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Mr Alex Lilley
Business Development Director
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Dear Mr Lilley

Short inspection of The Bassetlaw Training Agency Limited

Following the short inspection on 24 April 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. This inspection is the first short inspection carried out since your previous inspection in December 2012.

This provider continues to be good.

Directors, managers and staff have successfully maintained the good quality of provision seen at the previous inspection. You have set a very clear strategic direction that includes an overhaul of the current premises to provide additional training and administration accommodation, a merger with another training provider and rebranding of the company. The new, merged leadership team will introduce a more suitable management and organisation structure and stronger governance arrangements. You hope to see these developments completed before the end of 2017.

The company currently has around 25 learners on 16 to 19 study programmes and traineeships, both introduced since the previous inspection. The vast majority are on study programmes and most of these are on childcare, health and social care, and customer service programmes. The majority of learners are referred from family services, and receive free meals and financial bursaries; many have returned to training with low confidence and self-esteem after periods of disengagement from education.

The majority of study programme learners enjoy learning and attending the training centre. The vast majority of learners make good progress from their starting points and benefit from employability training and relevant skills that prepare them well for employment, further training, apprenticeships or traineeships. For example, a study programme learner received intensive training and support to allow her to become a receptionist and is now a confident and valued apprentice in a dental practice.

The company has recently introduced GCSE English and mathematics sessions for learners who have a grade D pass at GCSE. The number of learners with prior attainment of a grade E pass or lower at GCSE who gain an English or mathematics qualification at the first attempt is low. Consequently, progress in gaining English and mathematics qualifications for a minority of learners is slow.

Since the previous inspection, you and your managers have maintained your close relationship with local employers and continue to make good use of your connections to provide learners with high-quality work placements. As a result, almost all study programme learners have appropriate work-placement experience and the majority have progressed into further education, employment or an apprenticeship. Almost all trainees have progressed into an apprenticeship. You are keen to exploit the potential of working more formally with local businesses to raise the profile of skills and training.

Safeguarding is effective.

Directors and managers have taken effective action to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that learners feel safe in the training centre and the workplace. The designated safeguarding officer has appropriate training and managers undertake disclosure and barring checks on all staff. Staff are diligent in checking the health and safety of learners' places of work. Managers have implemented their obligations under the 'Prevent' duty with suitable staff training. Learners have a basic understanding of radicalisation and extremism, but a better awareness of what they need to do if they are harassed, bullied or have concerns. Appropriate risk assessments and a visiting speaker policy are in place.

Inspection findings

- At the previous inspection, the accuracy and use of management information required improvement. The current data management system provides focused and detailed management reporting that allows all directors, managers and staff to have a clear understanding of the performance of all programmes. As a result, more robust quality assurance arrangements and systematic monitoring of learners' progress allow staff to make early interventions for those learners at risk of not completing. The analysis of performance of different groups of learners by gender and ethnicity is undertaken regularly, but this does not include monitoring the performance of a significant number of learners who are looked after, received free school meals or have English as an additional language.
- Most learning sessions support the development of employability skills well. Learners work well together and tutors ensure that they remain on track and make productive use of time. Project work promotes individual learning well. For example, a competition, focused on modern British values, requires learners to research and design a poster aimed at informing and updating learners and parents.
- Learners develop their English and mathematics skills further when writing formal letters or working out percentages during work-focused sessions. However,

targets set for learners are not sufficiently personalised and do not focus on their individual skills development. As a consequence, learning sessions do not fully address the differing needs of all learners.

- Learners develop their communication skills and build their self-confidence well during peer-to-peer discussions in group sessions. They learn how to conduct themselves when dealing with customers during interactive sessions or through responding to customers when using the telephone. They learn the value of being well prepared for interviews during role plays and the importance of making sure that they are on time and are dressed appropriately. All learners benefit from good, impartial and objective careers advice and guidance. For example, one potential study programme learner was directed to a local college construction course where his aspirations were met.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all relevant groups of learners are identified appropriately on entry to their programmes and that their progress is monitored systematically to identify potential gaps in their performance
- targets set for learners are personalised so that learning sessions fully support their individual needs
- all learners who have a grade E or lower in GCSE English and mathematics are provided with appropriate support to make good progress towards their qualification.

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

Yours sincerely

Bob Hamp
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Ofsted Inspector carried out the inspection, assisted by the business development director, as nominee. We met with learners, directors, managers, tutors and assessors. We reviewed key documents, including the most recent self-assessment report and development plan, data relating to the performance of apprentices currently on programmes and documents relating to safeguarding. We considered the views of learners and employers.