

# NETA Training Trust

## Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		15-19 April 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

## Summary of key findings for learners

### This provider is good because:

- Apprentices acquire good specialist engineering skills which are highly valued by employers.
- The pass rates of technical certificates are outstanding and most craft apprentices achieve high grades.
- Employability learners achieve qualifications and receive good guidance, which prepares them well for work.
- Much teaching, learning and assessment is good.
- Specialist engineering construction learning resources are exceptional.
- Apprentices and adult learners are well supported.
- Programmes are designed to meet the needs of industry particularly well.
- Quality improvement arrangements are comprehensive.

### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Apprenticeship success rates are not yet high enough.
- Job outcomes rates on employability programmes are not monitored sufficiently well enough.
- Not enough teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and the proportion that requires improvement is too high.
- The learning environment and information and communication technology (ICT) resources in the Stockton-on-Tees centre require improvement.
- Monitoring arrangements of sub-contractors are incomplete.
- Organisational targets are insufficiently ambitious to drive improvement to outstanding levels.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve apprenticeship success rates by:
  - ensuring apprentices are closely matched to employers
  - maintaining recent improvements to retention rates
  - making sure that apprentices fully understand the importance of completing all the framework requirements in a timely manner
  - recognising the prior achievement of all learners.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - making better use of the observation of teaching and learning process to share good practice to ensure all teaching and learning is of good or better quality
  - providing greater challenge to the more-able learners
  - ensuring all assessment feedback enables learners to understand how they can improve
  - correcting written English errors in coursework
  - up-dating the learning environment and ICT equipment at the Stockton-on-Tees site.
- Ensure that organisational targets are sufficiently demanding to raise the quality of provision further including those agreed with subcontractors.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
------------------------------	------

- Outcomes for learners are good. Engineering apprentice success rates, which have declined and have been affected by apprenticeship redundancy, remain above national rates and an increasing large majority succeed within the planned duration of their programme. Retention rates since 2011 are high and have now stabilised.
- Since the last inspection the provider has offered qualification based programmes for adult learners and while achievement rates overall were good they were below national rates and the provider now only offers these programmes through privately funded provision.
- Apprentices make good progress from basic training at the two specialist skill centres and return to their employers with a high standard of vocational skills that are highly valued by employers. They also benefit from a wide variety of additional learning which contributes well to their employability.
- Apprentices develop high standards of engineering skills in the training centres and the workplace and experienced staff support, encourage and promote independent learning. For example, apprentices were observed working on complex chemical processing equipment, wind turbine structures and oil processing plant and equipment. Apprentices are very confident and knowledgeable and rapidly progress onto work requiring greater levels of responsibility whilst making a valued contribution as part of a specialist engineering team.
- The majority of apprentices undertake higher levels of qualifications than is required by their frameworks. As a result this enables many of them to progress to higher education. Pass rates on technical certificates are outstanding and the very large majority of craft apprentices pass with high grades.
- Many apprentices join NETA Training Trust (NETA) with good levels of literacy and numeracy. However, for those that do not, the provider has very good pass rates in functional skill development. Learner attendance is good and this is carefully monitored.
- Achievement of employability learners is good. Learner achievement of qualifications linked to improving their employability is high. These learners are gaining confidence and improving their

personal development well. Although this is a new programme, early indicators are that these programmes are leading to good job outcome rates linked to known vacancies.

- All apprentices apply to join NETA without employment. NETA's strong partnership working with employers ensures that on commencement of the apprenticeship programme all apprentices are employed. Recent improvements in initial assessment and more closely matching of new apprentices to employer requirements have resulted in much improved retention of apprentice jobs.
- NETA is successful at ensuring that all apprentices achieve as well as each other and there are no differences in the success of different groups of learners or trades. While the provider is improving the percentage of females and apprentices from minority ethnic groups in their programmes these groups are very under-represented.
- NETA is highly effective at providing apprenticeship programmes with pathways that meet specific local needs and those where there are skills shortages. This enables apprentices to progress well in their chosen career and to undertake higher education.

