

Inspection of Dick White Referrals Limited

Inspection dates: 6 to 9 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
<hr/>	
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

Dick White Academy (DWA) is an independent learning provider. DWA was set up by Dick White Referrals Limited in 2016. DWA has held a direct funding contract to provide levy-funded apprenticeships since 2017. DWA is now operating independently under the Dick White Charitable Foundation.

At the time of the inspection, there were 130 apprentices studying the level 3 veterinary nursing standard. Two apprentices were studying the level 2 veterinary care assistant standard. The provider has recently ceased the offer of the level 2 standard and is not taking on any new apprentices. Apprentices work at large national and smaller independent veterinary practices for around 80 employers, predominately in East Anglia.

At the time of inspection, DWA did not have any subcontractors and did not have apprentices in receipt of high needs funding.

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

Apprentices are passionate about caring for animals. Apprentices value the helpful guidance from their tutors and clinical supervisor. Apprentices recognise that their tutors and clinical supervisor are strong role models for the professional standards they are required to develop. Apprentices are highly motivated to achieve their professional registration. They work diligently to gain the 'day one skills' required to be a qualified veterinary nurse.

Apprentices benefit from positive, respectful training and work environments. Apprentices take their studies seriously and are attentive in lessons. They value and enjoy their studies. As a result, most apprentices have high attendance in lessons and at work.

Apprentices swiftly become valued members of the teams they work in. Apprentices develop their skills and take on new responsibilities at work, such as running nurse-led clinics and managing laboratory tests. As a result, most apprentices progress into permanent employment when they complete their training.

Apprentices feel safe in training and at work. Apprentices quickly develop safe working practices. They understand the importance of following standard operating procedures and risk assessments to guide their practice. Apprentices ensure that animals are suitably held when administering second vaccinations to avoid causing injury and distress to the animal. Apprentices understand the risks that people who have extremist views pose, including those who are active in the animal sector.

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

Leaders have established an ambitious curriculum. Leaders are passionate about reducing the chronic shortage of veterinary nurses in the animal sector. Leaders work closely with national groups and smaller independent veterinary practices to ensure that the training and development they provide meets employers' needs. Leaders ensure that apprentices swiftly develop their resilience, which enables them to thrive in a pressured and emotionally demanding job. As a result, apprentices develop the skills to support clients when they make difficult choices about the care of their very sick animals.

Leaders have worked effectively with employers to develop the curriculum. Leaders ensure that apprentices achieve the status of a 'suitably qualified person'. This enables apprentices to prescribe and supply medicines. As a result, apprentices can apply for a greater range of jobs after they qualify.

Leaders structure the curriculum effectively so that it builds from simple principles and increases in complexity. Apprentices first learn to identify and describe the anatomy of bones before learning about specialist terminology such as radial and lateral. They relate this appropriately to the position of an animal when preparing

them for an X-ray. Consequently, apprentices incrementally build their knowledge to be able to meet the technical aspects of their role.

Apprentices benefit from their tutors' expertise. Tutors are vocational specialists and registered veterinary nurses. They have highly developed clinical skills across a diverse range of specialisms and experiences. These include emergency and critical care, neurology and senior ward managers. Leaders enable staff to update their clinical skills to ensure that tutors maintain their professional registration. As a result, apprentices have role models to develop the knowledge and clinical skills required to be successful in their chosen profession.

Tutors provide highly effective support to apprentices with special educational needs (SEN). As a result, apprentices with SEN make the same strong progress as their peers. Tutors effectively support apprentices to practise and develop their mathematical skills. Apprentices can confidently calculate hydration rates for a cat. As a result, apprentices develop the essential skills they need for their roles.

Most tutors use effective teaching strategies. When learning about infection control, tutors use a handwashing demonstration. This helps apprentices to understand the importance of having the appropriate technique when preparing to assist a surgical procedure. In more theoretical sessions, tutors use quizzes and anatomical models for apprentices to label. This helps tutors to check apprentices' knowledge of technical terminology and correct any misconceptions. As a result, most apprentices pass their exams first time. Most achieve high grades for their apprenticeship.

Apprentices quickly improve their writing and analytical skills. Tutors give highly detailed developmental feedback on written assignments, which enables apprentices to improve their work. Tutors pinpoint where apprentices need to develop their work further. Tutors encourage apprentices to include greater reference to the impact on the patient when writing about nursing procedures. Tutors correct apprentices' use of grammar. They highlight where apprentices' work would benefit from additional references to enhance an argument. As a result, apprentices improve the quality of their assignments over time and are better prepared for further higher-level study.

Leaders do not ensure that apprentices have the time at work that they need to complete the written component of their apprenticeship. Too many apprentices complete written work in their own time. As a result, they struggle to cope with their workload, which slows their progress.

Leaders do not ensure that the quality of apprentices' reviews are consistently good. Visiting officers do not align the workplace skills development with the knowledge taught at the academy. This negatively impacts apprentices' progress. Where this does occur, clinical supervisors work diligently with apprentices to create more opportunities to practise these skills.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices benefit from ongoing impartial careers advice. Apprentices are very confident and secure in their career choice to be veterinary nurses. Apprentices frequently discuss with their tutors their

wide range of experiences. However, tutors do not develop apprentices' knowledge about the full range of options open to them after gaining their apprenticeship.

Leaders and tutors are appropriately informed about the quality of education and strive to make improvements. Leaders are highly reflective practitioners. They use a broad range of metrics to inform them about the quality of the provision. Leaders frequently visit lessons and provide useful feedback to tutors. Tutors conduct surveys and get feedback from apprentices. This influences how tutors develop their plans for learning. Tutors value the peer observations they carry out on each other. This helps them see how other tutors use extension activities to challenge apprentices who have prior experience with subject content.

Governance arrangements are strong. Governors have a highly developed understanding of the academy. They provide frequent and useful support to leaders and challenge them on the decisions they make. Governors have supported leaders in the implementation of a new teaching and learning policy. This change has resulted in tutors becoming confident, effective teachers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have high regard for the mental health and well-being of apprentices. Leaders have designed a highly relevant personal development curriculum tailored to the apprentices' job role. Apprentices learn about the early signs of poor mental health. Apprentices become more reflective, and recognise when they need support.

Designated safeguarding leads have the appropriate training to carry out their roles effectively. Apprentices know whom to report their concerns to. As a result, apprentices are confident that if they had any problems they would be well supported.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must work with employers to ensure that apprentices have time while at work to complete assessments.
- Leaders must ensure that apprentices receive planned, ongoing impartial careers advice and guidance so that apprentices know the wide range of career options available to them.
- Leaders must ensure that apprentices' reviews align the workplace skills development with the knowledge taught at the academy.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2539282
Address	Station Farm London Road Six Mile Bottom Newmarket CB8 0UH
Contact number	01638 590657
Website	None
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Ali Heywood
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 principal, 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

Robert Bamford, lead inspector

Judith Mobbs

Helen Morgan

Shahram Safavi

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted 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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023