

# Inspection of Childbase Partnership Limited

Inspection dates: 31 January to 2 February 2024

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Childbase Partnership Limited (Childbase) is an independent learning provider based in Newport Pagnell. It specialises in training apprentices in childcare and early years education and leadership in Childbase's 44 nurseries in the south of England, east of England and the Midlands. Childbase successfully registered to provide apprenticeships in 2021 as an employer provider and subsequently became a main provider in August 2023. It does not currently work with any employers outside Childbase.

At the time of the inspection, there were 162 apprentices in learning. Of these, 29 apprentices were studying level 2 early years practitioner and 113 apprentices were studying level 3 early years educator. There were 14 apprentices on the level 3 team leader programme and six apprentices were studying level 5 early years lead practitioner. Around one third of apprentices were aged 16 to 18 years old.

Apprentices attend training at Childbase's academy on one day each month. In addition, trainers visit apprentices in the workplace once per month at minimum.

In a new provider monitoring visit in September 2022, inspectors judged Childbase to have achieved 'reasonable progress' in two areas and 'significant progress' in one area.

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

Apprentices value their training and work roles with children greatly. They benefit from high-quality teaching and support from experienced trainers, who link theory and practical learning skilfully. Apprentices make valued friendships with their peers and build their confidence significantly in the inclusive environment that leaders and staff have created. As a result, they attend very well and are motivated to achieve, which most do.

Apprentices gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours quickly and apply this learning to their work. They take responsibility for the children they care for and quickly learn to work independently with them. For example, level 2 early years practitioner apprentices learn how to design stimulating activities that support children's learning effectively. Level 3 early years educator apprentices work closely with parents to prepare children carefully for successful transition to primary school. Consequently, apprentices become proficient in their job role and make a positive contribution to their settings.

Apprentices develop their character and resilience well. For example, they learn how to manage difficult conversations with parents in a way that avoids confrontation and leads to a positive outcome. Level 3 team leader and level 5 lead practitioner apprentices use the skills they gain in managing conflict to improve staff's morale and performance successfully. As such, apprentices quickly gain the skills and confidence to manage challenging situations at work competently.

Apprentices have a secure understanding of relevant topics such as healthy eating, mental well-being and equality and inclusion. They use this knowledge well to benefit the children in their settings. For example, level 3 early years educator apprentices learn nursery rhymes in different languages to help children from other cultures participate successfully. However, apprentices do not benefit consistently from planned opportunities to develop their broader interests and talents.

Apprentices feel safe and are safe in their training and at work. They know how to report concerns if needed. Apprentices know how to stay safe from risks in their local communities, including the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They benefit from a comprehensive focus on safeguarding and health and safety in their studies. As a result, apprentices protect themselves and the children they care for very effectively.

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

Leaders have developed a range of ambitious courses that support the demand for high-quality early years staff and leaders. They work closely with employers to understand their staffing challenges and to meet skills gaps in the sector. Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of employers and apprentices very well. For example, they plan for apprentices to gain essential mandatory qualifications and valuable additional qualifications, such as paediatric first aid. As a result,

apprentices develop the knowledge and skills that employers need to grow and upskill their early years workforce successfully.

Leaders and trainers plan the curriculum carefully so that apprentices develop knowledge and skills in a logical order. They ensure that level 2 early years practitioner apprentices know how to keep children safe before they move on to more complex topics such as child development. Level 5 lead practitioner apprentices study leadership theory and reflect on their own leadership style, before they plan a change management project in their setting. Consequently, trainers ensure that apprentices build their knowledge and skills over time.

Leaders and trainers recruit apprentices appropriately. They work closely with employers to assess apprentices' starting points accurately using interviews and skills scans. Trainers use this information to adapt their teaching to meet apprentices' needs effectively. They ensure that apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from highly individualised support and specialist resources, such as visual aids. As a result, most apprentices, including those with additional support needs, make good progress and achieve well.

Highly experienced and qualified trainers teach new and challenging concepts expertly. They use well-managed peer discussion, group tasks and real-life scenarios to help apprentices understand and apply new information very well. For example, trainers use role play skilfully with level 2 early years practitioner apprentices to demonstrate clearly the responsibilities of the different professionals involved in a vulnerable child's life. Consequently, apprentices improve their understanding of multi-agency working and the need for effective communication between professionals.

Trainers ensure that apprentices use professional and technical language accurately. For example, apprentices understand the danger of anaphylactic shock and the importance of knowing about children's food allergies. As a result, most apprentices use complex terminology confidently and correctly in their job roles.

Trainers work diligently with employers to ensure that apprentices benefit from their full entitlement to high-quality off-the-job training. Experienced work-based mentors help apprentices to master skills to fluency through valuable practice in their settings. For example, they help level 3 early years educator apprentices to apply their understanding of child development theory to plan children's next steps effectively. Consequently, apprentices consolidate their skills in the workplace quickly and securely.

Trainers and employers have a clear and detailed knowledge of apprentices' progress. They set and monitor appropriately challenging targets which help most apprentices to improve their work to a high standard.

Trainers use assessment effectively so that apprentices understand the quality of their work and what they need to do to improve further. For example, trainers routinely give apprentices clear feedback on how to develop their draft assignments

to achieve high grades, which many subsequently do. Trainers prepare apprentices for their assessments thoroughly. As a result, the majority of apprentices achieve high grades successfully.

Trainers do not consistently provide level 3 apprentices with sufficient feedback on the spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in their written work. Trainers do not consistently ensure that level 5 lead practitioner apprentices improve their mathematical skills to a level in line with the work they do. As a result, those level 3 and 5 apprentices who need to improve their literacy and numeracy skills for their job roles or higher levels of study do so too slowly.

Leaders and trainers provide relevant and useful careers advice and guidance to apprentices. They ensure that apprentices are suitably advised on careers in schools, such as teaching, and progression to higher levels of education. Apprentices reflect on their career aspirations at the start of the programme and evaluate these with trainers at review meetings regularly. As a result, most apprentices are well prepared and supported for their next steps.

Leaders care greatly about their staff and their health and well-being. They ensure that staff workload is considered carefully. Leaders aspire for staff to be happy and well supported in the job roles, which they are.

Leaders recognised that too many apprentices were leaving their programmes before they completed them. They have taken rapid action to resolve this issue. For example, they have adjusted the teaching of functional skills to improve individual support for apprentices. As a result, the number of apprentices who pass these qualifications has increased.

Those responsible for governance are suitably familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They use their skills and experience to fully support and challenge leaders to meet improvement targets, such as increasing the number of apprentices who achieve. Consequently, governors support continuous and sustainable improvement in the quality of training well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Ensure that trainers support level 3 apprentices to develop their literacy skills to help them in their learning and at work.
- Ensure that trainers support level 5 apprentices to develop their numeracy skills to help them in their learning and at work.
- Continue to ensure that all apprentices achieve their qualifications in a timely manner.

- Ensure that all apprentices have access to planned opportunities which develop their personal talents and interests.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2654184
<b>Address</b>	Kingston House Northampton Road Newport Pagnell MK16 8NJ
<b>Contact number</b>	01908 211699
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://childbasepartnership.com/">https://childbasepartnership.com/</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Emma Rooney
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Not applicable

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of academy, 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

Sara Woodward, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Claire Griffin	Ofsted Inspector
Hilary Yuille	Ofsted Inspector
Liz Greenhalgh	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Hillman	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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