### **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which enables learners to make good progress and achieve well. Teachers are well qualified and have good industrial experience which is used well in lessons. They have high expectations of learners and set them challenging tasks which help them to learn and develop skills.
- Learners work well in practical sessions and are learning and developing good technical skills. Learners on employability programmes develop good independent learning skills which improves their self-confidence. A few teachers talk for too long during lessons and ask undirected questions which are often answered by the more-able learners.
- Learners benefit from good on-the-job training which helps them learn and develop relevant skills. Often learners work on a wide range of complex engineering construction projects that broadens their experience. Learners' understanding of health and safety is extremely well developed.
- Employers are highly supportive of learners and most are actively involved in learners' training. The very good training provided for scaffolding learners helps them gain registration as advanced scaffolders, which significantly improve their employability.
- Very good specialist resources help learners develop skills by providing close working replicas of engineering construction projects, such as off-shore and petro-chemical applications and process control engineering. Most classrooms provide a good environment for learning but others are in need of refurbishment along with some workshop areas. Many of the ICT facilities at the Stockton centre require updating.
- Initial assessment effectively identifies learners additional learning support needs and ensures learners study at the correct level. Assessment of learners' work is mostly well planned, accurate and reliable. Assessment in the training centres effectively links to learners' work environments, which then helps them to apply knowledge in the workplace. Monitoring of employability learner's job-related outcomes in subcontractors is not sufficiently rigorous.
- Internal verification is rigorous and ensures the reliability of assessment. All learners, qualification units and assessors are incorporated into internal verification samples which ensure a consistent approach between assessors. Standardisation meetings are usually frequent and used well to provide assessor training and share good practice, but peripatetic assessors are often unable to attend.
- Tracking systems though variable identify learners' progress towards their qualifications. Feedback to learners following assessment in the workplace is mainly detailed and constructive. Feedback on learners' work in training centres is sometimes perfunctory or merely a description of the work completed. Many assessors recognise good work and are clear on work which is not meeting requirements, but it is not always clear what learners need to do to improve.

- Learners develop and improve their English and mathematical skills particularly well through relevant tasks in lessons. Learners significantly improve their skills in ICT through vocational assignments and specific engineering applications which they apply at work. Spelling and grammatical errors on learners' written work are few but they are not always corrected.
- Learners receive good initial information, advice and guidance to help them make informed decisions about their course. Recruitment and selection arrangements for apprenticeships are very thorough. Entry requirements are clear and are complemented by good pre-entry initial assessment and aptitude tests which helps select learners who have the potential to succeed in engineering.
- Teachers and assessors provide good one-to-one support for learners, which helps them develop relevant knowledge and skills that they apply well in the workplace. Employability learners are supported well in lessons and after their training to seek jobs and gain employment.
- An equality and diversity champion is working effectively with teachers and assessors. Staff now have a better understanding of equality and diversity and are beginning to incorporate 'hot topics' in teaching and learning and progress reviews. A small minority of staff still fail to promote equality and diversity well with their learners.

## Engineering Apprenticeships

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, reflecting the achievements of learners which are also good. The majority of theory and practical sessions are good. In the better sessions, planning is thorough and lesson documentation is specific, with clear objectives and session targets. The periodic checking of learner understanding is good and learning materials are of a high standard. However, in some of the less effective sessions, there are insufficient activities to stretch and challenge the more-able learners, and electronic presentation is used excessively.
- ICT is used effectively to reinforce and enhance learning and most learners are fully engaged and enjoy their lessons. Attention to health and safety is extremely high at the centres and in the workplace. Apprentices are able to speak confidently about health and safety legislation when working in high risk environments. For example, maintenance apprentices quickly become aware of the need for permits to work in restricted areas.
- Resources to support learning are good. The Billingham centre has some outstanding facilities, including a wide range of specialist engineering construction equipment. For example, apprentices are able to work on industry standard process control and instrumentation equipment and an internationally accredited explosion atmosphere facility used in the offshore and chemical industries. However, the general environment and ICT resources at the Stockton-on-Tees centre require improvement.
- The majority of assessment practices are good. Most workplace assessment activities are well planned and thorough with constructive feedback given on how to develop and improve. Apprentices written portfolios are of a high standard and include a diverse range of evidence including, job cards, work sheets and digital images and professional discussion. However, in a few cases target-setting in the training centre is insufficiently detailed to challenge apprentices and feedback on their work is insufficient to help improvement.
- Progress reviews are thorough and fully involve the employer. A monthly 'hot topic' bulletin is a good resource to promote discussion on health and safety, welfare and equality and diversity issues. Apprentices' knowledge and understanding of these topics is thoroughly checked by the majority of assessors. However, in some progress reviews this resource is not used effectively. The monitoring and recording of apprentices' progress is good, but in a small minority of cases apprentices are unclear about their progress towards framework completion.
- Apprentices are well supported by NETA who work very closely with employers and maintain good working relations to ensure that programmes effectively meet the needs of the apprentice

