

Sunderland Engineering Training Association Ltd (SETA)

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates	29 January–1 February 2013	
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners	Good-2	
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good-2	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good-2	

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Outcomes for apprentices are good for the vast majority who are successful within their planned time scales.
- Apprentices develop a high level skill, confidence and competence in a range of engineering applications
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Training is well planned, structured, interesting and engages the apprentices to improve their knowledge and understanding, and progress.
- Tracking and recording of the progress apprentices make is well recorded, clear targets are set and learners benefit from accurate feedback on how to effectively improve their performance.
- English, mathematics and information and communication technology activities, closely and accurately mapped to lesson plan activities, are used skilfully to plan learning to meet the needs and competence of individual apprentices.
- SETA has a clear direction with a board of trustees who take their supervisory roles seriously and have a strong focus on improving performance and quality improvement.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The number of apprentices who successfully complete their programme in the planned time scale needs to continue to increase.
- Too few teaching and learning sessions are outstanding. In the less successful sessions, the range of teaching activities is limited and there are missed opportunities to check and reinforce apprentices understanding.
- Portfolio assessment is brief and lacks detail on how the apprentice could improve their performance and achieve at a higher level.
- Actions for improvement arising from senior managers' meetings need to be better recorded to evaluate progress and more effectively link to quality improvement.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Develop the further use of the monitoring and tracking systems to identify apprentices at risk of leaving the programme and use to continually evaluate the effectiveness of strategies introduced to improved success rates.
- Improve the standard of teaching and learning in weaker sessions through the introduction of a wider range of teaching activities. Develop more effective methods to check learning, understanding, progress, and ensure all learners are involved in learning.
- Ensure that portfolio assessment and feedback is sufficiently detailed and informative to make clear the apprentice's standard of performance and how to improve the quality of their work.
- Ensure that actions arising from managers meeting are systematically and formally recorded to contribute better to quality improvement.
- Accelerate the actions introduced to improve the quality of the sub-contracted provision and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions to ensure apprentices are making good progress.
- Include individual targets focused on quality improvement as part of the performance-management process.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Apprentices achieve a high level of skills, confidence and competency in practical engineering applications. They demonstrate a particularly good range and high-level of hand skills in SETA's workshop and on employers' premises. They adopt safe working practices in producing a complex range of engineering components and assemblies. For example, apprentices operate with confidence extremely high value machine tools, manufacturing complex aerospace components and oil drilling equipment to very high industrial standards
- Personal learning and thinking skills effectively delivered through accredited study packs are highly valued by apprentices and tutors, helping them to gain confidence and improve their English skills. Attendance and punctuality is good and apprentices enjoy their learning.
- Apprentices develop a good work ethic and are confident to take on additional responsibilities within their employment. They have a good understanding of career progression routes and how they can benefit from training opportunities.
- Overall success rates have significantly improved since the previous inspection and are now at or above the national average. Improvements have been made in the number of apprentices who are successful within their planned end date, which is now significantly above the national average.
- Success rates on the classroom-based learning, where short vocational course are provided in engineering at level 2, are very high and significantly above national averages.
- The standards of written work are good and apprentices take pride in the production and presentation of their portfolios.
- The in-year data indicates retention of apprentices has significantly improved compared to the same period on the previous year. Current apprentices are all making very good progress with many on target to achieve early. Apprentices on advanced mathematics courses have high achievement particularly in relation to their starting point.

- Progression rates to higher level courses and into employment are high. No significant differences were identified in achievement between different groups of apprentices.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, reflecting the significant and rapid improvement in success rates and the increased skills development for the majority of learners. Training sessions are generally well planned and managed. Learners benefit from the knowledgeable and experienced staff, the exceptional range of industry standard resources at both SETA and employers' premises, and the tasks and activities which engage and interest them.
- The high expectations of staff benefit apprentices during their classroom sessions. Tutors effectively assess the progress of apprentices through well-directed question and answer techniques. In some sessions, effective encouragement is given to apprentices to present their detailed answers to the whole group, develop their confidence in presenting to their peers and improve their communication skills.
- Apprentices often set their own individual goals for learning. For most apprentices, challenging tasks are set that extend their understanding and develop their practical skills. The range of teaching methods is generally very good and provides apprentices with very effective learning activities. Tutors are knowledgeable, instructing and preparing apprentices well for the next stage of their learning. Apprentices enjoy their learning and make good progress during the teaching and training sessions.
- In the minority of less successful sessions, the pace is too fast for apprentices to absorb new knowledge and develop their understanding of the subject matter. Opportunities are missed to assess their progress and understanding. In these sessions, the majority of apprentices remain passive and are not involved in asking and answering questions to clarify their understanding of engineering concepts.
- Employers have very high standards of health and safety and ensure that learners remain well protected when working and training. Employers speak highly of the expertise and facilities at SETA's training centre; communications are good and employers are kept fully involved as to the progress their apprentices are making in their off-the-job training.
- The effectively designed programmes meet the needs of apprentices and employers. The well-managed and structured practical and theory sessions build on apprentices' previous knowledge and there is a close match between on- and off-the-job training. Apprentices' involvement in learning is good and they maintain their interests throughout training. They develop a good knowledge and understanding of engineering principles and practical applications. They have good access to additional qualifications that provides them with the skills and expertise to progress to higher qualifications.
- Progress reviews are conducted to a particularly high standard. Target-setting is very clear, time constrained and achievable, this ensures that learners are fully aware of the progress they need to make for the next stage of their training; employers are very proactive in the review process providing good opportunities for apprentices to gather evidence and develop specialised skills and knowledge.
- Portfolio work is of a very high standard, well written and with much detail, clearly and accurately explaining how the apprentice has manufactured complex components. However, SETA has recognised that written feedback is brief and does not explain how the apprentices could improve their performance. Verbal feedback to apprentices is very detailed, thorough and supportive, indicating how to improve their performance.
- Learners, assessed prior to starting their programmes, receive further detailed and thorough assessments of their engineering competence and learning styles. Tutors at the training centre

have full knowledge of the initial assessment results and level of attainment of their apprentices and use this effectively to plan their learning sessions.

