

Inspection of Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training Limited

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 May 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Abbeydale Vetlink Veterinary Training Limited is a small specialised independent learning provider based in Monmouth. Abbeydale gained a contract to deliver levy-funded apprenticeships in May 2018. The provider offers veterinary nursing apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3. At the time of the inspection, 105 apprentices were in learning. Exactly 94 apprentices were enrolled on the level 3 veterinary nurse standard. A further 10 apprentices were enrolled on the level 2 animal care and welfare assistant standard, with one apprentice enrolled on the level 3 veterinary nursing apprenticeship framework. The provider does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Apprentices demonstrate high levels of respect for staff, peers and colleagues at work, contributing well to a positive workplace culture. Apprentices enjoy the opportunities to work with their peers during lessons to share experiences from their different workplaces.

Apprentices rightly value the expertise and experience of their tutors, and how tutors use real-life examples within their teaching. Apprentices benefit from clinical coaches in the workplace, who support apprentices well to apply new learning in the workplace. All staff and clinical coaches have high expectations of what apprentices must know and be able to do.

Most apprentices make good progress on their apprenticeships and are well prepared for their end point assessments. Apprentices develop their confidence and resilience over time.

Apprentices have access to a wide range of useful resources. This helps apprentices to be able to revisit key content to help prepare for assessments.

Apprentices feel safe. They know where to go to report any issues that they may have. Tutors support apprentices to develop their understanding of key localised risks, such as county lines. However, not all apprentices understand the risks associated with the sector in which they work. For example, the risks related to animal rights activism and how this links to apprentices' work.

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

Senior leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculum they offer. They focus on training high-quality veterinary nurses and assistants to support skills shortages in this area.

Senior leaders and tutors have developed an ambitious curriculum which provides apprentices with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to work in this sector. Senior leaders have planned a well-thought-through curriculum which builds apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours incrementally over time. For example, apprentices at level 3 develop their understanding of anatomy and physiology before moving on to medical diseases and then surgical interventions.

Senior leaders and tutors regularly review the curriculum so that it reflects current industry practice. For example, apprentices have a secure understanding of changes in surgical law because of Brexit.

Senior leaders and tutors identify what apprentices know and can do when they start their programme. Apprentices complete 'skills scans' before starting their course. However, tutors do not systematically use the information from skills scans to plan learning so that apprentices – particularly at level 2 – make the rapid

progress of which they are capable. In a few cases, senior leaders and tutors do not ensure that apprentices with additional learning needs receive the support they need as quickly as they could.

Tutors share new concepts with learners clearly. Teachers use their knowledge of current industry practice and use real-life examples in their teaching. Apprentices rightly value this. It helps them to learn new complex topics quickly.

Tutors use assessment well to check learning. Tutors identify apprentices' gaps in knowledge. They use this information diligently to reorder the content that they teach to support apprentices to close gaps in learning.

Senior leaders and tutors link on- and off-the-job learning creatively and effectively. Apprentices undertake 'focused theory' sessions in class, where tutors focus on a particular theory. Clinical coaches in the workplace support apprentices to apply this new knowledge to practice quickly. Consequently, apprentices rapidly develop their practical skills.

In the majority of cases, apprentices receive constructive feedback on their work. Apprentices receive frequent progress reviews where they further discuss how they can improve their work. However, the actions set by tutors to support apprentices to improve their work are not always clear. Actions are too focused on tasks apprentices need to complete, rather than on the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices need to develop. As a result, apprentices are not always clear what they need to do to improve the standard of their work.

Senior leaders and tutors develop apprentices' English and mathematics throughout their course. Apprentices develop well their use of technical vocabulary. This supports apprentices to have more productive conversations with surgeons when discussing treatments and care for animals.

The vast majority of apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Apprentices achieve well. The vast majority of apprentices move into jobs with additional responsibilities or move into higher level training within veterinary nursing.

Tutors support apprentices to develop positive workplace behaviours. For example, apprentices develop their behaviours in customer care. Apprentices are skilled in holding challenging conversations with pet owners during traumatic times. Apprentices show empathy and ensure owners receive high levels of customer care.

Tutors help apprentices to improve their understanding of equality and diversity. For example, apprentices understand how people with different religious beliefs hold different views on euthanasia. Apprentices appreciate the challenges this can pose when ensuring the welfare of animals. Where this is the case, apprentices are better prepared to hold conversations with owners.

Senior leaders and tutors support apprentices to understand career pathways directly within the veterinary nurse sector. Apprentices know these well. However, tutors do not support apprentices well enough to understand the wider career opportunities in the animal care and management sectors.

Some apprentices take part in charity and local community activities. These help to develop their character. For example, some apprentices are actively supporting local charity initiatives to provide food, blankets and welfare products for pets in countries impacted by war.

Senior leaders have taken positive steps since their new provider monitoring visit so that they benefit from governance arrangements. Governors provide leaders with challenge and scrutiny to support improvements in the quality of teaching. However, senior leaders do not ensure that governors receive a wide enough range of information, so that governors can challenge senior leaders as much as they could.

Senior leaders have in place a range of quality assurance processes. For example, a process of teaching observations is in place. However, this process focuses on the progress apprentices make during a single lesson, as opposed to the progress that apprentices make over time.

Senior leaders support tutors to undertake a wide range of training to support tutors' craft of teaching. All tutors now hold a level 3 teaching and learning qualification and have recently commenced a level 5 teaching qualification.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders give safeguarding a high priority. The provider has safeguarding officers, who are well trained. They have recently undertaken additional training around mental health. There is a clear safeguarding policy in place including a process for the reporting of any safeguarding concerns. Where safeguarding concerns are raised, safeguarding officers respond diligently and provide appropriate ongoing support to apprentices. Leaders have developed useful relationships with safeguarding agencies in the areas where they work. For example, to provide counselling support for apprentices to support their well-being. Leaders have a clear approach to safer recruitment. They undertake necessary pre-employment checks so that they recruit staff who are safe to work with apprentices.

Leaders provide a range of useful information to apprentices to help develop their understanding of safeguarding risks. Apprentices' induction includes training on safeguarding and the types of abuse. Leaders produce safeguarding newsletters called 'safe and sound'. However, leaders and tutors do not always ensure that apprentices have accessed such information and do not routinely check what apprentices now know and remember. Clinical coaches support apprentices to

understand how to work safely. For example, apprentices know how to prepare a workstation safely in preparation for surgical procedures.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Senior leaders must ensure that all apprentices understand the risks associated with working within the veterinary nurse and animal care sector. For example, the risks associated with animal liberation groups and what this means for apprentices and their work.
- Senior leaders and tutors should use better the information they gather about apprentices when they start their programme. They should use this information to support all apprentices to make rapid progress, particularly at level 2.
- Tutors must ensure that the actions they set apprentices at progress reviews are specific, so that apprentices know what knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to improve.
- Senior leaders must revisit the information they provide to apprentices on careers, so that apprentices understand the full range of next steps available to them in the wider animal care and animal management sectors.
- Senior leaders should ensure that governors receive a wide range of information about the outcomes of quality improvement activities, so that governors can provide further challenge and scrutiny to senior leaders to support improvement.
- Senior leaders should revisit their approach to teaching observations, so that it allows them to make more accurate judgements as to the progress apprentices make over time.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2510855
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Contact number	01600 747 040
Website	www.vetnursetraining.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Samantha Morgan and Kirsty Gwynne
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the 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.

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