

CITB (Construction Industry Training Board)

Address: Bircham Newton, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE31 6RH

Unique reference number (URN): 51170

Inspection report: 13 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✔ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, learners are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect providers for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The provider has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- Not met: The provider has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

1. Inclusion, and leadership and governance

Expected standard	● ●
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Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff create a supportive and nurturing learning environment in which apprentices are supported effectively to achieve their qualifications, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or other barriers to learning.

Leaders use their processes to identify, assess and review apprentices' needs promptly throughout their training. Prior to starting the apprenticeship, staff establish and record a wide range of apprentices' support needs. During the first few weeks, staff conduct thorough assessments of apprentices to identify specific learning needs, such as dyslexia and dyscalculia. Leaders monitor closely apprentices' support plans and adjust them as needs change. Staff have appropriate qualifications and are well trained to help apprentices with specific needs, such as autism.

Leaders work well with a range of external organisations, such as local authorities, to ensure apprentices get the support they need. Staff systematically review personal education plans to make sure they are meeting apprentices' needs. While leaders have an effective overview of the progress apprentices who receive additional learning support make, they do not have a thorough understanding of the progress particular groups of apprentices make, such as those who are disadvantaged, and those who are known or previously known to social care.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have taken decisive action to improve educational standards since the previous inspection. Leaders have developed a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. Managers use monitoring information to identify relevant professional learning to improve teaching. Managers and staff now track apprentices' progress effectively through frequent assessments.

Leaders ensure that staff receive the support and training they need for their roles, including professional learning in areas such as developmental feedback and reflective practice. Teaching staff stay updated through national construction networks and publications. Staff feel well supported and valued by managers. Leaders manage staff wellbeing and workload sensitively.

Trustees use their extensive experience in further education and construction to support leaders. Leaders provide trustees with useful data and information so they understand the provider's strengths and weaknesses. Trustees participate in learning walks to understand the standards of education and training. This close collaboration enables trustees to challenge and support improvements, such as improved health and safety standards in workshops and new interactive classroom resources.

Leaders work closely with trustees to develop apprenticeship curriculums, meeting regional and national construction needs. Leaders have developed highly specialised training and resources, including for scaffolding, steeplejack and lightning protection training.

Leaders have invested significantly in the training, accommodation and leisure facilities at

their Bircham training centre in Norfolk. Leaders and trustees recognise that the standard of training, resources and accommodation across subjects is not yet consistently high. Renovation of training facilities has commenced at Erith centre, in addition to the continued development at Bircham.

2. Education programmes for young people

3. Adult learning programmes

4. Apprenticeships

Expected standard



Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

Leaders have strengthened monitoring and support processes, contributing to three years of improved achievement and timely completion. Over a third of apprentices achieve distinction grades in their final assessment, although this is not consistent across all apprenticeships.

Lecturers and instructors enable apprentices to make at least expected progress from their starting points, helping them to gain secure knowledge and skills they apply confidently at work. Apprentices use technical vocabulary confidently, behave professionally and improve their subject-specific English, mathematics and digital skills. Apprentices improve the digital skills employers value through using tools such as computer-aided design and QR code feedback systems.

Apprentices produce work that generally meets expected standards and improves over time. However, in a few cases, apprentices' written work is not of the expected standard. Apprentices achieve well and are prepared for their next steps. Apprentices achieve within

the planned time and a high proportion move on to sustained employment in the construction industry.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of training. They support staff well to improve their teaching and recognise the need for further development to ensure training is of a consistently high quality across all programmes. Apprentices learn by completing tasks, which instructors assess frequently, so apprentices know what they need to improve. Instructors make effective use of industry standard resources so apprentices can develop new skills. Apprentices are taught using equipment that reflects the workplace, which helps them make progress.

Leaders work closely with employers and stakeholders to design curriculums that meet national skills priorities. For example, they provide specialist construction plant and emerging technologies skills training. This helps apprentices develop relevant new skills needed in the construction sector.

Lecturers and instructors plan curriculums logically so apprentices have the foundational knowledge they need before progressing to complex theory and skills. Instructors draw on their extensive industry experience to teach specialist vocabulary and provide clear explanations using high-quality, sector-standard resources. Staff use purposeful assessment and constructive feedback to help apprentices improve their work. Instructors use targeted questioning and structured peer assessment to deepen apprentices' understanding.

Apprentices are taught thoughtfully designed programmes that reflect their starting points and individual needs. They benefit from well-coordinated and planned support, enabling those with learning or additional needs to progress in line with peers.