and company. For example, NETA has worked with local employers to support learners who recently lost their jobs, finding appropriate alternative employment and so allowing apprentices to successfully complete their programme.

- The development of learners' skills in English and mathematics is good. A large majority of apprentices' written work is of a high standard. Functional skills are integrated into the course work and effective use is made of a diagnostic and training functional skills software package to prepare apprentices for online examinations covering English, mathematics and ICT up to intermediate level.
- In most cases information, advice and guidance are good. Initial assessment is timely and effective in identifying apprentices support needs. Apprentices have a thorough understanding of progression routes and training opportunities. However, previous achievement is not sufficiently recognised for a small minority of apprentices.
- Equality, diversity and safeguarding are covered well during the induction programme and in the majority of theory classes. However, subsequent reinforcement and embedding in the workplace is insufficient in a minority of cases.

### Employability training Employability

Good

- Teaching and learning are good, which is consistent with the progress learners are making. Learners enjoy learning and participate well. In the majority of lessons tutors pay close attention to checking learning and understanding and set high expectations for learners. In those sessions well-planned learning objectives provide a range of interesting learning activities that relate well to learners' chosen career paths.
- Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress as they work towards achieving their qualifications is good. NETA and its subcontractors have adopted a very effective internal verification system that ensures that a suitable cross section of learners' work, taking into account the range of age groups and characteristics of those learners, is verified.
- Assessment of job-related outcomes is inconsistently monitored. NETA does not sufficiently enforce the need to measure job-related outcomes with all subcontractors although contractual arrangements set specific job-related targets. There is no effective assessment or analysis of learners' personal and social skills development.
- Resources within NETA and on subcontractor sites are good and used effectively to develop learners' skills. Training workshops are generally well equipped with industry standard equipment. Independent learning is promoted and developed well within learners' homework and research activities. Learners use ICT effectively to research and to present information.
- Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced to perform their duties. Health and safety practices are very effectively prioritised and both staff and learners comply well with regulations and procedures. In workshops within NETA's premises the safe use of machinery and equipment is risk assessed and learners demonstrate a good understanding of the procedures for minimising risks to themselves and to others.
- Initial assessment and advice and guidance are used effectively to ensure learners study at the right level. All learners' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed early in their programmes and the outcomes of these assessments are used to direct learners to study appropriate qualifications. Good advice and guidance is given to learners regarding progression into employment or education, based upon learners' individual needs and career aims.
- Support for learners is good. Qualified and experienced staff offer particularly good support to learners with identified or declared support needs. NETA takes safeguarding and learners' personal safety very seriously, with careful supervision of learners during all workshop activities. Workshop tutors, assessors and teachers make considerable efforts to support learners' individual needs.