- SETA systematically identifies apprentices who require improvement of their functional skills. English, mathematics and information and communication technology activities, closely and accurately mapped to lesson plan activities, are used skilfully by tutors to plan learning that meets the needs and competence of individual apprentices. Scheduled into the training programme are further specialised activities to support apprentices in developing their functional skill levels to meet their framework requirements.
- Additional qualifications in advanced mathematics support the achievement of useful learning goals that helps apprentices transition to higher qualifications.
- Equality and diversity are very effectively reinforced during training sessions and progress reviews. Tutors use very good examples to explore gender differences and skilfully introduce topics that promote discussion in the classroom. During progress reviews apprentices are encouraged to think of the wider issues in society using topical media reports.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- A clear strategic direction is well informed by local and national priorities. A key priority is improving the quality and overall performance of the provision. Communication throughout the company is good with staff having a clear understanding of the objectives of the company and the roles they play in helping achieve these goals. Staff value the open style of management.
- Board members take their supervisory role seriously and play a very active role in ensuring that key priorities for improvement are on target to be achieved. They are well informed through regular reports and have the necessary expertise to challenge senior managers. Board members contribute well to the shaping of strategic direction.
- The performance-management process is effective at improving success rates but insufficiently linked to individual targets for quality improvement. The operational day-to-day performance management of staff is good with underperformance being successfully challenged. Tracking and monitoring of learners progress is very good and used effectively by senior managers to evaluate overall performance.
- Reshaping the management structure after the previous inspection has been successful at developing and introducing improved arrangements for quality improvement. Strategies to improve success rates have been successful. It has been recognised by the provider that sub-contracted provision needs to improve and effective actions to improve this have recently been introduced.
- Observations of key learning processes including teaching, learning and assessment have been improved and strengthened since the previous inspection. Well planned observations take place quarterly with the grades awarded being internally moderated. A strong focus has been on making the process more robust, with staff development taking place to ensure that observers are skilled in evaluating learning sessions and providing clear development points for tutors.
- Curriculum planning is very effective, reflecting the needs of both apprentices and employers. SETA has excellent working relationships with its partner employers which are used productively to ensure that programmes are tailored to their needs to improve the employment opportunities for apprentices. The management of on- and off-the-job training is exceptionally good.
- The coordination and management of functional skills is good with effective support in place to ensure that learners progress and achieve in a timely manner. Functional skills are well linked to vocational areas. Additional programmes have been introduced in advanced mathematics to help prepare learners to progress to higher level qualifications.
- The self-assessment process is inclusive and involves staff evaluating evidence from all aspects of the learner journey. Apprentice and employer views are collected and used well in identifying

and promoting improvement. The self-assessment report is evaluative and reflects many of the finding of inspectors.

- The quality improvement plan is clear and well focused on key priorities for improvement. It is used as an effective quality tool and is regularly reviewed by senior managers and the board to ensure sufficient progress toward key objectives is being made, but the provider recognised the need to better record the actions required, resulting from senior managers meetings and better link this to quality improvement.
- The arrangements for safeguarding learners meet the statutory requirements. Learners feel safe and staff and members of the board take part in regular training to ensure they can recognise and identify safeguarding concerns.
- The management and promotion of equality and diversity is good. Regular training takes place to ensure that staff, apprentices and members of the board have a good understanding of the wider aspects of equality and diversity. The provider has been successful at raising awareness with employers who are included in equality and diversity training.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity, which is re-enforced very effectively at progress reviews. Instructors are skilled at incorporating equality into learning sessions. Learning activities at induction are very effective at challenging stereotypical views, raising apprentices' awareness of the wider aspects of discrimination.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Sunderland Engineering Training Association Ltd (SETA)

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Apprenticeships
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Engineering	2

Provider details

Sunderland Engineering Training Association Ltd (SETA)	
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16-18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 105
	Part-time: NA
Principal/CEO	Lawrence Whitney
Date of previous inspection	24 June 2011
Website address	www.seta.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Part-time	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	NA	NA	80	25	NA	NA		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ South Tyneside College ▪ City of Sunderland College 							

Additional socio-economic information

The provider is situated in Washington near Sunderland in the North East of England and provides training for apprentices within this region. The population in this region is around 1.4 million. Around 31% of the adult working population (453,000) are not qualified to level 2, a further 327,000 adults in the region are qualified to level 2 but not level 3. The regions population has around 4% of people from a minority ethnic background. The region's economic activity at 73.4% is below the national average of 76.2%. The employment rate is also below the national average. A reasonable proportion of employment in related industries in the region is of the type offered by SETA.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Stephen Miller HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the chief executive officer as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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