

# Finning (UK) Ltd

## Reinspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 51835

**Name of lead inspector:** Julia Horsman HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 10 December 2010

**Type of provider:** Employer

**Address:** Watling Street  
Cannock  
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## Information about the provider

1. Finning (UK) Ltd is the sole Caterpillar dealer in the UK and Ireland. It is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Finning International, a Canadian company based in Vancouver. Finning (UK) Ltd's business is to sell Caterpillar equipment and provide a parts and product support system for the entire Caterpillar line. The company has 1,450 employees in the UK and Ireland, of who over 500 are service engineers, including more than 350 who are field engineers. Apprentices work as part of the service engineering function within its Earthmoving division and Power Systems division. They are based at one of 11 branches in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.
2. Finning (UK) Ltd has its apprentice training academy and headquarters in Cannock, Staffordshire. The apprenticeships are organised through the academy where they attend residential training blocks of six to eight-week periods. The apprentice training manager is supported by two full-time training instructors and an apprenticeship coordinator. The fully-equipped training academy has a wide range of Caterpillar products.
3. Finning (UK) Ltd contracts with the West Midlands Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and has 29 apprentices and 22 advanced apprentices on construction plant maintenance frameworks. In addition to attending the academy, they complete a specialist unit at a training provider in Bolton. In addition, a minority of other apprentices employed at Finning (UK) Ltd are contracted to other SFA training providers who offer specialist qualifications, such as marine engineering and power systems. All current apprentices are men, including two with dyslexia and one of who is from a minority ethnic group.
4. The following organisation provides training on behalf of Finning (UK) Ltd:
  - Alliance Learning, Bolton

| Type of provision                             | Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10 |
|---|--|
| <b>Employer provision:</b><br>Apprenticeships | 55 apprentices                         |

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b> | <b>Grade 1</b> |
| <b>Capacity to improve</b>                | <b>Grade 1</b> |
|   | <b>Grade</b>   |
| Outcomes for learners                     | 1              |
| Quality of provision                      | 1              |
| Leadership and management                 | 1              |
| Safeguarding                              | 1              |
| Equality and diversity                    | 2              |
| <b>Subject Areas</b>                      | <b>Grade</b>   |
| Construction plant maintenance            | 1              |

## Overall effectiveness

- The overall effectiveness of Finning (UK) Ltd's provision is outstanding. Outcomes for learners, quality of provision, and leadership and management, including safeguarding, are all outstanding. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Finning (UK) Ltd has made exceptional improvements in safeguarding and has implemented impressive company-wide arrangements. Health and safety in the academy and workplaces are highly promoted and rigorously adhered to. Significant improvements have been made in the promotion of equality and diversity. Finning (UK) Ltd has further improved its high quality specialist training provision. The academy training and the arrangements for its reinforcement and consolidation in apprentices' workplaces between the residential blocks are particularly good. Learning facilities and resources both at the academy and in the workplace are extensive and of a very high quality. Progression is very good and the majority of apprentices progress within the company, with increasing numbers working towards a company-sponsored higher-level qualification in technical skills and/or management. Apprentices enjoy their training and the outcomes they achieve are outstanding.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Success rates on advanced apprenticeship and apprenticeship programmes for learners aged 16 to 18 are very high. In addition, they gain a relevant specialist qualification and benefit from product knowledge seminars. The majority of apprentices remain employed with the company on completion of their programmes.
- Apprentices develop high quality technical and communication skills, which are clearly demonstrated through their well-presented theory work, which is particularly good. Their portfolios are well organised. However, links between apprentices' end-of-academy block reports, progress reviews and their company appraisals are insufficient.
- Apprentices feel very safe at the academy and their workplaces. Health and safety in the academy and workplaces are highly promoted and rigorously adhered to by all staff including the apprentices. Safe working practices are given high priority at Finning (UK) Ltd and are further reinforced by apprentices gaining specialist safety qualifications.
- Academy and workplaces have exceptionally high quality learning facilities and resources, including complex and sophisticated internationally renowned large earth-moving machinery. Academy trainers are highly skilled and experienced, hold specialist qualifications and teacher training awards, and carry out continuous professional development and maintain high industry standards.
- Academy training programmes are very well planned and structured to combine apprenticeship requirements, additional specialist qualifications and the Caterpillar international training criteria. Apprentices benefit from the good links between academy training and workplace activities, which are highly effective in reinforcing and consolidating their newly-developed skills and knowledge.
- Partnership working is strong and effective across the company, Caterpillar dealerships internationally, other specialist training providers and local colleges. School partnerships with the academy are well established and further developments are taking place, including plans to share good practice across the other Finning branches.
- Apprentices receive excellent care, guidance and support for their personal development, progress on programme and career decisions. Academy staff's recent dyslexia and dyspraxia training has enhanced discussions with apprentices about additional learning support. However, staff are unclear about eligibility criteria for extra time in exams.
- Apprentices benefit from high levels of senior management support and investment in developing and promoting the apprenticeship programmes. Since 2009, Finning (UK) Ltd's human resources department has been particularly proactive in supporting the implementation of the excellent new safeguarding arrangements in an impressive company-wide approach.
- Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. The significant improvements introduced by the academy team have influenced company-wide developments and those at local hotels used during residential training blocks. Staff

