

Inspection of National Business College Limited

Inspection dates: 26–28 January 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

The National Business College Limited (NBC) is an independent training provider based in Huddersfield, which provides training in West and South Yorkshire. NBC was established in 1983 as a private college specialising in business-related subjects and information technology. Since 1993, the college has offered a variety of work-based training under different funding streams but now only delivers apprenticeships.

At the time of the inspection, NBC had 21 level 2 customer services practitioners, 28 level 3 business administrators, seven level 5 operations managers and a few apprentices studying level 2 junior estate agent, level 3 team leader and level 3 customer service specialist.

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

Apprentices behave maturely in sessions and collaborate well in group discussions with their trainers and peers. This creates a calm and supportive learning environment. Apprentices are motivated and committed to their apprenticeship. They develop positive attitudes to their work and take pride in ensuring that they attend well and are reliable employees. Apprentices strive to achieve the best grades they are capable of.

Apprentices often benefit from additional training in their workplaces, such as learning about infection control, learning medical terminology and dealing with prescriptions. This deepens their knowledge and understanding of their job roles and develops their confidence and work-based skills.

Apprentices develop substantial new skills and behaviours that are valuable to their job roles. These include improved confidence, timeliness and accuracy. As a result, their employers are highly satisfied with the quality of their work and the positive contributions that they make to their organisations.

Apprentices often quickly take on more responsibility in their job roles. They develop the confidence to apply for higher-level posts, such as a human resources or project manager. Most apprentices gain promoted posts on completion of their apprenticeship.

Apprentices learn how to stay safe at work and in their personal lives. They are aware of topics such as the dangers of radicalisation, grooming and drug and alcohol misuse. Apprentices feel safe and are safe at college.

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

Leaders have developed excellent partnerships with local employers. They match their curriculum offer to the skills needs of the local area very effectively. Leaders have focused on specific sectors, such as training staff who work in healthcare centres, doctors' surgeries and the local council. More recently, they have extended their offer to meet the needs of local estate agents. Leaders ensure that apprentices gain the skills needed to rapidly become better at their jobs.

Leaders have a rigorous recruitment process to ensure that apprentices are well matched to their employers' needs. They ensure that all parties are clear about their responsibilities to ensure that the apprentices' learning experience is good. Trainers review apprentices' prior experience to ensure that they are placed on the correct level of apprenticeship. As a result, apprentices develop substantial new skills and knowledge during their apprenticeship, which they apply to their job roles well.

Leaders and trainers have planned and sequenced the apprenticeship curriculum well. Apprentices, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and additional support needs, develop their knowledge and understanding

incrementally so they can apply it to more complex tasks. Apprentices learn about essential legislation, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the need for confidentiality, early in the programme. Apprentices working in doctors' surgeries learn how to take telephone calls and quickly move on to liaising directly with medical staff, applying the principles of GDPR well.

Trainers set apprentices relevant assignments that link on- and off-the-job training activities effectively. They provide apprentices with helpful feedback that helps them to produce work of an increasingly high standard. Apprentices value the feedback, which ensures that most achieve distinction grades in their final assessments.

Trainers ensure that apprentices continue to develop their English and mathematical skills during their apprenticeships. This helps them to understand the importance of these skills in their everyday and professional lives. However, trainers rely too much on self-study resources to develop the skills of those apprentices who need to take formal examinations in these subjects. Trainers do not match the support that they provide to the gaps in apprentices' knowledge well enough. As a result, a few apprentices make slow progress towards achieving their English and mathematics qualifications.

Trainers support apprentices well to ensure that they achieve by their planned end dates. They strongly encourage apprentices to attend additional learning sessions if they miss a class. Trainers involve apprentices' line managers in their learning effectively. Apprentices' managers often help them to understand wider business concepts, such as costings and sustainability. Consequently, most apprentices complete their studies on time and progress to higher levels of study.

Leaders have ensured that trainers are suitably qualified and experienced to undertake their roles. Trainers have extensive experience of working in different business environments. Leaders support staff to study for higher-level qualifications that are relevant to their roles. However, they do not ensure that trainers participate in useful training to update or improve their teaching practice.

Leaders have developed an appropriately experienced board of governors to help them to improve. Board members are committed to helping NBC to grow and to become better at what it does. Leaders established the board immediately prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This timing has prevented the board from fully establishing the scope of its role. As a result, board members cannot confidently discuss, for example, the detail and impact of the current quality assurance processes or what NBC needs to do to further improve.

Trainers ensure that most apprentices develop the professional behaviours that they need to succeed in their job roles. Where apprentices are not yet meeting these standards, trainers work closely with employers to support further development. This includes undertaking more frequent workplace observations to evaluate apprentices' professional behaviour while at work. However, trainers do not consistently correct the very few apprentices who dominate learning sessions, to ensure that they develop appropriate behaviours more rapidly.

Trainers do not routinely discuss apprentices' longer-term or wider careers options with them. They relate apprentices' careers advice and guidance only to their current job roles. Consequently, few apprentices can identify what longer-term career options are available to them outside of their current organisations.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices and staff feel safe in the college. They know how to keep themselves and others safe. They have a sound understanding of local risks, such as county lines, knife crime and criminal exploitation. Most apprentices are confident when discussing issues such as sexual violence, abuse and consent. They develop a deeper understanding about topics relevant to their own safety.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and staff receive appropriate training. Staff undertake update training every two years on a range of safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty themes. The DSL attends the North East Prevent Forum, which ensures that she understands the local issues that may affect apprentices and staff.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that apprentices understand what wider careers are available to them outside their current organisations and help them understand how they can pursue their careers.
- Improve governors' understanding of their role, so that they can provide suitable challenge and support to help leaders further develop and improve the quality of education.
- Ensure that trainers continue to update their teaching expertise, including the teaching of English and mathematics, so that apprentices who need to achieve functional skills qualifications as part of their apprenticeship are well supported to do so.
- Ensure that the few apprentices who do not demonstrate professional behaviours in classroom learning sessions are supported to develop the expected standards more rapidly.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53451
Address	1 Greenhead Road HD1 4EN
Contact number	01484 430433
Website	https://nationalbusinesscollege.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Jennifer Stringer
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	March 2016
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations manager, 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

Linnia Khemdoudi, lead inspector
Anne Tyrrell

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022