Apprenticeship development coaches support apprentices effectively to consolidate learning through close alignment between on- and off-the-job training, allowing them to practise new skills at work. This helps apprentices to make productive contributions on site that employers value highly.

Participation and development

Expected standard 

Leaders have created safe, respectful learning environments prioritising apprentices' wellbeing. Apprentices demonstrate high professional standards and adhere to health and safety requirements. They are confident applying new technical skills at work. Leaders set and reinforce high expectations for apprentices' behaviour, attendance and participation, which most apprentices achieve.

Instructors teach young apprentices how to keep themselves safe through a well-planned programme covering healthy relationships, online risks, the 'Prevent' duty, physical health and wellbeing. Apprentices confidently identify signs of radicalisation, discuss professional boundaries and use welfare resources effectively to maintain healthy lifestyles.

Instructors teach apprentices about British values meaningfully, so apprentices understand democracy, respect, the rule of law and tolerance, applying these in lessons, residential

settings, and the workplace.

Staff provide structured careers guidance, giving apprentices meaningful insights into progression routes. Most apprentices benefit from impartial advice. They can explore related options and can articulate their ambitious next steps.

Apprentices participate in a wide range of activities to keep them occupied at the Bircham training centre. However, staff do not give apprentices the opportunity to develop their awareness of personal and social responsibility and diversity in communities.

What it's like to be a learner and/or an apprentice at this provider

Apprentices thrive in their training due to the personalised support from staff with industry expertise, well-equipped training centres and small class sizes. Apprentices who attend the residential Bircham training centre have access to high-quality accommodation and communal social areas. They make good use of a games room and a fully equipped gym, which helps them maintain their health and wellbeing. Leaders have begun work on renovating facilities at the Erith centre to ensure apprentices there have the same experience as those at Bircham. All apprentices receive free meals throughout the day.

Apprentices appreciate the balance of practical and theory sessions, which helps them apply new knowledge and develop new skills. Instructors make strong links between their training and real-world industry demands, which makes learning relevant and interesting. Apprentices learning scaffolding build large structures in expansive workshops, so they know how to meet strict safety standards. Plant mechanics competently strip and rebuild large engines, which helps them learn about engine operating characteristics, parts and tools.

Apprentices generally progress quickly and feel confident in applying their skills in training and at work. Apprentices who are disadvantaged typically make progress at the same rate as their peers. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. Apprentices are supported with care by dedicated welfare and safeguarding teams, ensuring young and vulnerable apprentices feel safe and settled in residential accommodation.

Apprentices attend informative, age-appropriate personal development sessions that cover topics such as drug awareness and healthy relationships. Apprentices take part in enrichment activities that they choose, including bowling, swimming, and cinema trips. This creates a positive and inclusive environment where apprentices feel valued and motivated in their studies.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that training and resources are of a high quality in all subjects.
- Leaders should ensure that the standard of apprentices' work, particularly written work, is

of a consistently high standard.

- Leaders should monitor closely the progress that groups of apprentices make, particularly those who been previously eligible for free school meals or previously looked after children.
 - Leaders should plan more opportunities for apprentices to further develop their awareness of personal and social responsibility and of diversity in communities.
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About this inspection

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with apprentices, trustees, the executive principal of education and training, the head and deputy head of the National Construction College, managers and staff during the inspection.

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) operates as a specialist national construction training provider. CITB provides specialist construction apprenticeship training that is not typically available in the wider further education and skills sector, to meet national and regional skills needs. CITB delivers training from two sites, the National Construction College (NCC) East, at Bircham Newton, Norfolk, and NCC South at Erith, South London.

At the time of the inspection, CITB had 495 apprentices in learning. Two hundred and forty-eight apprentices were aged 16-18, of whom 144 were under 18 at the start of their apprenticeship. The other 247 apprentices were 19 years or older. The majority of apprentices study at level 2, with 83 studying at level 3. The largest number of apprentices train in scaffolding, construction plant, groundworker and highways maintenance. Other apprentices train to be formworkers, steplejacks and lightning protection operatives.

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Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 13 January 2026

Number of learners

Total learners

495

Apprenticeships

495

Percentage of learning aims successfully achieved

Apprenticeships overall achievement rate

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	68	61	Close to average
2022/23	60	55	Close to average
2021/22	60	53	Close to average

Apprenticeships pass rate

Year	This provider	National average
2023/24	97	98
2022/23	97	97
2021/22	98	98

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other providers can learn from it.

Strong standard

The provider reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The provider is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The provider needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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