

# Inspection of Best Practice Network Limited

Inspection dates: 12 to 15 December 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Best Practice Network (BPN) is a national independent learning provider. Its main office is located in Bristol.

BPN provides training to people employed in early years settings and schools. It was established in 2002 and has provided apprenticeships since July 2020. At the time of the inspection, 1,871 apprentices from across England were studying an apprenticeship with BPN. Nearly half of all apprentices were studying the level 3 early years educator apprenticeship. Around 180 were on the level 2 early years practitioner apprenticeship. Over a quarter of apprentices were managers and leaders in schools and nurseries; most were studying the level 5 early years lead practitioner apprenticeship, and around 70 were studying the level 7 senior leader and the level 5 operations departmental manager apprenticeships. The remaining apprentices were studying the level 3 teaching assistant apprenticeship. Most apprentices were over 18 years old.

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

Apprentices enjoy their studies. They find their coursework and job roles challenging and stimulating. They value greatly the care and support they receive from their tutors. Apprentices find the flexibility of how the training planned by their tutors takes good account of their working hours and family commitments, such as childcare.

Apprentices are ambitious to pursue further careers in early years and school education. They have very positive attitudes to their studies. They attend coaching sessions and online classes well and often study independently using BPN's high-quality teaching resources, such as webinars and online document and reference libraries. Apprentices are highly respectful towards each other and their tutors.

Many apprentices lead on, and participate in, social action projects to benefit their communities. For example, apprentices organise food bank collections, raise funds for charities and visit nursing homes to facilitate exercise classes for residents. Apprentices are proactive in suggesting and implementing activities to promote social inclusion and diversity. For example, level 5 apprentices studying early years invite parents from diverse backgrounds to read stories to children and this improves apprentices' knowledge of other cultures.

Apprentices gain new knowledge and skills quickly, which helps them to increase their levels of confidence and professional behaviours. Apprentices demonstrate mature attitudes to their job roles. Apprentices who are in senior job roles value how their tutors help them to reduce feelings of imposter syndrome. Apprentices studying early years apprenticeships learn how to manage difficult conversations with parents skilfully. Many apprentices lead on the organisation of school plays and nativities and, as a result, swiftly gain strong organisational and communication skills.

Apprentices have an excellent understanding of British values. Tutors ensure that apprentices enact these values in their workplaces. For example, apprentices are positive role models and advocates for the children they work with. They empower children to enjoy participating in democratic decision-making. For example, children make choices about how they learn, such as, for example, choosing their own reading books and play activities.

Apprentices use a wide range of high-quality online resources that leaders have carefully designed to be relevant to each apprentice's programme. For example, apprentices can attend webinars to learn more about wider topics, such as how democracy works, special educational needs, and careers. However, only a very small number of apprentices are aware of, or have attended, BPN's recently introduced programme of optional training modules.

Apprentices have access to and use helpful impartial careers information and resources. Tutors use their experience and knowledge well to provide apprentices

with pertinent and timely guidance about future progression pathways. As a result, apprentices are well prepared for their next careers steps.

Apprentices studying the level 5 early years educator apprenticeship receive useful tuition about mindfulness and the positive benefits this can have on the children they are responsible for. A small proportion of apprentices learn how to use yoga and dance techniques, which they use in their nursery and school settings to help children to be active and healthy. Tutors do not teach the small number of younger apprentices well enough about healthy relationships, so they do not know how to recognise signs of, for example, coercive control.

Apprentices feel safe and are safe. They know how to report concerns and how to keep themselves safe. They have good knowledge of the risks of extremism which are most prevalent in the locations where they work. They know the importance of being vigilant in the workplace to keep themselves and the children they care for safe.

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

Leaders have a clear strategy to provide training nationally to support recruitment and retention in the education and early years sectors. Leaders have established effective regional leadership and tutoring arrangements to support the growth they have achieved in the number of apprentices. Leaders have implemented new performance manager roles which provide acute oversight of quality assurance, English and mathematics and tutors' well-being in each geographic region. Leaders work closely with stakeholders to understand the needs of the sectors they serve. For example, they have introduced specialist pathways that apprentices can study to meet the specific needs of children, such as for those who speak English as an additional language.

