

Inspection of Stubbing Court Training Limited

Inspection dates: 23 to 26 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

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

Information about this provider

Stubbing Court Training Limited (SCT) provides apprenticeships and education programmes for young people in the equine industry. Based in Chesterfield, it provides training at a number of equine yards, mostly in the East Midlands and Yorkshire, with a small number in adjacent areas.

At the time of the inspection, SCT was training 87 apprentices. 64 of these were level 2 equine grooms, with 49 taking the riding pathway and 15 taking the non-riding pathway. 23 apprentices were level 3 senior equine grooms, with 17 taking the riding pathway and six taking the non-riding pathway. There were also five learners studying a level 1 diploma in work-based horse care, and one student taking a traineeship in horse care.

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

Apprentices and learners thoroughly enjoy their experiences. Staff have created a culture that is dedicated to horses and where hard work is necessary. Apprentices and learners, who arrive with a love of horses, have excellent attitudes, and quickly fit in. They are keen, self-motivated and want to learn. They are enthusiastic about their experiences and really value the range of opportunities available to them.

Apprentices and learners are extremely satisfied with the training that they receive. They develop not just the knowledge and skills required to pass their courses but also the specific skills and behaviours that they need, to meet industry expectations and to proceed confidently through life.

Leaders and managers at SCT have exceptionally good links with a wide range of leading professionals that they use to provide apprentices and learners with a wealth of experiences, well beyond the requirements of their courses. This enables apprentices and learners to broaden their knowledge and skills and to gain an appreciation of the opportunities available to them.

Apprentices and learners develop good skills that enable them to work with self-assurance, interact well with a range of professionals, and to speak confidently with clients about the horses in their care.

Apprentices and learners feel safe. Staff help them to understand the types of behaviour that might make them vulnerable, and they know what to do if they have concerns.

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

Leaders work very well with leading industry professionals to develop a curriculum that reflects the needs of the equine industry. They provide courses that prepare apprentices and learners for work as highly skilled grooms and managers in a range of settings. In addition, staff make excellent use of partnerships to provide apprentices and learners with access to specialist facilities, such as aqua-treadmills, veterinary centres and physiotherapists, that help apprentices and learners to develop their knowledge of specialisms beyond those they encounter at work.

Leaders plan the curriculum in detail, according to the seasonal activities applicable to working with horses. This ensures that the right skills are taught at the right time and to the right standard. In addition, staff have developed an abundance of online learning resources that clearly set out the knowledge that apprentices and learners are required to understand.

Staff are ambitious for their apprentices and learners and adjust the curriculum to meet their individual needs. Staff undertake a range of activities to identify the starting points of each apprentice and learner so that they can provide challenging

activities for them. They also identify any specific learning needs apprentices and learners have so that they can provide extra help if it is needed.

Employers, who provide most of the practical training, have excellent subject knowledge and skills that they use very well to provide clear and precise explanations of topics. They relate their explanations well to apprentices' and learners' day-to-day experiences. They give expert practical demonstrations and make good use of opportunities as they occur in the workplace to provide relevant and interesting teaching. Highly skilled coaches provide further explanations of topics and help apprentices to relate their learning to equestrian settings beyond those they encounter in their daily work.

Staff require learners and apprentices to meet exacting standards and provide extensive opportunities for them to practise their skills. They frequently help apprentices and learners to apply their skills and knowledge in real situations such as when managing the diet of horses that are prone to laminitis.

Most coaches and employers systematically revisit taught knowledge to reinforce and deepen learning. For example, employers conduct revision sessions every month with their apprentices and learners, and ask questions about the theoretical knowledge that underpins their daily routines. As a result, apprentices remember what they are taught.

Coaches use quizzes, worksheets and oral questions to review learning at monthly meetings with apprentices and learners. This helps to ensure that apprentices and learners understand the material they have recently studied. Coaches identify gaps in understanding and provide apprentices and learners with further tuition and activities that help them to improve. Employers make very good use of the records of these meetings to identify the things that they need to work on with apprentices. For example, one employer provided additional sessions with a visiting farrier to help their apprentice to understand hoof anatomy.

A high proportion of apprentices achieve their qualifications and a number meet the challenging requirements needed to gain distinction grades. Apprentices who take functional skills qualifications are successful.

Most apprentices produce work of very high standard that meets the requirements of their courses and the specific needs of their employers. As a result, apprentices quickly become integral members of their teams and take on extra responsibilities, such as grooming at shows and events. Most apprentices remain with their employers at the end of their courses. They are also well prepared for a wide range of other roles and a number go on to work in competition yards or attend university.

Managers and staff have a clear focus on attendance and punctuality, which are good. Employers gauge the commitment of potential apprentices during an initial trial period before they take them on. Staff monitor attendance and punctuality through off-the-job training records, work attendance records and progress reviews.

From the first day, staff teach apprentices and learners to focus on safety in the workplace. All learners at all levels complete an initial health and safety module that enables them to competently undertake risk assessments for every activity in the yard. This helps to keep apprentices, their colleagues and the horses safe.

Leaders, managers and staff provide a wealth of opportunities for apprentices and learners to develop their wider skills and knowledge. Activities include masterclasses and seminars with top competitors, breeders and trainers, and participation in competitions and events, such as Chatsworth International Horse Trials. Apprentices take pride in representing SCT and their employers at these events. Apprentices also compete for an apprentice of the year award and an enterprise award, and this allows them to develop their skills and demonstrate excellence.

Leaders have created a large quantity of very good online resources that teach apprentices and learners about healthy lifestyles. Materials include topics on nutrition, physical fitness and psychology.

Apprentices receive excellent guidance on the careers available to them in the equine industry. Leaders use their extensive links with a wide range of employers to provide additional work experience to apprentices who wish to explore alternative career paths. Masterclasses and seminars give apprentices exposure to different aspects of the industry. The online learning platform includes a variety of videos on different careers including horse physiotherapy, competitive riding, grooming and yard management, as well as running a business.

Leaders and managers focus almost obsessively on providing the highest quality educational experiences for their apprentices and learners. They have implemented a range of quality assurance activities that help to maintain and improve the quality of apprentices' and learners' experiences. However, although lesson observations are extremely frequent, records do not clearly identify the specific things that teachers do or how they can improve their teaching practice.

Employers and coaches have access to a wide range of professional development materials and training opportunities that help to promote good teaching. These materials and opportunities include online courses on how to teach functional skills, masterclasses with leading professionals, and subject update seminars.

Appropriate arrangements are in place for external challenge and support. Leaders meet regularly with two external 'critical friends' who help to review and strengthen the quality of training. These critical friends bring to bear their good experience of working in the further education sector.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Managers have established clear policies and procedures to keep apprentices and learners safe. The designated safeguarding lead understands her role well and maintains clear records of safeguarding concerns and actions taken. Managers follow safer recruiting practices and conduct appropriate pre-employment checks on new staff. Managers provide apprentices and learners with training on the safety risks in equine yards and how to minimise them. They work with the police to ensure that apprentices and learners know how to recognise and respond to extremist threats from hunt saboteurs and how to keep themselves safe when working in remote areas.

Provider details

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| Unique reference number | 54649 |
| Address | Ashgate Cottage Old Brampton Chesterfield S42 7JE |
| Contact number | 01246 566193 |
| Website | www.stubbingcourtraining.com |
| Principal/CEO | Belinda Turner, MBE |
| Provider type | Independent learning provider |
| Date of previous inspection | 15 June 2010 |
| Main subcontractors | None |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the CEO, 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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