

# Inspection of QUBE Qualifications and Development Limited

Inspection dates:

1 to 4 November 2022

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

Qube qualifications and development limited (Qube) is an independent learning provider. It provides education and training to apprentices and learners across England. The provider subcontracts with five providers, three of which have current apprentices.

At the time of the inspection, Qube has 3,358 apprentices, including 11 who study with subcontractors. Apprentices study mostly standards-based apprenticeships at levels 2 to 5. Around half of apprentices work in the health and social care sector. The rest study apprenticeships in business services, leadership and management, logistics and retail. Qube has 154 traineeship learners located across the country, but mainly in the north west and Yorkshire. They have 155 adult learners, most of whom are located in Norfolk and Colchester, in the east of England. Adult learners study mainly pre-employment courses that last between five days and one month. Most attend classroom-based learning sessions.

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

Apprentices and learners appreciate the support they receive from approachable tutors. They are respectful to their tutors and each other. Tutors create calm learning environments in which learners and most apprentices are motivated and ready to learn. Most apprentices and learners demonstrate high levels of punctuality and attendance. A few apprentices are frustrated by the turnover of tutors on their apprenticeship.

Traineeship learners enjoy an ambitious curriculum in which they increase their confidence significantly. Most make good progress from their starting points, including learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders put in place appropriate support for learners, such as a sign-language interpreter. Learners attend work placements that meet their ambitions and interests, for example in childcare and warehousing. The large majority progress to work or further training, such as apprenticeships.

Adult learners benefit from a curriculum with a defined purpose that prepares them for work. They develop good personal, social and employability skills, including effective communication and problem solving. Learners are ambitious about their futures. They gain the skills and qualifications they need to progress into jobs. For example, learners on introduction to construction courses gain their Construction Skills Certification Scheme certification ready for construction site work.

Most apprentices develop a range of new knowledge, skills and behaviours on their apprenticeship, which their employers value. For example, level 3 team leader apprentices confidently deputise for managers at work. However, too many apprentices, including those on subcontracted provision, have gone past their planned end dates. Consequently, they are not progressing at the rate at which they are capable.

Apprentices and learners feel safe. They know who to contact if they have any concerns. Apprentices and learners benefit from the useful health and safety training tutors provide, which enables them to keep safe, especially those working in high-risk settings. Level 2 retail apprentices working in pharmacies use gloves to handle hazardous medicines. Adult learners on forklift truck courses check the equipment is safe for use before they operate it.

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

Leaders, managers and governors ensure traineeship and adult learners benefit from a high-quality education. However, they have yet to fully realise their ambitious strategy to provide high-quality education and training for apprentices. Leaders and managers are clear about the areas they need to improve. However, improvements are sometimes too slow.

Apprentices working in adult care settings have faced many challenges due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their sector. Leaders work closely with most employers to support the large majority of apprentices to remain on their programme. Most tutors put in place appropriate plans for apprentices who have fallen behind with their studies to catch up. The large majority of employers are positive about how leaders keep them up to date and how effectively they communicate with them. However, tutors do not intervene frequently enough to get level 2 retail apprentices, two-thirds of whom work in pharmacy settings, back on track. They do not routinely involve employers in planning actions to speed up the progress that apprentices make. Leaders rightly recognise that they need to better coordinate on- and off-the-job training so that all apprentices make rapid progress on their apprenticeship.

Leaders acknowledge they have struggled to recruit new staff quickly enough. This has slowed the progress of a few apprentices. Current tutors are well qualified, have relevant experience and are enthusiastic about their subject. They get together frequently to share industry updates and best practice in teaching and learning. Traineeship tutors attended deaf awareness training. Following this, they developed an introduction to British Sign Language module for their learners. Most staff are proud to work at the provision. They appreciate the professional development they receive, which helps them to be more effective in their role.

Leaders and managers have developed appropriate curriculums that meet apprentices' and learners' needs. They develop the apprenticeship curriculum to meet employers' needs. Around half of the current apprentices are studying apprenticeships in adult care, for which there is a national workforce shortage. Leaders and managers develop adult and traineeship curriculums with partner agencies and employers. The programmes meet local and regional needs, addressing unemployment and low attainment levels.

Leaders and managers adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of traineeship learners and their employers. In collaboration with their employer and tutor, learners select a range of optional units. Tutors use these to build individualised programmes that include the skills learners need to progress on to employment. Traineeship learners develop their communication and customer service skills. Staff work with learners, employers and partners, such as Jobcentre Plus, to develop the curriculum for adult learners. Learners develop their personal, social and employability skills as part of their programme. Leaders and managers work with the large majority of apprentices' employers to adapt the curriculum to meet their needs. They work with employers to choose optional units that reflect the needs of their businesses. Level 3 business administration apprentices working in the healthcare sector complete a short qualification in medical terminology.

