

Inspection of The College of Animal Welfare Limited

Inspection dates: 5 to 8 July 2022

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	Good

Information about this provider

The College of Animal Welfare (CAW) is based in Huntingdon and provides learning in centres in Cambridgeshire, London, and Yorkshire. CAW offers apprenticeships and adult learning programmes, specialising in animal care and veterinary science. CAW has one subcontractor with six remaining apprentices working towards completing their apprenticeship framework in Veterinary Nursing.

At the time of inspection, CAW had 1,140 learners. Of these, 1,056 were studying apprenticeship programmes. Of the apprentices, 64 were aged 16 to 18 and 992 were aged 19 years and over. 858 apprentices were studying veterinary nursing at level 3 and 149 apprentices were studying animal care and welfare at level 2. A further, 49 were studying apprenticeships in business studies and leadership and management. Of the adult learners, 62 were studying the diploma in veterinary nursing at level 3 and 22 were studying the level 3 dog grooming diploma. CAW received a transfer of 151 apprentices studying veterinary nursing at level 3 from a provider no longer in receipt of funding. The transfer took place in March 2020, immediately before the first national lockdown resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These apprentices received their training online within five days of transferring to CAW.

There are no learners or apprentices currently in receipt of high needs funding.

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

Apprentices and adult learners develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours that prepare them well for their chosen careers. Apprentices progress promptly to work independently in their practices. They have opportunities to take additional qualifications throughout their programmes. Apprentices studying veterinary nursing may gain suitably qualified person status, enabling them to dispense approved medications. Adult learners develop knowledge and skills, which they apply to procedures in their workplaces. They learn about the anatomy and physiology of small animals, which deepens their understanding of the consequences of the injuries and illnesses they treat. Apprentices and adult learners work closely with their colleagues and become valued team members.

Apprentices develop good knowledge and application of animal-related legislation. They understand the animal welfare freedoms that include freedom from pain, hunger, thirst, fear and distress. Apprentices learn capture and restraining techniques that keep themselves safe and ensure minimum distress to animals. Apprentices' increased understanding of animal behaviour enables them to better identify signs of animal abuse.

Apprentices and adult learners develop good professional behaviours at college and in the workplace. Their attendance and punctuality are good. They learn the importance of communication, networking and professionalism in their work. As a result, they become increasingly effective in dealing with customers and can explain with sensitivity, the care and treatment options for pets.

Apprentices learn how to be active citizens in the communities they live and work in. They participate in activities to raise funds for cancer research charities. Apprentices quickly develop values, such as listening and respecting the opinions of peers and work colleagues. As a result, apprentices apply these values at work and in their wider lives.

Apprentices and adult learners have a good knowledge of safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe. They know the importance of practices, such as the storage of chemicals, managing radiation and keeping animals safe during surgical procedures. They know how to report their concerns and who to go to for support.

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

Senior leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for the animal care sector. They have used their extensive knowledge of the sector to respond effectively to the needs of local and regional employers. Senior leaders have developed appropriate courses in dog grooming and animal care and welfare assistant qualifications. As a result, apprentices and adult learners are prepared for work in veterinary-related professions that are in high demand due to the increase in pet ownership.

Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge and skills as a result of their training. They promptly apply their training in their job roles. They complete post-operation checks on pets after dental surgery. They know how to check vital signs, such as breathing, heart rate and temperature. As a result, they provide high-quality treatment for the animals in their care.

Adult learners study meaningful qualifications that enable them to pursue their career goals. Animal care assistants develop their skills and knowledge and work towards veterinary nurse qualifications while continuing with employment. They undertake increasingly challenging tasks on their own, such as successfully administering heart massage to a pet rabbit in cardiac arrest. Those studying dog grooming learn the business skills they need to run their own small businesses.