development for academy staff has been good with excellent sharing of safeguarding information across the branches.

- Promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity have significantly improved following academy staff training. Apprentices benefit from innovative equality and diversity activities during induction. New recruitment initiatives are aimed at increasing participation of under-represented groups in apprenticeship programmes and on school work experience placements.
- Proactive and continuous quality improvement is a very strong company ethos contributing to the achievement of high quality academy training. Staff take fast action to rectify areas for improvement. Academy quality assurance activities, including self-assessment, vary in their development and effectiveness and are under review to ensure their full efficiency and effectiveness.
- Finning (UK) Ltd apprenticeship programmes offer outstanding value for money. The company provides high quality learning resources and outcomes by apprentices are outstanding both in gaining qualifications and high level industry skills and knowledge.

### **What does Finning (UK) Ltd need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the links between the end-of-academy block reports, progress reviews and company appraisals so that apprentices have a fully-integrated overview of their progress to aid action planning.
- Research the eligibility criteria for extra time in exams, so that apprentices with additional learning needs can benefit.
- Share good academy practice across all branches to enhance work experience for school pupils.
- Complete the review of the academy quality assurance processes and implement actions to ensure they become fully efficient and effective.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What apprentices like:**

- the company academy training which is good, enjoyable and very relevant to their work
- the residential blocks that help them develop personal and independent living skills
- the very good care and guidance and high emphasis on safeguarding and dyslexia awareness at the academy
- the good environmental awareness at the academy and in work
- working for a very good company and the high attention to detail
- the very good training and promotion opportunities at Finning (UK) Ltd
- the new hotel for the residential blocks with very good accommodation
- the new procedure that enables them to take a friend for support at their individual meetings with trainers and work supervisors.

**What apprentices would like to see improved:**

- more components to hand round during academy sessions
- more academy trainers and/or fewer apprentices in the first block for it to be less busy and to have more individual attention to get used to the training.

**Summary of the views of the work-based supervisors as confirmed by inspectors****What work-based supervisors like:**

- the up-to-date Caterpillar equipment used at the academy
- that apprenticeship training is good and relates to company requirements
- that health and safety at work rules are reinforced at the academy
- that the academy provides relevant and up-to-date equipment training
- the training at the academy, rather than apprentices going to other providers
- the excellent start the first academy block gives the apprentices for them to be fully prepared to start work
- that Finning (UK) Ltd employs multiple generations of the same families and there are good career progression opportunities to support retention.

**What work-based supervisors would like to see improved:**

- it would be useful to hear from the academy when apprentices are taken on interesting work-related visits.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 1**

6. Finning (UK) Ltd has maintained very high levels of specialist engineering performance on its apprenticeship programmes over many years, including before it opened its own academy in 2007. Apprenticeship training is a very high priority and there is significant company investment and staff support at all levels. Company-wide support has been impressively demonstrated since the previous inspection in 2009, resulting in significant and highly positive developments in both safeguarding and the promotion of equality and diversity. Academy staff have very effectively shared their increased knowledge learnt from good staff development activities with work-place managers and apprentices.
7. Finning (UK) Ltd has an impressive and proactive approach to continuous quality improvement and the sharing of good practice. The academy benefits from excellent support from, and integration with, the whole company. Innovative communication tools, using paper-based and electronic systems encourage fast and efficient action. Quality assurance arrangements specific to the academy vary in their development, for example, self-assessment and teaching and learning observations are undergoing review. The process of self-assessment is comprehensive and inclusive and the views of apprentices are sought in various ways and valued. The new self-assessment process is already leading to improvements.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 1**

