

Inspection of Babcock Training Limited

Inspection dates: 13 to 16 September 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

Babcock Training Limited (Babcock) is an independent training provider based in Bristol. Babcock are a part of the Land sector of Babcock International Group. At the time of the visit, there were 5790 apprentices. Of these, 5741 apprentices were studying apprenticeship standards and 49 apprentices were studying frameworks. Of the 4142 apprenticeships funded directly, 911 were on the level 3 motor vehicle and maintenance technician, 449 were on the level 3 rail engineer, 394 were on the level 4 retail manager, 345 were on the early years educator, 221 were on the level 3 lead adult care worker, 218 were on the level 3 retail team leader, 195 were on the level 2 retailer, 182 were on the level 2 adult care worker, 157 were on the level 3 team leader/supervisor, 152 were on the level 2 customer service practitioner and 137 were on the level 2 early years practitioner apprenticeship. The remaining apprentices were studying a range of apprenticeships from levels 2 to level 5 in the care, motor vehicle, management, and hospitality sectors.

Babcock works with five subcontractors, Anglia Ruskin University, Brunel University London, University of East London and University of West London to deliver the level 6 police constable (integrated degree) to 1373 apprentices for the Metropolitan Police; and Network Rail deliver 275 level 3 rail engineer technician apprenticeships.

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

Apprentices are highly ambitious and have a passion for their studies. For example, level 3 operational firefighter apprentices study an initial 11-week programme that requires swift skills development. Apprentices rise to the challenge well and complete work outside of the working day to further strengthen their knowledge. As a result, apprentices strive to complete the programme and be the best firefighter they can be.

Apprentices develop knowledge and skills which are highly valued by employers. For example, as a result of their apprenticeship, level 2 adult care work apprentices work with less supervision, supporting the administration of medication, leading shifts, and updating care records, which would typically be carried out by senior care staff.

Apprentices benefit from the expertise and sector experience of their trainers, who teach apprentices the values, empathy and respect they need to be successful in their chosen profession. For example, level 6 police constable (integrated degree) apprentices participate in mini debates related to their experience's while on operational duties, linking ethical decision making and respect for others, to policing practice.

Apprentices feel safe and many develop the skills they need to ensure their health and safety and that of others when working in high-risk sectors, such as the fire service, police and rail.

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

Leaders have high expectations of their staff and apprentices They create a culture of respect and professionalism. As a result, the majority of apprentices model these behaviours in their work and studies and give their very best.

Leaders have developed a curriculum which is aligned effectively to meet the needs of employers. Apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to be successful in their chosen industry. For example, managers work closely with a German car manufacturer to ensure that the automotive curriculum is equipping apprentices with the vocational knowledge, technical skills and confidence to undertake the service and repair of a range of petrol, diesel and electrically powered vehicles.

Leaders have put in place a detailed suite of quality processes that staff use effectively to help leaders to quickly identify areas of concern and put in place improvements for both direct and sub-contract provision. For example, on the level 6 police constable (integrated degree) apprenticeship, leaders responded quickly to apprentices' feedback relating to the repetition and timing of assessment when undertaking off-the-job training at university, as a result, apprentices are better able to balance their studies with their work commitments.

Strategic directors within the Land sector of Babcock International Group provide effective oversight of leaders at Babcock, they review and discuss monthly reports generated by the operational teams, providing scrutiny and support to managers. For example, they have put in place additional investment to support the recruitment of rail trainers, in response to shortages, to secure the quality of apprentice's learning experience.

Leaders have developed a clear strategy for managing subcontractors and work with established employers and training organisations. They co-create and co-teach all subcontracted provision. For example, working closely with Anglia Ruskin University, Brunel University London, University of East London and University of West London, managers have developed a degree apprenticeship in policing that aligns well to the apprenticeship standard, the requirements of the College of Policing and the needs of the Metropolitan Police.

Managers have carefully sequenced the curriculum to support the development of apprentices' knowledge, skills, and behaviours over time. Managers order the content based on employers' natural cycle of business and operational needs. Apprentices use these opportunities to apply and deepen their learning through practise in the workplace.

Managers have designed a curriculum that ensures apprentices have a secure understanding of the essential content and can apply these principles as they develop in their roles before moving on to more complex tasks. As a result, the significant majority of apprentices make at least expected rates of progress in line with their individual targets.

