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Mr Keith Lawrence  
Keith Graham Academy  
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Dear Mr Lawrence

### **Short inspection of Keith Graham Academy (KGA)**

Following the short inspection on 6 and 7 April 2016, 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 July 2010.

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

Leaders and managers have maintained good-quality apprenticeship provision for hairdressing and barbering in Kent. Due to low achievement rates in several subject areas delivered by a subcontractor, leaders and managers decided to stop subcontracting in 2015 and concentrate on their specialist strengths of hairdressing and barbering. Keith Graham Academy continues to offer a good range of qualifications that meet learners' and employers' needs well.

Leaders and managers maintain the training centres in Maidstone and Folkestone to high professional standards. The busy commercial environments ensure that learners develop good hairdressing and employability skills that they hone in their salons to become proficient hairdressers. The reducing volume of learners in Ramsgate means that a dedicated training centre is no longer sustainable and most of the training will now take place in the workplace.

Managers have successfully made improvements in all the areas identified at the previous inspection. They have a good awareness of the areas that need further development and improvement, although they do not always record these in the quality improvement plan. Managers have taken appropriate actions to address a recent decline in the achievement rates for the small number of advanced apprenticeships.

#### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and managers ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding are fit

for purpose. Staff and learners have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe and who to talk to should they have any concerns. Staff handle minor welfare issues sensitively and signpost learners to relevant professionals when appropriate. Managers review all welfare concerns during their regular meetings. However, staff do not make any records of minor incidents, such as ill health or changes in family circumstances, which may affect learners' ability to make good progress.

Staff complete suitable risk assessments on workplaces to ensure that apprentices work in safe and appropriate salon environments. Staff review health and safety regularly to ensure that salons maintain high standards and apprentices demonstrate safe working practices in both the training centres and salons. Good training sessions help learners understand how to protect themselves from potential dangers; in particular, learners found a short video about 'online grooming' informative.

Managers have made a reasonable start in complying with the 'Prevent' duty. They have ensured that all staff have completed a range of relevant training about 'Prevent' and all assessors feel confident in discussing the issues with learners. Managers and tutors have developed a good range of relevant training materials for learners on British values, personal safety, drugs and alcohol awareness and sexual health.

Senior managers have not yet fully addressed all aspects of the 'Prevent' duty. Managers have not established partnerships with other organisations in order to assess fully the risk of learners being radicalised. Although some actions relating to 'Prevent' are included in the quality improvement plan, not all policies and procedures have been reviewed to ensure compliance.

## **Inspection findings**

- Managers have made reasonable progress in addressing all of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. In particular, achievement rates for intermediate apprenticeships have improved and learners have a better awareness of the progress they are making. Training materials and resources have improved and make theoretical training sessions more interesting for learners. Managers use management information well to evaluate the performance of staff and ensure that learners attend and achieve in the timescales planned.
- The self-assessment report correctly identifies most of KGA's strengths and areas for improvement, although the text is too descriptive and managers do not use data sufficiently well to evaluate performance. Not all the areas for improvement managers have identified are included in the quality improvement plan, which currently focuses solely on aspects relating to leadership and management.
- Managers do not routinely review the quality improvement action plan. Managers discuss topics relating to the quality of provision at the regular management meetings; however, the majority of the meeting is dedicated to discussions about operational matters.

- Arrangements for the observation of teaching, learning and assessments have improved. One experienced and knowledgeable member of staff now completes all observations and focuses on the effectiveness of learning rather than teaching. However, reports continue to be very descriptive, with not enough focus on the progress learners make, their skills development and their adherence to health and safety.
- The range of programmes offered has increased with the successful introduction of barbering apprenticeships. Managers are in the process of delivering nail services and customer services to ensure that suitable qualifications are available to all hairdressing salons. A few salon owners are working towards training, assessment, quality and assurance qualifications at level 3 and level 4 to better support their apprentices.
- During the inspection, employers and learners expressed high levels of satisfaction with the courses offered and were very pleased with professional standards set in the training academies. Learners enjoy their training and develop good employability skills as well as hairdressing techniques that meet commercial standards. They develop good communication skills with clients and learn the meaning of technical hairdressing terms.
- Staff have completed additional training in English and mathematics and are confident in supporting the development of learners' English and mathematics skills. Staff integrate mathematics particularly well in most training sessions as learners work out ratios and proportions for colouring and angles for cutting.
- The development of learners' written skills is not so well established. Assessors are starting to use a marking strategy to help learners recognise errors in grammar and spelling, but too many learners remain unaware of their mistakes. Feedback from assessors is not sufficiently specific to ensure that learners improve their written work.
- Assessors set effective targets for learners relating to achievement of their hairdressing qualifications. Employers provide good support for learners to develop their hairdressing skills in the salon. Reviewers check targets for achievement of functional skill tests. However, they do not set targets to help learners improve the weaker aspects of their English and mathematics.
- Assessors' feedback to learners in practical sessions is effective and forms part of a useful professional discussion. Apprentices are clear about what they need to do to improve and progress. Assessors provide general comments for the reviews of learners' progress in the workplace but do not suggest frequently enough further workplace training to ensure that learners develop and improve their skills. Employers do not often use the observation forms provided by KGA to record the training and skills development that happens in the workplace.
- Achievement rates for the vast majority of learners, who are intermediate apprentices, were well above national averages in 2012/13. Although these have declined slightly in the last two years,

they remain above the average for the sector. Achievement rates in barbering are high.

- Advanced apprenticeship achievement rates declined significantly last year and were low. During this time, managers replaced the assessor for these learners three times due to poor performance. Managers have now trained and developed two staff to deliver the level 3 programmes. Very few advanced apprentices have left the programme early in the last six months.
- An increasing proportion of apprentices remain in full-time employment on completing their programme. A significant minority of intermediate apprentices progress onto advanced apprenticeships or barbering programmes. Managers are starting to follow up learners more systematically to monitor learners' employment and career progression.

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

Leaders and managers should ensure that:

- they include all areas for improvement in the quality improvement plan along with relevant data to measure the impact of actions taken
- they hold meetings to discuss quality improvements separately from the regular operational meetings to allow sufficient time and emphasis to be placed on evaluating progress against all areas for development
- the records made during observations of teaching, learning and assessment are more evaluative and cover all aspects of learning
- assessors provide learners with more specific targets and written feedback on the areas of English and mathematics they need to improve and any specific occupational skills they need to develop further
- they fully implement the system for recording and monitoring learners' progression after leaving their programme.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Montgomery

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors conducted this short inspection with assistance from the operation manager as nominee. We spoke with staff, employers and learners in the training centres and workplace. We observed training sessions, scrutinised learners' files and reviewed a wide range of documentary evidence relating to the programmes and safeguarding.