

Finning UK Ltd

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Employer

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RE-INSPECTION MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Finning (UK) Ltd is the sole Caterpillar dealer within the UK. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of Finning International, a Canadian company based in Vancouver. Finning (UK) Ltd sells Caterpillar equipment and offers a parts and product support service. It employs over 500 service engineers, of whom over 350 are field engineers. The 48 apprentices and advanced apprentices are based at the company's branches throughout the UK. They are employed as a part of the service engineering function. Finning (UK) Ltd headquarters and training academy is in Cannock, Staffordshire. Part of the first year apprenticeship training is sub-contracted to Alliance Learning, based in Bolton.

Finning (UK) Ltd was inspected in September 2009. Although outcomes for learners and the quality of provision were judged to be good, overall effectiveness and leadership and management were judged inadequate. This report focuses on the two mandatory themes of monitoring visits: outcomes for learners and self-assessment and improvement planning and five others themes relating to the 2009 inspection recommendations for improvements in safeguarding and equality and diversity.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What is the progress in using self-assessment and improvement planning since the original inspection?

Reasonable progress

At the 2009 inspection, Finning (UK) Ltd was judged to make satisfactory use of self-assessment to improve its provision. It used the views of training staff and learners but did not sufficiently involve them in decisions about judgements. This has improved and at the end of each training period, academy trainers and learners now hold effective evaluation sessions. These result in recommendations for improvements that contribute to judgements in the self-assessment report (SAR) and the quality improvement plan (QIP). At the 2009 inspection it was identified that the SAR did not provide sufficient evidence to substantiate the grades it contained. This continues to be the case as the 2010 up-dated SAR includes strengths which are normal practise in work-based learning and its summary statement has no areas for improvement. The company's performance data used to make judgments in the SAR does not correlate with the funding body's 2009-10 published interim data. Managers continue to monitor progress using the QIP and much progress has taken place against many action points. However, some actions are still incomplete after their target end dates, whereas others do not have target dates. The sub-contracted provision was not included in the safeguarding action points, although action has taken place.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made since the original inspection to improve the outcomes for learners? **Reasonable progress**

At the previous inspection outcomes for learners were good. Success rates were high; most learners completed on time and employment rates were good. Overall success rates remain high and are still significantly above the national average. However, the funding body's 2009-10 interim published data shows the learners' timely success rates have fallen significantly. This does not correlate with Finning (UK) Ltd's own data and their detailed records of each learner's progress, which show that learners are completing on time. No action has been taken to check reasons for the differences and to resolve the discrepancy.

Health and safety in work areas and for learners personally is key focus at Finning (UK) Ltd. Learners continue to feel safe and additionally they now have a clear understanding of safeguarding and the arrangements in place to protect them. The health and safety development plan for 2010 includes a wide range of objectives, including equality and diversity training for trainers and workplace supervisors as well as specific work related health and safety points. Useful 'toolbox' talks regularly take place in academy workshops to inform about and re-inforce to learners the importance of following work processes and how to prevent potential accidents.

Leadership and management: safeguarding

What progress has been made since the original inspection to improve and communicate the safeguarding arrangements for apprentices; and re-inforce these with apprentices and staff? **Significant progress**

Safeguarding arrangements were inadequate at the 2009 inspection; since then a significant amount of action has taken place. A safeguarding policy and good practice guidelines are in place and Finning (UK) Ltd holds a copy of its sub-contractor's safeguarding policy. Finning (UK) Ltd has a nominated safeguarding officer, who with an academy trainer has attending safeguarding training. Safeguarding training for other academy staff is booked to take place shortly. Academy trainers and three other relevant company staff and the sub-contractor's trainers have received or are awaiting Criminal Records Bureau clearances. The company is taking appropriate steps to address vetting and barring requirements.

