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Mr Robin Lockwood  
Sunderland Engineering Training Association Limited  
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Dear Mr Lockwood

### **Short inspection of Sunderland Engineering Training Association Limited (SETA)**

Following the short inspection on 21 and 22 March 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in March 2013.

#### **This provider continues to be good.**

Apprentices enjoy their training at SETA and they recognise and identify the approachable and knowledgeable trainers who are particularly effective in developing their skills and knowledge to prepare them for the next stage of their programme. SETA has good training facilities and resources that generally meet industry standards so that apprentices in their first year, where they undertake full-time, off-the-job training, learn on machinery and use tools and equipment that prepare them well to progress to the workplace. SETA plans training programmes well and supports apprentices very effectively.

SETA places a strong focus on promoting equality and diversity. It makes very good use of a challenging activity during apprentice inductions. This particularly powerful activity can introduce concepts of personal bias and stereotyping very effectively to the apprentices. Apprentices can confidently discuss issues regarding equality and diversity and British values.

SETA maintains detailed monitoring of the reasons learners do not complete their learning programmes. In many cases, business closures or redundancies are the reason for non-completion for a small number of apprentices. SETA does its best, sometimes very successfully, to find alternative employment or placements for apprentices.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding at SETA meets all statutory requirements and helps ensure that it takes all possible precautions to maintain learner and staff safety. All training staff undergo enhanced disclosure and barring service checks and have completed safeguarding training. Two managers, who act as designated officers, have undertaken additional training.

SETA maintains a strong focus on health and safety, both in the training centre and in the workplace, and all assessment activities start with a review of the working area and environment and a check that personal protective equipment is in place.

SETA very effectively introduces apprentices to the 'Prevent' agenda at induction. This clearly explains what the 'Prevent' duty means and how it links to safeguarding. A detailed workbook includes definitions and explanations of the key concepts of 'Prevent' and the possible dangers of radicalisation and extremism. SETA also provides clear guidance on the procedures to follow and actions to take if apprentices or staff have concerns.

## **Inspection findings**

- The published data for 2015/16 suggests a significant decline in achievement rates last year but this data includes duplicate records for eight apprentices who changed their main learning aim. The actual achievement rate for 2015/16 remains good and, although it has declined slightly over the last three years, it remains significantly above the latest national rate. The rate at which apprentices achieve within the planned time is also very good.
- Pass rates are very high and all learners who complete their programme successfully achieve. The reasons for not achieving are usually business closures, redundancy or disciplinary actions in the workplace.
- The current cohort of learners is not reflective of the local community, with only one female and no apprentices from any minority ethnic background.
- Apprentices enjoy their learning and participate well with activities in theory sessions. Tutors use a wide range of resources effectively to engage apprentices in their learning, and apprentices are able to apply their knowledge well to practical tasks in the workshops. Apprentices are attentive and contribute well to discussions, resulting in most apprentices making good progress. However, tutors do not always plan activities to stretch the more able apprentices who are capable of making more rapid progress.
- Tutors plan assessments well in collaboration with apprentices and employers. Training is effective in developing apprentices' skills and tutors monitor apprentices' progress in the workplace well, particularly when planning assessments. Tutors and assessors provide good constructive written feedback on apprentices' work, highlighting what they need to do to improve their work.
- SETA plans apprentices' programmes well to ensure that they meet the relevant standards. Apprentices receive training in-centre on a full-time basis for the first

year, where they complete their technical certificate and additional related qualifications, followed by three years' on-the-job training and assessment. As a result, most apprentices make good progress and successfully complete their assessments to the required standards.

- Senior managers identify key relevant issues and address them effectively to drive improvements. For example, senior managers and staff are currently working together with employers to develop the new apprenticeship standards, including additional qualifications to enhance apprentices' workplace skills.
- Although senior managers do not always specify precise and measurable targets in their meeting records, this does not adversely affect staff's understanding of required actions and their ability to respond effectively.
- Board members are clear about the direction of the organisation and set senior managers clear priorities for improvement. They are committed to growing the number of high-quality engineering apprentices to support the needs of local businesses.
- Senior managers use individual targets to performance manage staff at reviews. This process is effective in setting focused targets for quality improvement, and although these targets are often very similar for all staff, they are then individualised well to suit the role and responsibilities of each member of staff.
- Staff understand how their targets affect apprentices and the business as a whole, and are able to give clear examples of the impact of their actions on driving continual improvements. For example, recent changes to the apprentice review process, which now includes the employer as well as the apprentice, has resulted in more apprentices remaining on programme in their first year.
- Senior managers effectively monitor progress against targets and are swift to take action when this is not good. Underperforming staff are, in the first instance, given support and help to become more effective, and if performance does not improve senior managers do not hesitate in implementing formal disciplinary proceedings.
- SETA promotes British values well. It ensures that apprentices are provided with good information at induction and further reinforces the messages with poster displays in-centre. Tutors know British values well and take opportunities to engage apprentices in discussions on everyday topics, both during progress reviews and within sessions, for example regarding the Scottish referendum and Britain's planned withdrawal from the European Union.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they halt and reverse the recent decline in achievement rates by ensuring that strategies successfully reduce the number of apprentices who leave before completing their programme
- managers further develop the current strategies to recruit under-represented groups such as females and minority ethnic learners onto learning programmes

- trainers identify the abilities of all apprentices better so that they plan and deliver lessons that challenge and stretch the most able to ensure that they make even quicker progress
- senior managers ensure that actions arising from their performance reviews, reports and meetings set more specific and measurable targets for staff.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tim Gardner  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Two Her Majesty's Inspectors, assisted by one Ofsted inspector and the chief executive officer, as nominee, carried out the inspection. During the inspection, inspectors met with managers and staff, observed teaching activities and met and talked to apprentices and staff in workshops and classrooms. Inspectors also reviewed a large number of documents, learner files and records.