

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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



17 February 2016

Mrs Kath Soliman  
Chief Executive  
The Oldham Engineering Group Training Association Limited  
Mount Pleasant Industrial Estate  
Lees Road  
Oldham  
OL4 1JP

Dear Mrs Soliman

### **Short inspection of Oldham Engineering Group Training Association Ltd**

Following the short inspection on 13–14 January 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in October 2011.

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

- The new leadership team has successfully implemented the key improvement areas identified at the last inspection and reversed the dip in success rates. Leaders have created a positive learning environment that meets the needs of apprentices and their employers.
- In 2014/15, the proportion of apprentices that achieved qualifications increased and was good. The number who achieved in the planned time was below similar providers in 2014/15. This was due to technical issues related to online tests for functional skills. These have now been resolved with the awarding body and those apprentices affected have now achieved their qualifications. The majority of current learners are making good progress and are on track to achieve in their planned time.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The successful recruitment of experienced and well-qualified new tutors in electrical engineering and functional skills, the areas identified by leaders as requiring improvement, has improved apprentices' experience.
- Induction is thorough and prepares apprentices well for their programmes. Managers have invested significant funding to improve the quality of learning resources. For example, the engineering workshop has been equipped with new milling and turning machines that meet industry standards, including digital readouts.

- Managers ensure that the range of provision meets the needs of employers well and equips learners with a good range of engineering knowledge, skills and understanding. This enables apprentices to contribute well and produce high-quality and accurate engineering components in their workplaces.
- Managers introduced a successful engineering traineeship programme in September 2015. The well-structured programme prepares trainees well for future employment in the engineering industry. Three of the six trainees currently on the programme have been offered apprenticeships in their host companies, and the other three trainees are making good progress in preparing for work.
- The board of trustees meets regularly and provides good support and guidance to leaders and managers, for example, using trustees' expertise in improving the rigour of performance management. The board has a good understanding, but does not always receive data in enough detail to enable trustees to evaluate the performance of apprentices over time.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

- The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that appropriate action is taken to safeguard learners.
- Safeguarding is promoted well throughout the organisation and is reinforced in lessons, at apprentices' individual reviews and through prominent posters displayed throughout the training centre.
- Staff receive updated safeguarding training, including the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Two of the four trustees have received safeguarding training through their employment, and plans were in place to provide training to the full board at its next meeting in January 2016.
- The provider has a strong emphasis on health and safety. Learners have a good understanding of safe working practices. Learners feel safe and are confident in reporting any concerns.
- The dangers of radicalisation and extremism are covered well at induction, ensuring that learners have a good understanding of these issues. Apprentices who enrolled prior to September 2015 have yet to receive the detailed training on radicalisation and extremism, but plans are in place to do this in the next few months.

## Inspection findings

- Leaders and managers have developed a very supportive, professional and welcoming environment for learners that encourages learning and in which learners feel extremely safe. Learners are well mannered and show good respect for each other, staff and visitors. They have a good understanding of how to report any instances of potential bullying or harassment in the centre or in the workplace. New learners receive information on the dangers of radicalisation and extremism at induction, and these issues have started to be discussed further during reviews to increase apprentices' understanding.
- Managers have taken effective action to improve staffing and solve the technical issues in the online functional skills tests to reverse the decline in success rates. In 2014/15, the overall success rate for apprentices was good. Apprentices' progress is monitored closely and those falling behind receive prompt support. Consequently, current learners make good progress and most are on target to achieve in the planned timescale. Learners develop good practical engineering skills that help them to progress in their employment, and they are valued by their employers.
- Learners develop good personal skills and develop their confidence further through interaction with their peers and employer representatives in the workplace. For example, learners in manufacturing develop excellent skills in teamworking, critical evaluation of processes, and independent and collaborative learning, which are highly valued skills in engineering.
- The development of learners' mathematical and information and communication technology (ICT) skills is supported well in both discrete functional skills groups and is integrated particularly well in vocational lessons.
- Managers have improved learning resources significantly in the centre through investment in new equipment, such as milling machines, lathes, pillar drills and the good range of ICT available in classrooms. Trustees and senior managers have recruited sufficient and appropriate new staff to deliver the programmes effectively. Learners are fully supported, in particular, in functional skills and electrical and electronic engineering, which were weaknesses that managers had identified and resolved.
- Tutors use their good experience and expertise very effectively to make learning interesting and challenging for learners. Learners produce a high standard of work in both their practical and theoretical studies. Learners value the high standard of equipment they use in the training centre and understand how these additional skills enhance their employment prospects. For example, one learner valued the skills he had developed in using a machine equipped with a digital readout as this was not available in the workplace.

- The provider successfully introduced a new engineering traineeship programme in September 2015. The programme is well structured and enables learners to develop their confidence, problem-solving skills, practical skills and their mathematics and English in a structured environment. Employers support the traineeship programme well and provide work-experience placements to meet learners' specific needs. Learners on the traineeship programme make good progress and many have progressed to apprenticeship programmes. For example, one learner gained good practical skills and increased confidence in the training centre and successfully progressed to an apprenticeship with his work-placement employer.
- Tutors do not routinely check or give feedback to learners on their spelling, punctuation and grammar to help them improve. The correction of learners' English is not carried out consistently well. Too often, basic spelling mistakes and grammatical errors are overlooked, particularly with lower ability learners. Assessors make too many spelling and grammatical errors when providing written feedback.
- The quality of written feedback to learners to inform them what they need to do to improve is not consistently good. Where feedback is provided, there are too many examples of reporting the learners' current status or confirming satisfactory completion with a standard response of 'good work'.
- The provider offers a good range of additional opportunities for advanced apprentices to help them progress to further learning, for example to the higher national certificate. Apprentices can also complete an additional award in health and safety in the workplace. The provider offers a good range of full-cost bespoke industry qualifications; these courses are available to apprentices but they are not promoted sufficiently well to ensure that apprentices attend. Not all staff make apprentices aware of progression opportunities.
- Tutors set and monitor realistic targets and make frequent visits to learners in the employers' premises to monitor learners' progress. Employers are informed when learners fall behind to ensure coordinated intervention and support. This is effective in ensuring that current learners make good progress, with the significant majority now ahead of their target for achieving on or before their planned end-date. However, insufficient targets are set to enhance learners' personal development.

## **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- tutors and assessors improve the quality of their feedback to apprentices, including the identification of spelling and grammatical mistakes, so that learners know exactly what they need to do to improve further, to make more rapid progress and to achieve within the planned timescale
- progression opportunities beyond learners' apprenticeship programme are promoted well, so that the proportion of apprentices that successfully complete additional qualifications increases
- more teaching, learning and assessment become outstanding through the sharing of good practice
- tutors and employers work more collaboratively in setting apprentices' targets and provide further opportunities for gathering evidence to enhance the development of learners' personal skills
- trustees and senior managers systematically receive sufficiently detailed data with comparisons with national rates and information on trends to allow them to challenge senior leaders and secure rapid improvement.

Yours sincerely

Bob Busby  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted inspectors, assisted by the quality improvement officer as nominee, carried out the short inspection at 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 relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision.