

Inspection of Canterbury Christ Church University

Inspection dates: 7 December 2021 and
22 to 24 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Very occasionally, Ofsted must pause an inspection because of an outbreak of COVID-19 or the need for personnel to isolate. For this reason, Her Majesty's Inspectors and Ofsted Inspectors began this inspection on 7 December 2021, paused it after one day, and completed activities between 22 and 24 February 2022.

Canterbury Christ Church University introduced levy-funded apprenticeships in September 2017. The university mainly offers apprenticeships in Kent and Sussex on behalf of NHS Trusts and other health or care sector organisations. Almost all current apprentices work in hospitals, health or care settings in the region.

At the time of the inspection, 420 apprentices were studying standards-based apprenticeships from level 5 to level 7. Currently, there are 145 level 5 nursing associate apprentices, 90 level 6 occupational health apprentices, 58 level 6 registered nurse apprentices, 58 level 6 operating department practitioner apprentices, 40 level 7 advanced clinical practitioner apprentices and 29 senior leader apprentices. Ten apprentices are studying functional skills English and 40 study functional skills mathematics as part of their apprenticeship. All learners are over the age of 19.

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

Apprentices enjoy their learning, and they are very keen to succeed. They work hard, and they thrive in the caring and inclusive environment that staff have established. Tutors set high expectations. They model the high standards of professional behaviours they want apprentices to develop.

Apprentices are highly professional. They work very well with each other and with all of those they meet during their training. They listen to each other carefully and respectfully. They deepen their learning by discussing new knowledge and experiences with their peers through the skilful guidance of their tutor. For example, they discuss how best to support patients through mental health crises in a sensitive but effective way and how to best support family members.

Apprentices value the opportunity to develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours that will help them in their professional careers. They enhance their communication skills quickly and securely so that they can confidently respond to any new responsibilities. For example, associate nurses learn how to take the lead role in 'handover' meetings at the start and end of shifts to ensure continuity of care.

Apprentices are proud of the contribution they make to their teams at work. For example, advanced clinical practitioner apprentices can produce thorough and appropriate care plans for patients. Apprentices' line managers value the ability of apprentices to quickly apply their learning. For example, associate nurses ably move from supporting others with wound treatment to making their own assessments and recommendations for appropriate dressings.

Apprentices become skilled professionals. They are empathetic and compassionate. They demonstrate a range of behaviours that show their patients and clients dignity and respect, such as when working with patients with dementia or those facing difficult prognoses.

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

Leaders and managers work closely with regional partners and key stakeholders in the health sector to ensure that their curriculum strategy is very well aligned with local and regional health skills needs. They work with many large NHS Trusts, partner universities, professional and sector bodies as well as local authorities so that their apprenticeship provision is what employers need. Employers value the very collaborative approach.

Senior leaders are keenly aware of the wider regional economy and future developments. They plan carefully for how they can best play a role and support their region. For example, a senior leader sits on the board of a local life sciences

opportunity zone. This helps to ensure leaders and managers are ready for the training demands of the future.

Leaders and managers ensure that an aspirational and highly relevant curriculum is in place for their apprentices. They are passionate about inclusion. They make sure that non-traditional applicants can successfully apply and thrive as apprentices. They carefully assess each applicant at an early stage, and they ensure that appropriate support, if needed, is in place promptly.

Curriculum teams plan the curriculum well. They benefit from having an advisory board of relevant employers linked to their own apprenticeship specialisms. Managers work with these employers to plan and review each apprenticeship so the curriculum is relevant and up to date.

Teachers are very well qualified and highly experienced. They help apprentices gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours rapidly and securely. They provide frequent and very helpful feedback so that apprentices know what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. For example, chartered manager degree apprentices improve their academic writing following concise feedback which helps them better structure their responses and reference accurately.

Apprentices benefit from frequent opportunities to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills. Tutors provide helpful feedback on their written work to help them improve their sentence construction and use of paragraphs. This helps apprentices to improve their written assignments and also to be more confident when writing up patient notes or work-related written communication tasks. Occupational therapy apprentices can accurately take complex measurements to identify the correct equipment for a patient's individual needs. A small number of apprentices study formal qualifications in English and/or mathematics as part of their apprenticeship. They do this with another provider, and most pass at their first attempt.

Most apprentices benefit from good links between their on- and off-the-job training so that they can apply their new learning at work, gaining feedback from their workplace mentor. However, for a minority of apprentices, there is a lack of coherence between their on- and off-the-job training. Leaders and managers do not ensure that they provide workplace mentors or line managers with enough information or involve them fully.

Tutors do not ensure that they communicate clearly enough and in advance of mandatory placements, including where and when they will be. This means that apprentices are not given enough notice of placements or how to prepare for them. This leads to confusion and some anxiety for apprentices as they are keen to succeed, and worry that they will not.

Apprentices have opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities at the university, although few choose to due to work and family commitments. Apprentices act as course representatives and feed back on their cohort's experiences. They value this role and feel their feedback has impact. For example,

apprentice representatives provided feedback on how to improve online learning sessions and teachers made these changes.

Apprentices benefit from plentiful information about how to extend their learning during their apprenticeship, and also how to develop their careers beyond their apprenticeship. For example, they attend additional training so that they could move into different specialisms, such as palliative care, or access wider reading resources or research opportunities. Nursing and occupational therapy apprentices benefit from having a preceptorship programme to support them as they move into their new roles.

Apprentices have a good awareness of safety at work and of how to keep themselves, their patients, or clients safe. However, their understanding about the risks to their own safety outside of work and university, such as being alert to radicalisation, is more limited. Leaders and managers recognise this and have plans in place to further improve the wider curriculum for apprentices.

Leaders and managers have worked diligently to maintain the strengths identified at their monitoring visit while also taking swift action to resolve the areas for improvement. For example, they have revised their governance and oversight of the quality of apprenticeship provision so that there is now far more ownership and accountability. Leaders and managers know their provision well. They have well-considered and precise plans in place to continue the improvements they have already made.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have revised and improved their focus on safeguarding and their implementation of the 'Prevent' duty since the monitoring visit. For example, they now work more closely with relevant external partners so that they have a good understanding of local risks. They use these links to ensure staff are well trained to support their apprentices and make them more aware of radicalisation and potential safety risks. Apprentices have a good understanding of working safely in their health and care settings, including how to lift or move patients safely.

Apprentices feel very safe. They value the very caring and supportive ethos at the campuses. They have confidence that staff would listen to their concerns and support them.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers must ensure that employers, line managers and workplace mentors know what their apprentices are learning when they are not at work so that they can provide opportunities when they are at work to apply and deepen their learning.
- Leaders and managers must make sure that employers are kept fully informed about the progress their apprentices are making and what they need to do to improve.
- Leaders and managers should improve the planning for, and the timeliness of communication about, apprentices' placements so that all apprentices are better prepared and feel more confident.
- Leaders and managers should make more rapid progress in ensuring that all apprentices benefit from a personal development curriculum so that they are more alert to the risks in the areas they live and work in.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133806
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Website	https://www.canterbury.ac.uk
Vice Chancellor and Principal	Professor Rama Thirunamachandran
Provider type	Higher education institution
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Runway Training

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of curriculum, 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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