example, staying safe online.

- Apprentices feel safe, know how to report any concerns and are confident that appropriate action would be taken should they do so. Their induction includes health and safety awareness, which they subsequently apply well in their respective vocational settings. For example, apprentices on equine programmes are supported to ensure that they protect themselves from the dangers of Weil's disease and are reminded about the need to maintain high standards of personal hygiene. The induction covers staying safe online, safeguarding and the dangers of extremism.
- Broadland District Council community crime-and-disorder specialist officers link well with service managers and ensure that training under the 'Prevent' duty is current and relevant. A few managers have undertaken advanced training to further develop their understanding of extremism and radicalisation. Managers, assessors and recruitment team members are confident in their abilities to contextualise and reinforce 'Prevent'-related issues with employers and apprentices, and any implications for learners.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Apprentices benefit from well-qualified assessors and tutors who use their good vocational knowledge to successfully inspire apprentices to develop skills to a high standard. Employers are very active in helping apprentices reach the high standards in their chosen occupation. Construction apprentices, for example, learn complex heritage building techniques, such as creating architectural curved cornices. Apprentices quickly learn to use technical language accurately and this further increases their value to employers.
- Assessment of learners' achievements is good, and fully complies with the requirements of the apprenticeship qualification. Staff assess apprentices carefully when they begin their programme to ensure that they are on the right programme, working at the right level and that appropriate support is quickly put in place.
- Most assessors and tutors are skilled in using probing questions that help apprentices to think carefully and reach a deeper understanding of the topic they are studying. Assessors give good oral feedback to help apprentices improve their work. Written feedback on assessed units, while it is often encouraging and positive, does not consistently identify the study skills that would help apprentices to achieve highly in future assignments.
- Apprentices are well supported to achieve in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) at the level needed for their programme. Staff identify learners' needs at the beginning of the programme, and give regular and frequent individual sessions so that apprentices achieve the qualifications they need. The progress apprentices make is tracked well.
- Homework is used well to encourage apprentices to apply what they have learned and to understand how to answer examination questions fully.

- The functional skills teachers have created stimulating, vocationally relevant resources such as booklets containing historical and current political contexts that learners draw upon to prepare their verbal and written presentations. In doing so, apprentices learn about citizenship-related issues such as prejudice and the role of the press, as well as developing their persuasive writing skills. These valuable resources are not routinely shared more widely with all assessors or with subcontractors.
- Managers encourage apprentices who already have English and mathematics at level 2 to develop these skills further, and many apprentices challenge themselves to gain functional skills at a level higher than they need for successful completion of the programme, and most do this successfully.
- Staff run workshops to help apprentices understand how English is used in the modern world, including useful life skills such as how to recognise offensive and persuasive writing, and how to understand personal finance, including how to safeguard themselves from fraudulent activity.
- Assessors do not consistently use all relevant information in reviews to set improvement targets. Some of the targets on reviews do not adequately reflect the comments by apprentices and employers about the skills to develop, such as grammatical accuracy and appropriate body language. This limits the extent to which the targets stretch apprentices to achieve to their full potential. Targets set on progress reviews for the completion of units are specific and clear.
- Good links with employers and apprentices, which result in the design of programmes that matches both the needs of employers and the aspirations of apprentices, contribute to the high rate at which apprentices complete their programme in the time planned. An example of a programme that meets the needs of employers and apprentices is the one for healthcare apprentices interested in mental health, who can choose a unit focusing on helping people who have dementia.
- Observations of the quality of teaching and assessment are thorough and well recorded so that managers can identify the improvements made over time for each member of staff.
- Increased training in advice and guidance to staff has resulted in a large proportion of apprentices progressing into further training. The majority of learners are first employed as apprentices and most progress into full-time employment with their employers.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Apprentices are highly motivated and produce work to a high standard. They are self-assured, use their initiative, and take pride in their work as a result of the support and encouragement they receive from their assessors and workplace supervisors.
- Well-informed information, advice and guidance staff ensure that apprentices receive the right information at induction and during the programme. This supports apprentices to make informed decisions about their next steps and or, in some cases, to remain in learning.

- Apprentices are very respectful. They adapt their behaviour well when working with colleagues, clients or customers from diverse backgrounds; for example, apprentices on equine programmes work sensitively with riders who have disabilities to help them gain confidence when riding on a lead rein.
- Apprentices feel and are safe. They understand how to report any concerns and are confident that these would be handled swiftly and appropriately.
- Assessors work well, and with increasing confidence in ensuring that current issues in relation to living in modern Britain form an integral part of learner and employer inductions and progress reviews. Despite such good examples, a small minority of learners have insufficient understanding of the dangers of radicalisation or extremism. The examples which exist of good practice in the development of learners' awareness of the risks linked to radicalisation, extremism and British values are not shared well enough.

## Outcomes for learners

## Good

- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications has improved significantly since the previous inspection, with the vast majority achieving within the planned timescale. Timely achievements for apprentices were a key weakness at the previous inspection.
- The majority of current apprentices make good progress relative to their starting points and many are given increased responsibility at work. Apprentices on dental nursing programmes prepare instruments such as sickle probes and aspirator tips efficiently for use by dental surgeons. Apprentices on construction programmes produce high-quality work when constructing stud walls and building brick and flint walls. Apprentices work well with colleagues in the workplace, are reliable and attend well.
- The majority of apprentices continue to be employed by their employer when they complete their apprenticeship.
- Apprentices identified as being at risk of not achieving are supported well by their assessors, which ensures that they achieve within the planned timescale.
- In general, no significant achievement gaps between different groups of apprentices were evident in the last two years but apprentices aged 16 to 18 on hairdressing programmes do less well than older apprentices. In 2015/16, learners who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieved less well than others; the information for the current year notes an improvement.
- Apprentices successfully improve their English, mathematical and ICT skills, and their skills are good. Most apprentices pass their functional skills tests at the first attempt.
- Functional skills are used well at work. Apprentices on dental nursing programmes develop and accurately use technical specialist vocabulary when communicating with dental surgeons. An apprentice on a business and administration programme designed a spreadsheet that is now used to monitor and manage stationery stock levels. Apprentices on construction programmes make good use of their mathematical skills by accurately estimating quantities of materials they need. Those on equine programmes calculate accurately ratios and quantities of feed based on each horse's weight.

- Apprentices develop and use their written English skills when completing job sheets and develop high standards of verbal English skills in formal and informal settings. Apprentices improve their spelling by reducing their reliance on automatic spell-checkers, and develop their proofreading skills to reduce errors.
- Apprentices work to high standards and make a valuable contribution to their workplace. Employers value the high-level skills apprentices quickly develop. One business and administration apprentice was given responsibility for managing creditor ledgers. Equine apprentices benefit from gaining additional qualifications such as for transport attendants and first aid at work, which improves their work-related skills and chances of employment in the industry.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	50098
Type of provider	Independent learning provider/local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	441
Principal/CEO	Mr Phil Kirby
Telephone number	01603 430477
Website	<a href="http://www.apprenticeshipsbroadland.com">www.apprenticeshipsbroadland.com</a>

## 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+
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	117	50	38	65	0	3		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	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	Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors	Construction Training Specialists Ltd Anglian Academy of Hair John G Plummer & Associates Roots Training Services Ltd							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the work-based learning and recruitment officer as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors conducted group and individual interviews, telephone calls 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

Tony Gallagher, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mary Aslett	Ofsted Inspector
Howard Browes	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Pike	Ofsted Inspector
Ralph Brompton	Ofsted Inspector
Pauline Hawkesford	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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