8. Advanced apprentices and 16-18 year-old apprentices' success rates are outstanding and significantly above national averages; in 2009/10, all apprentices completed successfully. However, in 2009/10 success rates were low for 19-24 year-old apprentices as two of the three left the company without completing. All are thoroughly enjoying their programmes. Challenging targets are set and met. Attendance and participation in learning are excellent. Apprentices gain the coveted status as fully skilled Caterpillar engineers on completion of their apprenticeships.
9. Apprentices' standards of work are outstanding as they are gradually introduced to increasingly complex tasks, maintaining high levels of self-confidence and motivation. They make very good progress. At all branches visited during the inspection, apprentices were carrying out complex engineering repairs and manufacturing modification of components that exceeds the normal expectation of the construction plant maintenance qualifications. The company holds events and presents awards to celebrate apprentices' success.
10. Apprentices feel very safe at work and at the academy. They adhere rigidly to rigorous safe working practices. Health and safety practices are enforced rigidly with no allowance for non-compliance. Apprentices gain the Construction Safety

Card Scheme and the Passport to Safety awards, which reinforce safety information. A full range of Personal Protective Equipment is provided and an extensive range of manual handling equipment is used. Finning (UK) Ltd achieved The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents gold award in 2010 and 2009 and a silver award in 2008. Accidents, incidents and near misses are reported and recorded on a daily basis, and excellent company-wide electronic communications include photographs and videos with the aim of preventing similar incidents.

11. Apprentices make good and increasingly well-informed choices about their own health and well-being. Academy provision includes a good range of health-focused seminars, bi-annual health checks by the company nurse, smoking cessation support, leisure/gym membership and, since 2009, a healthy hotel-based evening meal.
12. Apprentices have good participation in a wide range of charity fund-raising and community activities, such as the Three Peaks Challenge and National Trust 'clean-up' projects. Corporate social responsibility is highly promoted and company sponsorship is readily forthcoming.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 1**

13. Teaching, training and assessment are outstanding. Initial assessment is very thoroughly carried out in the employing branches and involves branch and academy staff. Literacy and numeracy initial assessment tools are used. In addition, a Caterpillar-devised, timed, mechanical comprehension test, which involves prospective apprentices interpreting assembly drawings and manually assembling a test piece, provides a good indicator of the skills needed and results in high success rates. Induction is good and includes motivational presentations by senior company staff.
14. Academy and work-place training are highly effective and superbly linked to reinforce and consolidate new knowledge and skills. Staff have extensive experience and are well qualified. Resources are of outstanding quality and are regularly updated. Each apprentice is provided with a high quality tool kit. Academy training is well planned and structured and supported by excellent learning materials.
15. National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) assessments are carried out regularly by academy assessors visiting branches. Apprentices' NVQ portfolios and written work are particularly good. Portfolio evidence is supported well by witness testimony from workplace engineers, job cards, invoices, photographs and service records. Prompt and particularly effective ongoing and final assessment feedback is given by academy staff on apprentices' written work.
16. Apprenticeship programmes are outstanding in the way they meet the needs and interests of users at Finning (UK) Ltd. A choice of work-related specialisms are available and good advice and guidance and work experience are offered to



aid decisions. Good opportunities are taken to rotate apprentices' work locations nationally to enhance learning experiences and inform career decisions.

17. Academy enrichment activities are very good. They include visits for apprentices to see Caterpillar machines in use at a variety of companies, such as open quarry mines and steel works, and to national exhibitions. Apprentices also benefit from a wide range of social and team-building activities, including family days and inter-branch competitions.
18. Finning (UK) Ltd makes outstanding use of internal and external partnerships in developing its provision to meet apprentices' needs. Apprentices have excellent internal career progression opportunities and there are numerous examples of ex-apprentices employed across all levels of the company. Excellent partnerships have been developed with Reaseheath College and Telford College to offer higher level qualifications. The two college-based courses lead to foundation degrees and a work-based development programme leads to NVQ at levels 2, 3 and 4, in team-leading, supervisory and management qualifications. School partnerships with the academy are well established and further developments are taking place, including plans to share good practice across the other Finning branches.
19. Apprentices receive outstanding care, guidance and support at the academy and at work. Retention is outstanding. Particularly effective academy guidance is provided during the recruitment process relating to different apprenticeship programmes. Later in programmes, guidance relates to progression as employees and about higher level courses. Apprentices have an excellent apprenticeship handbook that provides policies, procedures and information about workplace mentors who are usually an ex-apprentices. End of academy-block reports to work-place supervisors, twelve-weekly progress reviews and company twice-yearly appraisal interviews are good, but are they insufficiently integrated to enable cohesive action planning.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 1**