Most tutors plan and teach the curriculum in a logical order that builds learners' knowledge and skills over time. They check learners' understanding is secure before moving on. Tutors ensure traineeship learners can remember their previous learning about communication before moving on to dealing with difficult customers. Adult learners studying forklift truck driving apply their understanding of legislative

regulations in the warehouse. Most apprentices recall previous learning. For example, level 3 lead adult care apprentices successfully put in place patient-centred care strategies at work.

Tutors use assessment well, including discussions and quizzes, to reinforce learners' knowledge. Adult learners studying construction identify health and safety signage correctly. Traineeship learners apply their understanding of target setting when devising a 'SMART' plan for a new member of staff. Most tutors reinforce apprentices' knowledge and understanding. For example, tutors use probing questions so that level 3 team leader apprentices demonstrate a deeper understanding of mental health.

Tutors promote high expectations and challenge learners to do their best. They provide helpful feedback so that learners know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Most learners act on the feedback and improve their knowledge and skills over time. However, too many apprentices do not always benefit from developmental feedback that they use to improve. Tutors do not support level 2 retail apprentices effectively to improve their work to a higher level.

Leaders and managers acknowledge that they do not systematically plan the development of apprentices' and learners' English and mathematical skills and knowledge. Most traineeship learners receive support with English and mathematics that allows them to make progress from their starting points. However, learners with a greater level of understanding do not advance their knowledge of more complex English and mathematical concepts. Tutors do not routinely correct errors in adult learners' work. They do not consistently provide apprentices with strategies or teaching that improves their English and mathematical skills over time. Leaders and managers do not plan the delivery of English and mathematics sessions early enough in the apprenticeship programme. They have recently changed this approach, but it is too early to see the impact.

Leaders and managers do not plan a personal development curriculum that benefits all apprentices and learners. The additional activities that apprentices take part in are not always relevant to the standards they complete. Opportunities for traineeship learners to participate in enrichment activities are ad-hoc. Consequently, take up is inconsistent.

Learners and a large majority of apprentices benefit from useful, tailored and supportive careers guidance that prepares them for their next steps. Traineeship learners receive detailed, impartial initial careers advice that tutors reinforce throughout the programme. Tutors provide advice to level 2 adult care worker apprentices about their next steps. Level 3 lead adult care apprentices who work in adult care settings progress on to careers such as nursing.

Experienced and knowledgeable governors provide appropriate scrutiny to leaders. They challenge them on key issues such as the progress apprentices and learners are making on their programmes. Although governors understand the strengths and

weaknesses of the provision, their oversight has not brought about rapid enough improvements.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding staff are suitably trained to carry out their roles effectively. Senior safeguarding staff have established strong links with external partners. They make prompt and appropriate safeguarding referrals to agencies such as the Police.

Staff benefit from regular training on safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty. They receive frequent updates, such as online safety. Staff report any concerns they may have about apprentices and learners promptly. Safeguarding staff understand the key local risks where apprentices and learners live and work. Although apprentices and learners attend safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training, not all can remember the details of what they have learned.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders, managers and governors should increase the speed with which improvements are implemented so that all apprentices, including those on subcontracted provision and those studying level 2 retail, benefit from high-quality education and training, complete their apprenticeship on time and make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders should ensure that they plan learning that coordinates on- and off-the-job training effectively.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that tutors provide high-quality feedback to apprentices that develops and extends their knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that the English and mathematics curriculum enables all apprentices and learners to develop their skills and knowledge.
- Leaders and managers should plan a personal development curriculum that all apprentices and learners can participate in and benefit from.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	54038
<b>Address</b>	Bee House 140 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park Abingdon OX14 4SB
<b>Contact number</b>	01235 833838
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.qube-learning.co.uk">www.qube-learning.co.uk</a>
<b>CEO</b>	Joe Crossley
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 to 30 June 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	GK Apprenticeships Newbury College Swarm Training CIC Merlin Academy Fleet Master Training

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality and compliance 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

Alison Cameron Brandwood, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Daniel Beale	His Majesty's Inspector
Catherine Richards	Ofsted Inspector
Alex Warner	Ofsted Inspector
Robin Lindsay	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Whiston	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Loftus	Ofsted Inspector
Christina Christou	Ofsted Inspector
Marta Gajewska-Kopczyk	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Leavey	His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2022