

# Inspection of Coventry University

Inspection dates:

27 February to 1 March 2024

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Education programmes for young people

**Good**

Adult learning programmes

**Good**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## Information about this provider

Coventry University is a higher education institution based in Coventry, West Midlands. It provides a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses from several sites across England and internationally. In England, this includes Coventry University, CU Scarborough, CU London and CU Coventry. It offers apprenticeships from level 4 to level 7 across a number of colleges and schools. The University also offers a level 3 foundation diploma in art, design and media practice, Access to Higher Education (HE) courses and adult Skills Bootcamps. The University subcontracts functional skills training to Runway Training.

At the time of the inspection, there were 32 students enrolled on the level 3 foundation diploma in art, design and media practice, of whom 19 were in scope for inspection. No learners were under the age of 18. There were 69 learners enrolled on Access to HE courses in nursing, health and human science, social science and business studies. There were 2,383 apprentices enrolled on apprenticeships. Most apprentices study at level 6, with high numbers enrolled on chartered manager, civil engineer and occupational therapist. More than half of apprentices studying at level 5 are enrolled on the nursing associate standard. At level 7, most apprentices are enrolled on the senior leader standard.

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

Tutors have high expectations for learners and apprentices. Tutors introduce art, design and media practice young learners to a studio code of conduct to encourage them to follow professional standards from the start of their programme. Tutors recreate professional environments for apprentices to develop collaborative working skills, critical thinking and reflective practice. As a result, the large majority of learners and apprentices rapidly develop broader skills for the workplace.

The large majority of Access to HE and art, design and media practice learners have high attendance to taught classes. Learners are committed to completing their qualifications and moving on to higher study. Leaders set high targets for the attendance of apprentices. Where level 7 senior leader apprentices' attendance is below expectations, tutors take swift action to intervene to prevent apprentices falling behind.

Tutors ensure that learners and apprentices complete fundamental British values training during induction. Level 5 nursing associate apprentices debate contentious topics such as assisted dying to understand the importance of respecting differing viewpoints. However, many tutors do not revisit the content of this training often enough for learners and apprentices to recall the content or how it impacts their work and life in modern Britain.

Leaders have ensured that support is available to apprentices with additional learning needs. Support teams liaise with apprentices to ensure support is in place for assessments. However, leaders do not accurately communicate support needs to teaching teams or track apprentices' engagement with learning support. As a result, a small number of apprentices do not receive the support they need to make the same progress as their peers.

Leaders have not ensured that all apprentices and employers understand the additional time and work required to complete assessments. While employers ensure apprentices receive their off-the-job time, the workload of the apprenticeship results in many apprentices completing work in their own time. Level 6 social worker, level 7 senior leader and level 6 civil engineer apprentices struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance during their studies.

Learners and apprentices feel confident in reporting safeguarding concerns and know that staff will act swiftly. Leaders have recently launched a campaign across campuses to raise the profile of the safeguarding, well-being and welfare support available. Learners and apprentices feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe.

The majority of art, design and media practice and Access to HE learners achieve their qualification. Art, design and media practice learners develop skills in digital media to meet industry skills needs. Learners develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours which ready them for further study and to meet their career aims.

Too many apprentices do not achieve their apprenticeship. Many apprentices leave after achieving their degree qualification. While they do not complete their apprenticeship, many achieve first-class degree results, which enables them to progress their career, and many gain promotion as a result.

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

Leaders and managers have developed well-considered academic curriculums, which meet local and regional skills needs for learners and apprentices. Leaders have considered the needs of specific sectors, such as senior leaders in education settings, carefully when developing curriculums to ensure they are specific to employer requirements. In level 6 civil engineer apprenticeship, leaders have recruited employers within the industry to the advisory board. Leaders update curriculum content to ensure apprentices have workplace critical skills.

Leaders, managers and tutors have planned a well-sequenced curriculum that allows apprentices and learners to build on the previous teaching they have received throughout their course. Level 6 occupational therapist apprentices first learn about their duty of care to service users and then apply this in the workplace. Apprentices build their understanding and skills progressively during their studies.

