

Inspection of NHBC Services Limited

Inspection dates:

10 to 13 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

National House Building Council Services Limited (NHBC) is an independent learning provider. It was established in 1936 as a provider of warranty and insurance for new homes and was registered to teach apprenticeships in 2020. NHBC has training sites in Milton Keynes, Tamworth, Newcastle, Hull and Cambridge. At the time of the inspection, there were 358 apprentices studying on two different apprenticeships in construction. There were 266 apprentices studying level 4 construction site supervisor and 92 studying level 2 bricklayer. Level 4 construction site supervisor is taught online, while the bricklayer apprenticeship is taught face to face at the hubs. At the time of the inspection, 25 apprentices were aged 16 to 18 years old. NHBC does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Too few apprentices studying construction site supervisor achieve the full apprenticeship. However, many of those who leave early do achieve the National Vocational Qualification that enables them to apply for the gold construction skills certification scheme supervisory card, which employers value. Apprentices who successfully complete their apprenticeship achieve very well, with most achieving high grades and progressing to positive destinations.

Too many apprentices do not have a positive attitude towards their mathematics and English learning. Apprentices studying construction site supervisor struggle to find time to access support and functional skills learning opportunities. Where it is done well, for those apprentices studying bricklaying, apprentices benefit from a well-planned curriculum that provides them with useful opportunities to access mathematics and English support. Many apprentices studying construction site supervisor do not access these sessions and, consequently, do not deepen the numeracy abilities that are essential for their jobs or achieve their required functional skills.

Apprentices consistently benefit from a calm and purposeful learning environment. Apprentices conduct themselves in a professional manner and value the respectful and inclusive learning culture. Apprentices attend their technical and vocational lessons well and are motivated to learn new skills and knowledge. The vast majority of apprentices enjoy their learning experience at the hubs, online and in their workplaces.

Apprentices studying bricklaying benefit from highly experienced tutors and relevant up-to-date technical training. Apprentices showcase their skills and competencies, completing a range of bricklaying projects before progressing on to more advanced skills such as accurately cutting bricks to the correct angle for the top of an archway. Apprentices are exposed to and experiment with the latest technologies and developments in the bricklaying sector from suppliers' master classes. Apprentices gain the necessary new knowledge, skills and behaviours they require to become effective employees.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to report concerns. Apprentices are trained to be aware of the risks in the construction industry. Apprentices adopt safe working practices to minimise the risks associated with the sector for themselves or others when learning or in the workplace.

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

Leaders have not ensured that the site supervisor apprenticeship is sufficiently planned to meet all apprentices' needs. Leaders do not tailor the apprenticeship programmes to account for apprentices' individual needs or starting points. Employers do not routinely provide apprentices with the necessary off-the-job time to complete their functional skills training. As a result, too many apprentices on the

construction site supervisor standard do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable and do not achieve their qualifications within the planned time.

Leaders have not ensured all apprentices benefit from effective progress reviews. Apprentices studying construction site supervisor have very limited progress reviews throughout their apprenticeship. When they do take place, staff do not ensure that all employers are involved in these essential reviews. Too many apprentices are unclear on what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve, and employers are not fully aware of the support apprentices require in the workplace.

Leaders have not yet fully implemented a quality assurance process to completely appreciate their strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders do not routinely monitor or support trainers to continuously improve the quality of education. As a result, not all apprentices consistently benefit from high-quality learning experiences.

Leaders do not benefit from external scrutiny to ensure they have sufficient oversight of all aspects of the apprenticeship. Leaders recognise some of the challenges that currently exist within the construction site supervisor apprenticeship and recognise that current concerns would benefit from external support and challenge. While leaders have sensible plans in place to develop governance arrangements, it is too early to see the full impact of these improvements on all apprentices.

Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the construction industry as a long-standing and highly experienced insurance provider in the housebuilding sector. Leaders effectively use this intelligence to introduce apprenticeships that have the greatest impact on the quality of construction in the sector. Employers value the relationship they have with NHBC and recognise that the teaching is up to date and meets industrial standards.

Leaders and managers have successfully sequenced the technical elements within the apprenticeships. Leaders have implemented a five-week intensive programme at the start of the apprenticeship to teach apprentices fundamental bricklaying skills before they enter the workplace. Apprentices attending the construction site supervisor apprenticeship initially learn about health, safety and effective communication skills before progressing to leadership, ethics and accurately assessing the quality of others' work. Employers value the skills apprentices are learning and quickly applying in the workplace.

Trainers at the brickwork hubs support apprentices to develop the skills they require in the workplace effectively. Trainers use assessment effectively to identify the progress apprentices are making and to provide valuable feedback and guidance on the areas they should improve. As a result, apprentices are clear on what they are doing well and know what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

Staff quickly develop apprentices' character, confidence and resilience for employment in the housebuilding sector. Apprentices benefit from learning

environments and expectations that mirror those in industry, such as early start times, health and safety briefings and personal protective equipment checks. Apprentices respond well to these expectations set at the outset of the programme and are well prepared for the industry they are entering.

Trainers have high expectations of apprentices and support them effectively to produce work to a high standard. Trainers teach apprentices studying bricklaying to break down complex wall designs into more manageable segments and only progress once mastery has been achieved. Apprentices learning bricklaying are clear on what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. Apprentices recognise it is essential to be able to produce work to a high standard when working on the construction of new homes.

Leaders and managers are ambitious for the vast majority of their apprentices and support them effectively to be recognised externally for their achievements. For example, apprentices studying bricklaying have seen success in the Guild of Bricklaying competition and have been nominated for the Youthbuild Young Builder of the Year award. Apprentices studying construction site supervisor are recognised as being part of successful site teams in the annual Pride in the Job Awards. However, leaders are not fully aware of how best to support disadvantaged apprentices, particularly those children who are looked after. Leaders celebrate apprentices' high achievement and excellence at regional and national levels.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure the apprenticeships are planned and tailored to meet apprentices' individual needs.
- Provide all apprentices with effective progress reviews throughout their apprenticeship so that they receive the support they need.
- Ensure all apprentices can access the required support with English and mathematics.
- Implement processes to understand the quality of education and how best to support staff to continually develop their teaching, learning and assessment abilities.
- Ensure leaders have appropriate external support, scrutiny and oversight of all aspects of an apprenticeship.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2654229
Address	NHBC House Davy Avenue Milton Keynes MK5 8FP
Contact number	01908746380
Website	www.nhbc.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Darryl Stewart
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the qualifications 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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