Following risk assessments, changes have taken place to safeguard learners both at the academy and in their UK-wide workplaces. Safeguarding information was shared company-wide in the electronic newsletter in April and learners were issued with the new policy and guidelines, which are also available on the company intranet. From April these are being re-inforced at the academy and in learners' reviews and at new

employees' induction. Cannock and Bolton hotel accommodation arrangements have been changed to ensure learners under-18 years of age do not share with adults. The Cannock social activities organised by academy staff have been risk assessed and are continuing.

Leadership and management: equality and diversity

What progress has been made since the original inspection to improve the identification of apprentices' additional learning needs and in providing appropriate support arrangements? **Insufficient progress**

At the 2009 inspection, Finning (UK) Ltd had under-developed processes for identification and prompt provision of additional support needs. At the previous inspection, it was identified that it had taken over 12 months to provide specialist support for a learner who had difficulty with written work, although trainers had provided additional support at the training academy. Systems to assess the literacy and numeracy skills of learners at the start of their apprenticeship are satisfactory and results are recorded in group files, but these are not used sufficiently in planning training. Trainers are unclear how teaching strategies and learning materials can be adjusted to help learners with additional learning needs, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. The company's identification and support systems remain under-developed.

What progress has been made since the original inspection in providing equality and diversity training for staff/workplace supervisors and to re-inforce equality and diversity with apprentices? **Insufficient progress**

At the 2009 inspection, there had been insufficient staff development in equality and diversity, and this remains so. Only the academy manager and apprentice co-ordinator had undertaken such training and since then no staff have undertaken equality and diversity training. In addition, the action points relating to this in the quality improvement plan do not have end target dates. Finning (UK) Ltd has recently had support from a specialist equalities consultant and this has helped raise awareness of equality and diversity with the staff involved in these discussions. Staff training is proposed to start with senior managers and then move through the company. It has not yet been decided what training would be most appropriate for the academy trainers and workplace supervisors, to help them support learners better and re-inforce their understanding of equality and diversity.

What progress has been made since the original inspection in making arrangements for promotion to under-represented groups for an increase in applications to apprenticeship programmes? **Reasonable progress**

At the 2009 inspection, Finning (UK) Ltd did not have targets or strategies to promote its apprenticeship programmes to under-represented groups. Two strategies now being applied are, the use of the national apprentice matching service (AMS) to attract applications from female and minority ethnic groups and improvements to the company web-side to attract a more diverse range of applicants. Finning (UK) Ltd has prepared a comprehensive spreadsheet to track new applicants, although it is too early to evaluate its effectiveness. The use of the AMS however has limited use as it does not routinely hold candidates' ethnicity prior to them applying, so cannot ensure those from under-represented minority ethnic groups are contacted. However, the raised awareness of equality and diversity by the human resources' staff has enabled them to contribute to up-dating the company's apprenticeship programme recruitment web-pages. These now include visual images of a variety of company staff to illustrate diversity across the workforce. Further changes on the website, to the text introducing the video are planned to encourage applications from people with more diverse backgrounds to the traditional white male learners shown. Targets have not been set for the next recruitment phase, aimed at the summer 2010 apprenticeship programme start date.

What progress has been made since the original inspection in the collection and analysis of data relating to the apprenticeship recruitment process? **Reasonable progress**

At the 2009 inspection, data were not routinely collected during the apprenticeship programme recruitment process. This has now started with the aim of being able to analyse and evaluate successful and unsuccessful applications. Finning (UK) Ltd has a system developed to monitor results, but is too early to provide a full analysis of the recruitment process; although nearly 1,500 prospective applicants have been emailed by AMS. It is known however, that the majority targeted by the AMS are female. In addition, a company-wide ballot has provided data to identify the diversity profile of the Finning (UK) Ltd workforce. The 57% response rate has identified that the 93% white British and 85% male workforce at Finning(UK) Ltd, while slightly better than the UK construction sector profile, has under-represented staff numbers from both female and minority ethnic groups. Finning (UK) Ltd has analysed its gender spread nationally; and the headquarters site where the academy is based has more female employees, which correlates with there being a high administrative workforce on that site. Finning (UK) Ltd's research has also identified a correlation with its workforce data and national data which shows that service engineers are predominately male.

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