Tutors do not consistently use information on starting points to individualise learning. In level 6 civil engineer apprenticeships, tutors measure starting points but do not use this information to alter apprentices' learning or fill gaps in understanding. Level 6 occupational therapist apprentices have their starting points used to determine the qualification pathway they follow, but not the content of the pathway. A small number of apprentices do not make the progress they are capable of due to gaps in their understanding.

Tutors help apprentices to develop skills which are valuable within their industry. Tutors use real-life projects to develop apprentices' problem-solving skills. In level 6 civil engineer apprenticeship, tutors use a flume to teach apprentices how to measure and regulate water flow on a building site so that a town or village downstream is not flooded. Apprentices swiftly develop key skills needed in the workplace.

Leaders do not ensure that the feedback all tutors give apprentices is developmental. Level 6 occupational therapist tutors give clear feedback to help apprentices improve their academic writing and reflective practice. They improve the writing of patients' reports and record-keeping of multidisciplinary reviews and case conferences. However, level 6 civil engineer tutors do not always ensure the feedback apprentices receive tells them how to improve their work.

Tutors teach English and mathematics skills effectively. Learners and apprentices develop their skills through higher-level writing, and tutors support them to continually develop the quality of their written English. In art, design and media practice, tutors use angles, scale and measurements of 3-D shapes to explain

mathematical concepts in art. Level 5 nursing associate apprentices practise their mathematics skills frequently to become confident in calculating medication dose rates. However, learners on Access to HE courses have too little focus on developing mathematics skills alongside their vocational learning and do not develop the skills needed for their next steps.

Leaders do not ensure that apprentices who require English and mathematics functional skills receive teaching in these subjects from the start of their apprenticeship. Not all apprentices have the opportunity to join online group classes. For some apprentices, support for English and mathematics is through online independent learning. While learners can track their own progress, this is not monitored by tutors or discussed during reviews with employers. As a result, too few apprentices complete their qualifications in a timely manner.

Leaders ensure that learners and apprentices have access to an extensive careers and employability programme. Leaders introduce the Talent Team to learners and apprentices within induction to understand the support available to them from the start of their programme. Art, design and media production and Access to HE learners are well supported by tutors to apply to higher study at a range of universities. The Talent Team advises learners on CV writing and interview skills and gives careers advice and guidance.

Leaders and managers have recently redesigned their quality assurance process to better identify their strengths and areas for development. Currently, leaders do not use information effectively enough to monitor apprentices' attendance and progress from starting points or identify apprentices at risk of withdrawal. Leaders have recruited new apprenticeship staff to support improvements in this area; however, it is too soon to see the impact of these appointments.

Leaders ensure that the quality of education learners and apprentices receive is consistent across campuses but not across schools and subjects. Level 5 nursing associate apprentices studying in London have the same strong outcomes as their Coventry peers. However, level 7 senior leader apprentices studying within education achieve significantly better than those studying within the college of business and law. Too many apprentices in the college of business and law have experienced prolonged breaks in learning and do not achieve their apprenticeship. Leaders do not have enough oversight to ensure consistency and drive improvements across all schools and subjects.

Leaders and managers have recently improved their monitoring of the teaching of functional skills by Runway Training, their subcontractor. Although leaders meet with the subcontractor regularly to monitor apprentices' progress, too many apprentices do not complete their qualification by their planned end date. Leaders have recently recruited teachers to teach functional skills when the subcontracting arrangement ends.

Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of Coventry University. However, governors do not always receive reliable and accurate information which

informs them of apprentices' performance and those at risk of withdrawal. The governing board is not sufficiently aware of the progress leaders are making towards achieving critical improvements. Where governors have given support and challenge to leaders, actions have not been swift enough to lead to rapid improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Improve quality processes to rapidly identify issues and drive improvements.
- Improve the information given to governors to allow clear oversight of apprenticeships.
- Ensure starting points are used effectively to develop individualised programmes of learning for learners and apprentices.
- Ensure apprentices have access to functional skills English and mathematics teaching from the start of their programme.
- Ensure all apprentices with additional learning needs receive appropriate support.
- Increase the number of apprentices completing their apprenticeship

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133808
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<b>Contact number</b>	02476887688
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.coventry.ac.uk">www.coventry.ac.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Professor John Latham
<b>Provider type</b>	Higher education institution
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 to 29 March 2019
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Runway Training

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Ofsted assurance manager, 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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