

Inspection of Bishop Grosseteste University

Inspection dates:

21 to 24 November 2023

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	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU) is a higher education institution in Lincoln. The university has taught higher and degree apprenticeships since September 2020.

At the time of inspection, there were 123 apprentices at various stages of their course. There were 34 level 6 career development professionals, 30 level 6 chartered manager degree apprentices, 53 level 7 senior leaders, and six senior leader masters apprentices. A few apprentices on each standard were near the end of their studies. Very few had completed their qualifications. All apprentices were over the age of 18.

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

Apprentices enjoy their courses and have a positive attitude to learning. They demonstrate a high level of commitment to their studies and are conscientious in lessons, which they attend well and on time.

Apprentices gain the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to succeed in their job roles and progress in the workplace. For example, chartered manager degree apprentices undertake additional projects with stakeholders to support financial planning, and senior leadership apprentices gain promotion to strategic leadership positions.

Tutors, apprenticeship support officers (ASOs), and staff within the centre for enhancement in teaching and learning develop very positive relationships with apprentices. This supports apprentices very well with their studies and helps them to progress.

Apprentices benefit from, and appreciate, the inclusive culture at BGU. They are treated as individuals, and tutors make positive adjustments to support their personal circumstances. As a result, apprentices are provided with the best opportunity to achieve their qualifications.

Leaders provide a varied enrichment offer to develop apprentices' interests and talents beyond the curriculum. Apprentices benefit from, for example, craft clubs, discussion groups, trips and visits. They can also access a useful range of well-being activities such as storytelling, puppetry, pet cafes and mindfulness challenges.

Apprentices feel safe at university and within the workplace. They know how to report concerns, and they understand how to keep themselves safe. They rightly value the focus that staff have on their well-being and welfare.

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

Leaders and managers have developed strong, strategic partnerships with a range of regional employers and stakeholders. They understand their needs and priorities well. Leaders select appropriate apprenticeship courses that support employers to strengthen their workforce and develop skilled managers.

Tutors plan the curriculum well. They have thought carefully about the content of the curriculum and how this builds apprentices' knowledge and competence in the sectors in which they work. For example, chartered manager degree apprentices learn about finance, human resources and change management, and they apply this through a range of work-based projects. This supports apprentices to add value to the workplace and perform their job roles well.

ASOs work closely with apprentices and employers to plan on- and off-the-job activities well. They use their knowledge of the curriculum well, and they ensure that apprentices complete meaningful activities that link with their learning.

Support for apprentices with additional learning needs is good. Before starting their course, apprentices complete thorough diagnostic assessments to identify their support needs and requirements. Tutors create detailed support plans, which are implemented swiftly. This supports apprentices with additional learning needs to make good progress.

Tutors and ASOs are highly motivated and appropriately qualified. Managers support them to complete a range of training activities to further develop their subject knowledge and expertise. They use this knowledge well to enhance the learning and skills development of apprentices.

ASOs use review meetings with apprentices effectively to assess apprentices' knowledge. They make frequent reference to industry practice to extend apprentices' understanding and use discussion to reinforce learning. Consequently, apprentices are able to evaluate their current practice and plan areas for development. However, too few employers participate routinely in planned reviews. As a result, they do not support their apprentices to develop and apply new skills as swiftly as they could.

Tutors provide detailed, frequent, and helpful feedback on apprentices' written assignments and projects. They use clear assessment criteria to ensure that apprentices understand how to develop their work further. Apprentices understand what they need to do to make progress and develop their written work.

Leaders consider carefully the workload of staff. They use a workload allocation model that provides tutors with a generous amount of non-teaching time to complete preparatory work, marking and personal development activity. Caseloads for ASOs are appropriate.

Leaders provide apprentices with effective careers advice and guidance. Apprentices value the advice and support they receive through the 'BG Futures' service. They benefit from a range of sessions, such as CV development, interview support, industry visits and guest speakers. Apprentices are well informed about their progression options.

Apprentices' work is of a high quality and is appropriate for the level at which they study. For example, apprentices conduct independent research of theoretical concepts and analyse the use of these in practice. As a result, apprentices demonstrate appropriate industry-relevant knowledge and skills with competence and fluency.

As a result of high-quality support from ASOs, a large majority of apprentices are on track to achieve their qualifications. Most understand what they need to do to achieve high grades and prepare for final assessments. A very small number of

apprentices have reached final assessment. Of these, a majority achieve high grades.

Achievement rates for functional skills mathematics are too low, and apprentices do not develop their mathematical skills swiftly enough. Leaders have taken action to improve this. However, as actions are in their infancy, it is too early to measure the impact of these.

Leaders and managers use a range of tools to monitor and improve the quality of courses. However, these tools are not always used in a consistent manner. For example, actions within the quality improvement plan do not always clearly link to areas for improvement identified within the self-assessment report. Consequently, the extent to which action plans bring about rapid improvement varies.

Governors understand the strengths and areas for improvement across all apprenticeship courses. They form part of the university's 'apprenticeship oversight group', which monitors performance and addresses areas for improvement. Governors recognise that they have, historically, lacked the expertise to support and challenge leaders effectively regarding apprenticeship courses. Recent appointees with specialist knowledge in apprenticeships should address this issue, but it is too early to judge the impact.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that quality monitoring processes identify areas for improvement accurately and appropriate actions are implemented promptly.
- Ensure that apprentices have access to appropriate training and support for functional skills mathematics so that they successfully achieve these qualifications.
- Ensure that mentors and employers are routinely involved in review meetings to support apprentices to make the progress of which they are capable.

Provider details

Unique reference number	133835
Address	Longdales Road Lincoln Lincolnshire LN1 3DY
Contact number	01522527347
Website	https://www.bgu.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Professor Karen Stanton (interim Vice-Chancellor)
Provider type	Higher Education Institution
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, 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

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