Leaders have a mostly systematic approach to assuring and improving the quality of education. Leaders make good use of apprentices' views to find out what is working well and what needs to improve. However, they do not systematically seek the views of employers. Those employers who are keen to be more involved are not always able to contribute to the planning of apprentices' training.

Leaders appoint well-qualified and experienced tutors to teach apprentices. Tutors who teach the level 7 senior leader apprenticeship have previously been chief executive officers of schools and multi-academy trusts. Tutors use their expertise well to share real scenarios that give apprentices practical and effective strategies to resolve work problems.

Leaders recognise rightly the importance of continuous professional development for tutors. Tutors gain qualifications in teaching online learning. Most learn to use digital skills and online teaching tools such as online polls, whiteboards and breakout rooms effectively to enliven lessons. Not all tutors ensure that apprentices participate fully in online sessions, make them interesting, or check their

understanding thoroughly enough. Consequently, tutors do not always know what knowledge apprentices have gained.

Leaders identify swiftly those apprentices who need additional support for their studies at the start of the apprenticeship. Expert special educational needs coordinators ensure that highly effective support plans are put in place for those apprentices who need help. As a result, tutors make appropriate adjustments to their teaching, for example flexible submission dates, extending programme study time and providing study aids such as coloured overlays. Special educational needs coordinators diligently monitor the progress that apprentices who have learning support needs are making. They use this intelligence well to inform early interventions where apprentices may be struggling or falling behind with their studies.

Most apprentices move on to positive destinations at work and gain promotions or positions of greater responsibility. Apprentices studying leadership and management apprenticeships successfully move into school headship or multi-site school leadership. Apprentices are well prepared for their final assessments, with nearly half achieving higher grades.

Tutors sequence curriculums well so that most apprentices benefit from individualised training that enables them to apply what they are learning on their apprenticeship in the workplace. For example, apprentices studying the level 3 early years educator apprenticeship learn about safeguarding, health and safety, and child development early in their apprenticeship. Apprentices studying the level 7 senior leader apprenticeship complete academic reading and theoretical knowledge assignments when they are required to apply this knowledge in the workplace. Tutors do not involve employers enough in the design and planning of apprentices' training. A minority of employers do not have influence in how training is planned. Consequently, apprentices do not receive the opportunities to practise and apply what they know and can do in the workplace at the most opportune time.

Tutors evaluate the progress apprentices are making frequently and discuss this with each apprentice. They use assessment well to check that apprentices practise and apply what they are learning on their apprenticeship in their job roles. Tutors insightfully identify gaps in apprentices' knowledge and plan teaching to address these quickly. Consequently, apprentices know what progress they are making in gaining new knowledge, skills and behaviours from their starting points.

Tutors ensure that those apprentices who need to gain qualifications in English and mathematics receive appropriate tuition. Tutors assess accurately apprentices' strengths and weaknesses in English and mathematics. They use this information well to target topics to help apprentices to improve. Tutors plan activities to improve apprentices' mathematical knowledge and skills effectively. For example, apprentices learn how to apply mathematics as part of budgeting and financial control in their school and nursery settings. Tutors give apprentices studying the level 5 early years educator apprenticeship constructive feedback on their written work, so they know what they need to do to improve and gain higher grades. Tutors do not ensure that

level 7 senior leader apprentices are taught analytical and evaluative writing skills well enough. As a result, apprentices do not apply higher cognitive academic skills.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Plan on- and off-the-job training in detail with all employers to make sure that apprentices have enough opportunities to consolidate knowledge and practise skills at work.
- Increase apprentices' awareness of, and participation in, personal development programmes so that they broaden their wider knowledge and skills; teach younger apprentices about healthy relationships.
- Teach level 7 apprentices the skills they need to be more critical and evaluative in their academic writing.
- Make online lessons more interesting so that more apprentices choose to attend and participate more actively, so that they learn and remember more.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2654136
<b>Address</b>	27–29 Newminster House Baldwin Street Bristol BS1 1LT
<b>Contact number</b>	07584310068
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk">www.bestpracticenet.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Simon Little
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent Learning Provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality, 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

Cliff Shaw, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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