Trainers have extensive industry experience and expertise. They use this knowledge effectively to inform the highly relevant content of the training they provide. Trainers draw upon their professional experience to contextualise learning and fully engage apprentices. As a result, apprentices value their trainer's specialist knowledge and their ability to apply theoretical knowledge in useful workplace examples.

The majority of apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours, which they are able to apply well in their workplace. They increase and deepen their knowledge over time. For example, level 3 rail engineering technician apprentices quickly develop hand skills, dexterity and track-side behaviours related to health and safety and challenging safety within the rail lifesaving rules, which are a golden thread throughout the apprenticeship. As a result, apprentices become track side ready quickly and are able to make an effective contribution to their employers' businesses more readily.

On a minority of apprenticeships, trainers do not use the assessment of apprentices starting points effectively to identify apprentices' prior knowledge, and tailor the training to meet apprentices training needs. For example, in retail, apprentices with barriers to learning, such as English as a second or other language, are not being

supported quickly enough. As a result, these apprentices do not progress at the same rate as their peers.

The majority of trainers use assessment well to check learning and deepen apprentices' understanding. They use a range of formal and informal assessment, including quizzes and in-learning-session questioning, as well as formal assessment to check apprentices understanding. For example, trainers on the level 2 adult care worker apprenticeship use assessment effectively to check apprentices' understanding before moving on to new subject content and conduct professional discussions at the end of each unit to ensure that apprentices' knowledge is secure.

Most trainers provide useful feedback, which supports apprentices to improve their work. Trainers discuss findings from assessment with employers and agree actions to support apprentices who do not demonstrate the expected development of knowledge and skills. As a result, apprentices are supported to improve their knowledge, skills and behaviours over time.

A few trainers do not set effective targets for apprentices. For these apprentices, targets are often too general or insufficiently challenging to ensure apprentices continue to make suitable progress. As a result, these apprentices are not always aware of what they need to do next, or how it fits in with prior or future learning.

Leaders have developed a flexible model to teach the English and mathematics curriculum. Apprentices receive regular feedback on their work and know which areas they need to focus on to improve. Trainers quickly adapt teaching to suit individual apprentice's needs. For example, moving to one-to-one delivery when an apprentice falls behind and by signposting additional learning opportunities, such as group webinars.

Managers and trainers discuss progression opportunities for apprentices within their workplace. However, they do not routinely provide careers advice and guidance beyond that linked to internal progression with their current employer.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have recognised the challenges of ensuring a consistent approach to safeguarding in a national training provider. They have put in place designated safeguarding staff in key locations, such as training centres for academy delivery and regionally to support the civil sector delivery, which is less focused in centres.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL), in response to the increase in the number of 16 to 18-year-old apprentices, has ensured staff are developing the skills they need to support younger apprentices, implementing ongoing training and staff briefings.

The DSL has a detailed understanding of the support and reporting mechanisms for serious incidents of sexual abuse and risk of radicalisation. The DSL works closely with relevant parties, including the police and employers to ensure apprentices are supported.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that trainers use apprentices' prior experience and skills to develop a clear and logically sequenced plan, which takes into account their individual learning needs.
- Leaders should ensure that trainers continue to develop the skill of teaching, providing high-quality training for all apprentices.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices receive impartial careers advice, so that they are aware of the full range of progression opportunities available to them.

Provider details

Unique reference number	55241
Address	Babcock Technology Centre Unit 100A Bristol Business Park Stoke Gifford Bristol BS16 1EJ
Contact number	07788 133 680
Website	www.babcocktraining.com
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Jo Rayson
Provider type	Independent Learning Provider
Date of previous inspection	8–11 March 2016
Main subcontractors	Anglia Ruskin University Brunel University London University of East London University of West London Network Rail

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Director - Workplace Learning and Skills 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

Sharon Dowling, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Steve Battersby	His Majesty's Inspector
Ann Minton	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Lacey	Ofsted Inspector
Ben Sheridan	Ofsted Inspector
Victor Reid	His Majesty's Inspector
Sam Hanmer	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Bill	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Dearnley	Ofsted Inspector

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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

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