- Feedback to learners after assessment or within classroom-based activities is good. In the majority of learners work, spelling and grammar are appropriately checked, but in a few instances the correction of errors in English language are insufficient.
- Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily within teaching, learning and assessment. NETA staff use the organisations' 'hot topic' programme to promote equality and diversity issues for those learners attending centre. Equality and diversity in subcontractors is promoted sensitively and appropriately.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Good

- Senior managers and board members set a clear strategic direction for the organisation, responding well to a challenging economic environment and the needs of industry. Managers and staff have high expectations for learners' achievement. Managers set targets through a wide range of key performance indicators for all aspects of the business. However, while targets are demanding they are not yet high enough to raise the quality of provision higher than current levels.
- Managers monitor performance against the key performance indicators for the apprentice programmes closely, analyse those aspects which do not meet the targets and instigate actions to improve them. This is facilitated through the provider's sophisticated management-information systems. However, the provider does not monitor a job entry target set for pre-employment training sub-contractors effectively.
- Governance is strong. The board of trustees consists of representatives elected from member companies of the association; their extensive expertise and experience in the industry enable them to support the senior management team well. The board meets regularly once per quarter and more often as required to consider urgent single issues. The board receives appropriate financial and performance reports and provides appropriate scrutiny and challenge.
- Strategies to improve the standard of teaching, learning and assessment are effective. Managers have set a target of good or better for all teaching and learning sessions. The arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are robust. Observations are without notice and appropriately risk assessed for frequency. Action points arising from observations are recorded centrally and managers monitor these to ensure they are quickly addressed.
- NETA uses economies of scale well to acquire high quality and up-to-date equipment and resources, which it uses for apprentice training, by organising successful commercial training in addition to its government-funded provision.
- Quality improvement arrangements are comprehensive, covering all aspects of the provision. Procedures are well documented and the provider's audit system is designed to bring about continuous improvement. Quality improvement activities are carried out diligently throughout the year against a quality calendar. However, learners on employability programmes do not participate in the learner committee and learner views collected by subcontractors are insufficiently analysed or used to improve provision.
- Stakeholder involvement in self-assessment is good and includes staff, learners, employers and board members. The resultant report is largely accurate and the associated quality improvement plan addresses the areas for development identified. Progress against the improvement plan is closely monitored at monthly management meetings and actions prioritised effectively.
- Learning programmes are well designed to meet the needs of industry and the programmes prepare learners for the qualifications required by member companies. NETA has been involved with national industry bodies in the production of new national standards and in the piloting of courses to prepare learners for new qualifications. NETA belongs to a number of industry and training provider networks and associations and is able to identify local, regional and national training needs and respond well to them.
- NETA promotes equality and diversity well. Its comprehensive suite of policies underpins its single equality scheme, which is sent to all staff and learners. NETA has a detailed equality and

diversity development plan but has not introduced a formal consideration of the equality and diversity impact of any changes in its policies or procedures.

- NETA has introduced some good initiatives to increase the numbers of enrolments from under-represented groups but with little success. The numbers of female learners and those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds increased in the current year but remain low as a percentage of total applicants.
- NETA meets its statutory requirements for the safeguarding of learners.



## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

NETA Training Trust			
<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b>  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Apprenticeships</b>	<b>Employability</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Engineering</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Employability training</b>	<b>2</b>

## Provider details

NETA Training Trust	
<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	Full-time: 199
	Part-time: 284
<b>CEO</b>	Frank Ramsay
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	May 2007
<b>Website address</b>	www.neta.co.uk



Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	17	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	167	47	N/A	N/A		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	17							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<div>■ S &amp; D Training</div> <div>■ Tees Achieve</div>							

## Additional socio-economic information

NETA is a national provider of apprenticeships though most apprentices are based in the North East of England. It has recently commenced local employability programmes which vary in duration and subject area. Since the last inspection the provider has offered qualification based courses in various subjects within engineering construction but has ceased to offer these in government-funded learning since the commencement of the 2012/13 contract year. NETA also offers a programme for school children aged 14 to 19 years but this programme was outside of the scope of the inspection. Unemployment rates are significantly higher in the North East compared with national rates, particularly for males aged 18 to 24 years. Educational achievement of school children achieving grade A\* to C GCSE's including English and mathematics is below the national average. The proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups is low.

## Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Maxine Mayer HMI
----------------	------------------

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the quality manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with 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 of the current provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



Learner View is a new website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too.

To find out more go to [www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and provider inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013