

Inspection of B-Skill Limited

Inspection dates:

19 to 22 August 2025

Overall effectiveness**Good**

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Adult learning programmes

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Information about this provider

B-Skill Limited is an independent training provider based in Gateshead. It offers adult learning programmes at levels 3 and 4 in beauty therapy and barbering, as well as a range of apprenticeships at levels 3 and 5.

At the time of the inspection, there were 248 learners on adult learning programmes. Most were on level 3 courses in areas including beauty treatments, nail technology, combined beauty therapy, make-up artistry, massage therapy and reflexology. Learners were taught in training centres based across Yorkshire, the north east and the north west.

There were 82 apprentices training on seven standards. Most were on the level 3 youth support worker apprenticeship. Smaller numbers of apprentices were studying business and customer service-related apprenticeships at level 3, level 5 management and level 3 safeguarding support. Apprentices were based across England and taught online in group and one-to-one sessions. Most were over the age of 18.

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

Learners and apprentices train in professional environments where they develop valuable skills for employment. Learners on beauty courses wear their uniform with pride and communicate professionally with clients. Apprentices use technical terminology fluently in their job roles. Most attend well and arrive at taught sessions and reviews on time.

Learners and apprentices are motivated to achieve. In lessons, they listen attentively to their tutors and coaches and to the contributions of their peers. Learners routinely practise the techniques that they learn at home and write about their developing skills using reflective journals.

Staff support learners and apprentices well to overcome any barriers to learning they may experience. Adult learners returning to education quickly develop new skills and gain the confidence that they need to pursue new routes into employment. Tutors make effective adaptations to their teaching so that learners and apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well.

Learners and apprentices feel safe in training and at work. They understand the risks prevalent in their job roles and in the areas where they live and work, such as human trafficking and county lines. Young apprentices are well informed about how to stay safe online and the importance of consent in relationships.

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

Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have successfully refocused their curriculum to enable young people and adults to access purposeful training and secure employment. They have specialised in beauty therapy courses for adult learners and have modified their apprenticeship offer to meet the growing demand for skilled youth workers nationally.

Leaders recruit staff who are well qualified and experienced. Tutors attend useful training so they remain current with emerging trends in the sectors they teach. However, leaders do not ensure that tutors receive relevant training to develop further their teaching and assessment skills.

Staff teach topics in a logical order so that learners and apprentices understand, retain and can apply what they have learned. Level 3 youth support worker apprentices successfully apply the de-escalation strategies that they learn to help young people regulate their behaviours. Tutors on Level 3 nail technology plan monthly masterclasses led by industry experts to enable learners to consolidate their existing skills using new equipment and emerging techniques.

Coaches work effectively with employers to plan apprenticeship curriculums well. They use apprentices' starting points and feedback from employers effectively to

tailor projects and scenarios that help apprentices develop the individual skills they need for their roles. Coaches work with employers successfully to organise suitable workplace opportunities that help apprentices broaden their understanding, skills and interests.

Tutors use a range of effective teaching and assessment strategies. They demonstrate and explain techniques clearly and use questioning skilfully to test learners' and apprentices' understanding. Apprenticeship tutors use online learning tools effectively to facilitate discussion and respectful participation. Learners mostly receive helpful feedback from tutors on the quality of their practical work. However, in a few instances, feedback is not sufficiently developmental, and learners do not know how to improve their skills further.

Many learners and apprentices benefit from valuable opportunities to extend their skills and contribute positively to the communities where they live and work. Youth support worker apprentices take part in fundraising walks with the young people in their care. Learners work with local charities to give haircuts to those experiencing hardship and provide treatments at community events. Leaders and managers rightly recognise the need to ensure that apprentices and learners in all centres have access to equivalent opportunities.

Learners and apprentices achieve well. More than half achieve distinction grades, and those working towards functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics achieve them. All apprentices secure permanent employment on completion of their apprenticeship, many with higher salaries and increased responsibility. Learners quickly develop new knowledge and skills, and most progress to further training or secure employment when they complete their courses.

Tutors and coaches provide learners and apprentices with helpful careers information and guidance. Apprentices discuss their plans with coaches and know the roles they could pursue on completion of their apprenticeship. Staff help learners to understand the opportunities to work in sectors such as television, film and fashion. They help learners develop practical skills for self-employment such as using social media to market their services effectively.

Leaders and managers have effective oversight of apprenticeship programmes and most adult learning programmes. Leaders mostly use the information they gather to make improvements. However, they do not have effective oversight of the progress of learners on level 3 combined beauty therapy. Leaders have not ensured that these learners have sufficient teaching hours, and too many learners are past their planned end date as a result. Leaders have identified potential solutions to improve the quality of this course, although these have yet to be implemented.

A carefully selected board of governors provides effective support to help leaders maintain a high-quality curriculum, alongside navigating changes to the curriculum and staffing. It challenges leaders effectively to ensure that staff remain well supported and that planned improvements to provision are realised.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Improve oversight of all adult learning programmes so issues can be identified early and action taken quickly to make improvements where needed.
- Ensure that the feedback learners receive is consistently helpful so all learners know how to improve their work.
- Provide all tutors with well-planned training to develop their teaching and assessment skills.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50585
Address	B-Skill LMT YBN Delta Bank Road Gateshead NE11 9DJ
Contact number	0333 9000690
Website	www.b-skill.com
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Paul Wileman
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	7 to 10 February 2023
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of curriculum and 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

Alison Dennis, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jacque Brown	His Majesty's Inspector
Karen Anderson	His Majesty's Inspector
Kim Bleasdale	His Majesty's Inspector
Hayley Lomas	His Majesty's Inspector

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