

Inspection of DBC Training

Inspection dates: 8–11 February 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

Information about this provider

DBC training (DBC) specialises in apprenticeships and pre-employment courses for adults. Apprenticeship provision spans the midlands, northwest and London. It covers level 2 to level 5 standards-based courses in leadership and management, business administration, customer service, recruitment and sales, digital marketing, and warehousing. There are currently 411 apprentices in learning; 101 of these are aged 16 to 18.

Adult education is provided at training centres in Derby, Nottingham, and Chesterfield. This includes sector-based work academies, digital and employability skills, and functional skills. There are 941 adult learners enrolled on a range of courses from entry to level 2. Apart from functional skills, these are short two-week courses. The largest adult programmes are in preparation for work, information and communication and technology (ICT) for users and building and construction.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the curriculum is taught using a blend of face-to-face and online training.

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

Adult learners and apprentices are positive about their learning. Adults particularly value the job search and CV writing skills they develop. Apprentices enjoy the vocational content of their studies. Many aspire to progress to more senior or enhanced roles.

Apprentices' training supports them to carry out their day-to-day tasks in the workplace with confidence. Many adult learners have been unemployed for a significant amount of time, and this is their first experience of education for several years. Learners value the support staff provide and enjoy learning in a mature environment.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sectors they work in, many management and customer services apprentices struggled to complete their course. Apprentices who remain in learning achieve well and the vast majority gain distinction grades. Adult learners achieve well on employability courses in warehousing, public services, and customer services. Fewer adults achieve functional skills and ICT qualifications.

Coaches support apprentices' development of character and resilience in the work environment effectively. Adult learners benefit from the inclusion of topics such as mental well-being, resilience, and time management. This prepares them well for employment or further education and training.

Managers and coaches have established a caring, supportive culture for learners. Apprentices feel safe while learning and in their workplace.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale for apprenticeships and adult learning and plan training well. Coaches structure the apprenticeship curriculum effectively, particularly for those apprentices who are new to the world of work. For example, customer service apprentices start by exploring their organisation's core values before they consider how organisational policies and procedures impact on the customer service function. Tutors in construction plan a curriculum that builds on adults' prior learning. They embed additional knowledge and skills so that learners can gain the construction verification card. This increases their employment chances and enables learners to work on construction sites.

Managers work well with employers to develop the curriculum. For example, they adapt the level 3 customer service course to include content to help employers develop their apprentices for sales roles.

Apprentices explain new management concepts well. They relate them to their job roles and in many cases have utilised these newly learned skills in work projects.

Although managers recruit apprentices with integrity, those with higher qualifications at the start of their course find some aspects of training too simplistic.

Coaches design appropriate resource packs and assessments for apprentices that allow them to practise their new knowledge and skills. Resources highlight key terminology and legislation well. The standard of apprentices' work is at least of the required level and often of a higher standard. Most coaches' feedback pays attention to how apprentices can develop their work further. Feedback to business administration apprentices is not always precise or developmental.

Managers and coaches emphasise the importance of punctuality and attendance. Attendance at online and classroom sessions is high. Apprentices' destinations are systematically tracked by staff. Almost all apprentices remain in sustained employment, three quarters progress in their job role and gain additional responsibilities. Progression managers offer on-going guidance to adult learners who need extra support with job hunting. As a result, a significant number of adult learners progress into paid employment.

Employers are not always in attendance when coaches conduct reviews of apprentice's progress. As a result, they do not have a thorough enough grasp of apprentices' learning and progress.

Apprentices receive helpful advice about their career development at appropriate stages of their course. Coaches help them understand how they can use their transferable skills in different job roles. Leaders and managers work with a range of stakeholders, such as the Department for Work and Pensions, to ensure that they have the latest information on employment opportunities in the local area.

Leaders and managers have set challenging strategic objectives that support their aim of delivering high-quality training. They work well with a wide variety of employers and other stakeholders to offer a curriculum that addresses identified skills gaps. Leaders and managers use their productive links with government and employer bodies to influence and contribute to regeneration projects. For example, they have significantly expanded adult provision to successfully engage hard-to-reach learners in training.

Coaches have considerable professional experience of the sectors in which they teach. They have appropriate teaching and assessor qualifications that allow them to perform their role effectively. Managers are aware they need to provide more professional development related to the craft of teaching.

Apprentices with learning difficulties or disabilities are given appropriate support to ensure they achieve. Managers do not monitor the impact of this support or train coaches in the teaching strategies that would be most beneficial to apprentices who have learning difficulties.

Managers' quality assurance arrangements lead to improvement. The quality of learners' experiences, both in classroom and online, is subject to relevant verification processes. However, managers only produce action plans for coaches who have specific areas for development.

Governance arrangements are effective. The board's decision-making is subject to robust and effective challenge. For example, in shaping the organisation's mission to provide training that helps learners to gain sustained employment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers use safeguarding processes that keep learners safe. Staff undertake a wide range of relevant training. For example, online courses to raise awareness of damaging behaviour such as non-consensual sharing of indecent images. This contributes effectively to the safety of apprentices and adult learners.

All policies and procedures are fit for purpose, including those related to safe recruitment. A non-executive board member has specific responsibility for checking the effectiveness of policy implementation.

Learners generally have a sound awareness of how to protect themselves from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. They know who to contact if they have a concern.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Managers should ensure employers attend progress reviews with apprentices and coaches, so they have appropriate insight into their learning and progress.
- Managers should provide coaches with training to support them when working with learners who have learning difficulties or disabilities. They should monitor more closely the quality of support that these learners receive.
- Coaches should provide business administration apprentices with precise, developmental feedback so they are able to improve the standard of their work.
- Managers should ensure coaches' professional development includes a focus on developing their teaching and learning skills.

Provider details

Unique reference number	59167
Address	3–4 St. Peters Churchyard Derby DE1 1NN
Contact number	01332 295588
Website	https://www.dbc-training.co.uk/
Principal/CEO	Kerry Bentley
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	6–8 June 2016
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the skills and quality director, 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

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