20. Leaders and managers at Finning (UK) Ltd promote very high standards in a positive and supportive culture that aspires to excellence. Company-wide, including at the academy, they raise expectations through clear and realistic planning of the apprenticeship programmes to meet individual needs and support the national, regional and local business needs. Demanding targets are set and met throughout the company. Apprentices are part of this culture, and train and perform to high standards, especially in technical, safety and environmental matters.
21. There is significant financial investment by the company in apprentice training, including the academy's classroom learning resources and the high quality industry standard machinery and tools, much of which is Caterpillar supplied. Academy staff training continually updates their technical and training

- knowledge and skills. They participate in international events representing Finning (UK) Ltd, attend the annual prestigious Caterpillar 'Think Big' event, and meet trainers from the other world-wide Caterpillar academies.
22. Safeguarding is outstanding at Finning (UK) Ltd. Since the previous inspection in September 2009, significant improvements have taken place, both before and since the inspection monitoring visit in April 2010. An impressive company-wide approach has been employed, reinforcing safeguarding issues in the workplace following the excellent work started at the academy. This has built upon the high priority health and safety culture across the company. Safeguarding 'tool-box' talks are given regularly to apprentices and their supervisors, reinforcing key points. Sub-contracted provision and hotels used for residential blocks are carefully checked against compliance with the safeguarding policy. Some of these changes apply to, and benefit all employees. For example, all employees may now elect to have a third party present during individual staff meetings.
  23. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Significant improvements have taken place since the previous inspection. Recruitment processes are much improved, including the analysis of data. The website has been improved, with further enhancements planned. Equality and diversity are promoted imaginatively at induction, encouraging apprentices to research and discuss topical issues to reinforce key points. Since the previous inspection, two apprentices with dyslexia and one apprentice from a minority ethnic group have been recruited. There are no female apprentices. Academy staff have improved significantly their awareness and understanding. However, there remains insufficient knowledge by academy staff about the eligibility criteria to apply for extra exam time for apprentices with dyslexia.
  24. Engagement with users is good and contributes very effectively to improvements, often so immediate they do not appear on quality improvement plans. In particular, apprentices' end-of-block discussion forums are highly informative. Company-wide surveys are less useful as apprentice status is not identified to enable analysis of responses from this group of employees. More systematic feedback from other stakeholders involved in apprenticeship programmes is planned.
  25. Self-assessment and quality improvement planning is good. The excellent Finning (UK) Ltd workshop 'T-card' continuous improvement system is due to start in the academy and extends the sharing of successful work systems for quality improvement within the academy.
  26. Apprenticeship programmes at Finning (UK) Ltd provide outstanding value for money. Outcomes for learners are outstanding, as is their progress on-programme. The company provides high quality resources, uses them well to benefit all apprentices, and is committed to managing them in a sustainable way. Apprenticeship training is integral to the business need and to achieve this there is a high focus on maximising benefits to apprentices.

## Information about the inspection

27. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by one of the provider's academy trainers, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, documentation relating to the academy programmes and data on apprentices including their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
28. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and telephone calls to gain the views of apprentices and their work-based supervisors. They observed apprentices at work and while being trained. Inspectors examined training materials and examples of apprentices' practical and written work, assessments and progress reviews. They visited three of the company's work sites and the training academy, and also interviewed staff at the provider's head office.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)****Finning (UK) Ltd**

**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

| Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b><br>1: Outstanding; 2: Good;<br>3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate                              | Overall  | Employer responsive |
|--|----------|---------------------|
| <b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>   |          |                     |
| Full-time learners   | 51       | 51                  |
| Part-time learners   | 0        | 0                   |
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | <b>1</b> | <b>1</b>            |
| <b>Capacity to improve</b>   | <b>1</b> |                     |
| <b>Outcomes for learners</b>   | <b>1</b> | <b>1</b>            |
| How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?   | 1        |                     |
| How well do learners attain their learning goals?<br>How well do learners progress?  | 1<br>1   |                     |
| How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?                              | 1        |                     |
| How safe do learners feel?   | 1        |                     |
| <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>  | 2        |                     |
| <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>  | 2        |                     |
| <b>Quality of provision</b>  | <b>1</b> |                     |
| How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?   | 1        |                     |
| How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?  | 1        |                     |
| How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?                        | 1        |                     |
| How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?                                    | 1        |                     |
| <b>Leadership and management</b>   | <b>1</b> |                     |
| How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?                     | 1        |                     |
| <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>                         | 1        |                     |
| How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?  | 1        |                     |
| How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap? | 2        |                     |
| How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?  | 2        |                     |
| How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?                             | 2        |                     |
| How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?                         | 1        |                     |

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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