Assessors provide effective, developmental, and timely feedback that helps apprentices and adult learners to deepen their knowledge. Apprentices know what they have done well and what they need to improve. They know more and remember more over time and can complete increasingly complex tasks. Veterinary nursing apprentices understand how to provide focused post-operative care for dogs, identifying low heart rate, and responding quickly and calmly. As a result, they provide good support to the vets they work with.

Apprentices and adult learners benefit from highly experienced tutors, who are specialists in their fields. Tutors update their clinical and teaching skills through continuous professional development. For example, they update their clinical expertise in areas, such as managing ear disease and complications in surgery. Tutors use their knowledge to plan and sequence training programmes that meet the needs of apprentices, adult learners and employers. Apprentices build towards the Day One Skills list, which is the professional benchmark for veterinary nursing established by The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. As a result, apprentices are well equipped to work independently with minimum supervision in the workplace.

Apprentices and adult learners have good access to high-quality learning resources. An ambitious and engaging digital learning resource is well used by them to enhance and consolidate learning. Apprentices can explain complex models, such as the prescribing cascade, which allows vets to prevent suffering by prescribing medicines that may not otherwise be permitted for animal use. Senior leaders have worked with sector experts to develop virtual reality resources. Consequently, apprentices and adult learners develop animal-handling skills in a safe and ethical way.

Apprentices and adult learners develop good English and mathematics skills. Apprentices are skilled in calculating the drip rate of intravenous fluids. Adult learners studying dog grooming understand angles used in fur cutting and confidently calculate the correct ratios of disinfectant and shampoo. Apprentices and adult learners receive useful feedback on the technical content and style of their writing. As a result, they make clear improvements in their written work over the duration of the programme. Most apprentices successfully complete their English and mathematics qualifications at their first attempt.

Governance arrangements are effective. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. External oversight is provided by an employer forum that includes training managers from national employers and government agencies. This forum meets frequently to analyse reports of the quality of training and effectiveness of safeguarding measures. As a result, senior leaders recruited mental health advisers to better support apprentices and adult learners.

Leaders have not ensured that workplace supervisors for level 3 veterinary nursing apprenticeships are confident in their roles. Leaders have worked hard to communicate the significant and ongoing changes to the apprenticeship standards qualifications through news bulletins and their national supervisor forum. However, too few supervisors feel sufficiently prepared to support apprentices in developing their workplace portfolios to meet these standards. Consequently, apprentices' experience of workplace assessment varies too much and is not yet good.

Tutors do not plan and provide effective ongoing impartial career advice and guidance. Too few apprentices understand the benefits of further training. As a result, apprentices are unclear about how to increase their earnings through specialising, and about the range of careers available to them beyond the veterinary field.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders promote a culture of safety. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding learners and apprentices. Staff are appropriately trained for their roles and the provider has good links with regional support agencies. The designated safeguarding lead and safeguarding group meet frequently to review safeguarding procedures. When adult learners or apprentices make referrals, staff actions are timely. They ensure that appropriate support is put into place for those apprentices and learners who need it.

Learners and apprentices have a good knowledge of workplace health and safety. Learners used the knowledge of waste disposal gained in their off-the-job training to improve clinical waste management in their practices.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers need to ensure that workplace supervisors of apprentices on level 3 veterinary nursing fully understand their role. Leaders need to have effective, ongoing communication with workplace supervisors to ensure that supervisors provide good support to apprentices to complete their qualifications.
- Senior leaders need to ensure that apprentices receive ongoing impartial career advice and guidance to enable apprentices to consider the full range of career options available to them.

Provider details

Unique reference number	51224
Address	Headland House Chord Business Park London Road Godmanchester Huntingdon PE29 2BQ
Contact number	01480 422060
Website	caw.ac.uk
Principal/CEO	Barbara cooper
Provider type	Independent Learning Provider
Date of previous inspection	8–11 February 2016
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Principal, 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

Chris Bealey, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Worgs	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nikki Botterill	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Jablonski	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Grant	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Gray	Ofsted Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022