

Inspection of N A College Trust

Inspection dates: 13–16 January 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

N A College Trust (NA) is an independent learning provider based in Washington. NA provides training to adult learners and apprentices, almost all of whom work or aspire to work in the automotive sector. At the time of inspection, there were 428 apprentices. The majority are enrolled on apprenticeships in engineering and manufacturing. Of these, 165 are enrolled on standards-based apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3, and 95 are enrolled on frameworks at levels 2 and 4. All other apprentices are enrolled on apprenticeships in business and management. Of these, 149 are enrolled on standards-based apprenticeships at levels 3 and 4, with 19 apprentices enrolled on frameworks at levels 2, 3 and 4. There were 718 unemployed adults following short courses to equip them for employment in the automotive sector. NA works with one subcontractor to provide foundation degree programmes for level 4 apprentices in business administration and in manufacturing engineering.

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

Apprentices and learners are highly motivated and value the education and training that they receive. At the college, apprentices benefit from well-planned, high-quality teaching which complements the training provided by their employers. As a result, they quickly gain the confidence and ability that they need to carry out work tasks with minimum supervision.

Adult learners benefit from a realistic and well-resourced learning environment. Learners can test out and apply their understanding in a simulated workplace setting. As a result, they are well prepared for employment in the automotive industry and supply chain sector.

Apprentices demonstrate exceptional teamworking skills through involvement in collaborative projects with an automotive or engineering theme. Examples include recycling tyres into planters for the benefit of the local community. Apprentices hone their engineering skills through design projects such as building scale models to represent the local mining heritage and converting a classic car engine to electric. These projects enable apprentices to make positive contributions to their wider community and their employers.

Apprentices and learners flourish in a safe and supportive learning environment. They demonstrate consistently high levels of respect for others. They play a positive role in creating an orderly, harmonious and inclusive environment that values and nurtures difference.

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

Leaders and managers successfully address the skills development needs of the workforce in the automotive industry. They collaborate closely with employers to design and implement programmes that enable apprentices to develop the critical, practical and technical skills that they need, both on and off the job. For example, maintenance apprentices confidently improve and adapt assembly procedures in their workplace settings. Apprentices in business and management learn how to manage colleagues at work in line with legal guidelines. They apply their skills at work with confidence and benefit their employers' businesses. The large majority of apprentices on both frameworks and standards-based apprenticeships make good progress and achieve their qualifications on time.

Tutors provide a well-structured programme for adult learners of three or more short courses, typically warehouse and storage, forklift truck operation and lean manufacturing operations. Many adult learners take useful additional qualifications in environmental awareness and employability. As a result, adult learners develop current industry-standard knowledge and skills to prepare them for employment. For example, they explore the 'lean process' model and how to reduce waste in the workplace. A high proportion of adult learners achieve their qualifications, and most progress into employment or further learning.

Tutors and teachers have significant industry experience and keep their professional development up to date. Tutors provide relevant and interesting examples of real experiences in the workplace and in simulated exercises that enable learners to understand consequences of actions and responsibilities in a job role. For example, adult learners explore how hydraulic fluid spillages not only present health and safety risks but can also result in fines for the suppliers of products and services, causing a threat to jobs. As a result, learners develop valuable insights into the importance of safe working in the automotive sector.

Tutors provide good support to learners whose first language is not English, in order to develop their language skills as well as their vocational knowledge. Tutors provide constructive feedback to learners on employability courses so that they can improve their written work. As a result, adult learners produce good-quality curriculum vitae that are tailored for entry to the automotive industry and supply chain sector. Teachers ensure that apprentices develop good report-writing skills and use specialist terminology confidently. Apprentices who have high needs benefit from specialist support from teachers to help manage and prioritise workloads, enabling them to make progress in line with their peers.

Managers and tutors have an exceptionally strong focus on behaviour and conduct, which is reflected in learners' and apprentices' professional conduct and mature attitudes. Learners and apprentices attend well and are punctual. They are highly motivated by the high expectations of tutors and employers. For example, they begin learning sessions early in the morning to help them prepare to work on early shifts in the automotive trade or elsewhere.

Apprentices participate in innovative activities and social action projects and make valuable contributions to their local communities. For example, apprentices across different programmes coordinated a 'Remembrance Day' activity, making and selling metal poppies for charity and sharing skills and knowledge, such as spray painting, manufacturing, filing and cutting.

Leaders focus sharply on oversight of the organisation. Governors work closely with leaders, challenge them appropriately to make improvements and provide expert support on financial and legal requirements.

Apprentices and adult learners have a good understanding of values needed to live and work in modern Britain. They feel safe and know how to report any concerns. Apprentices recognise the importance of inclusion and respect, and they incorporate these values into their team building and change-management activities. Apprentices and adult learners have limited awareness of local issues affecting their communities, for example county lines.

Apprentices in engineering have a very clear understanding of progression routes and have carefully considered their next steps. Adult learners have clear career aspirations and are confident that the qualifications they are working towards will help them to achieve their career goals. For a small minority of apprentices in

business administration, tutors do not provide effective enough careers advice and guidance to enable these apprentices to explore specialist options or roles in their sectors.

A few tutors and teachers do not use assessment consistently well to check learners' and apprentices' understanding. They do not provide enough opportunities to test how well learners and apprentices retain and can use what they learn. As a result, a small number of learners are unable to identify fully what they need to do to improve. A few apprentices do not develop sufficiently their ability to reflect and retain learning, meaning that they struggle with assignments.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers provide staff, apprentices and learners with a very safe learning environment. Learners and apprentices demonstrate safe practice across the site in classrooms and workshops.

Leaders and managers carry out appropriate background checks to ensure staff are suitable to work with learners and apprentices.

The designated safeguarding officers are appropriately trained and experienced in their role. They have good understanding of local issues and risks, including right wing extremism and knife crime.

Leaders ensure that staff, apprentices and learners receive training that helps them identify safeguarding concerns. This includes the 'Prevent' duty and how to stay safe online to minimise risks of radicalisation and grooming.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that apprentices and adult learners develop robust awareness of local issues affecting their communities, for example county lines, in order to support them in protecting themselves, their peers and families from risk.
- Ensure that all apprentices receive effective careers advice and guidance to enable them to explore fully job roles and specialisms in their sectors.
- Ensure that tutors and teachers use assessment consistently well to check learners' and apprentices' understanding. Ensure that all apprentices and learners know what they need to do to improve and are able to reflect on and retain what they have learned.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1270869
Address	Unit 1, Spire Road Washington Tyne and Wear NE37 3ES
Contact number	0191 466 1188
Website	www.nacollege.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Paul Robson
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	New College Durham

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality, curriculum and performance strategic lead, 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 observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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