

# The TTE Technical Training Group

## Independent learning provider

<b>Inspection dates</b>		12 – 16 August 2013
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<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:

- A high proportion of apprentices complete their apprenticeship in engineering, laboratory activities and process operations , most within their expected timescale.
- Apprentices acquire high levels of knowledge and understanding, which they apply well in the workplace. They develop good vocational skills, team working and problem-solving skills. The development of English and, particularly, mathematics is good.
- Teaching and coaching include a good range and standard of activities which promote effective learning.
- TTE successfully fulfils its clear mission by meeting the needs and interests of engineering sector employers well. Very supportive employers are fully involved in planning and reviewing training.
- Actions by managers to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have had a positive impact.
- Learners benefit from working in an environment where safe working practices are given a very high priority.

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

- Not enough teaching sessions are outstanding. The checking of learning is insufficient in a minority of classroom sessions. Feedback in a minority of centre-based reviews is not sufficiently detailed to inform learners on their progress and how they could improve.
- Missed opportunities to promote English and mathematics in a minority of taught sessions.
- The reinforcement of learners' understanding of equality and diversity is not fully effective.
- Performance management of staff, and the analysis of some key performance indicators, are insufficiently rigorous.
- Self-assessment does not sufficiently involve staff and employers.

## Full report

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

- Close the gap between completion within the planned end dates and the overall success rates by improving the rate of progress of apprentices. Closely monitor learner progress and ensure through clear target-setting that learners' achieve within their planned end dates. Ensure centre-based reviews adopt the effective processes used in the workplace, to improve feedback to apprentices on how they can further develop and progress.
- Improve the proportion of outstanding lessons by ensuring lesson observations lead to high quality action planning and training. Support tutors to improve checking for learning in classroom sessions to ensure that they are fully aware of the apprentices' progress. More effectively plan for the promotion of English and mathematics in learning sessions.
- Ensure Vocational Instructors and Assessor Verifiers systematically, through lessons and reviews in the centre, develop and embed a thorough understanding by learners of equality and diversity. Ensure discussions at in-centre reviews are recorded accurately to reflect learners' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity concepts. Evaluate how well equality and diversity are promoted in all aspects of TTE's work and devise suitable improvement plans. Ensure centre-based reviews adopt the effective processes used in the workplace.
- Better analyse and use key performance data over time. Ensure managers and governors are kept fully informed of key trends in data to allow them to rigorously challenge performance and initiate improvements where necessary. Increase the effectiveness of staff by implementing a more rigorous performance management system, which ensures that staff have clear targets, particularly related to retention and achievement of learners.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Overall success rates for apprentices have been consistently above engineering national rates over the last three years but have declined from 86.8% in 2009/10 to 82.5% in 2010/11 then increased slightly to 82.9% by period 15 in 2011/12 which was 6.3% above the engineering national average of 76.6% for that year. Provider data shows an anticipated overall success rate of 89.3% in 2012/13. The provider's actions to improve retention have started to prove successful with in-year retention in 2012/13 at 96.9% compared to 91.6% in 2011/12.
- Overall success rates were suppressed through redundancies at a major employer since 2009. Otherwise, success rates would be 89% for 2009/10, rising to 94% in 2010/11 and falling slightly to 93% in 2011/12 with an anticipated further fall to 89.3% in 2012/13
- The proportion of apprentices achieving within their expected timescale declined from 81.4% in 2009/10 to 73.7% in 2010/11 then rose slightly to 74.5% to period 15 in 2011/12 which is 11.4% above the engineering national average of 63.1% for that year.
- Although the numbers of learners following work place learning programmes are low, overall success rates for these 19 learners in 2011/ 12 was 84.2% which was 3.1% below the engineering national rate of 87.3% for that year. The proportion of these learners achieving within their expected timescale was low at 58.6%, 13.1% below the engineering national rate of 71.7% for that year.
- The low numbers of women, learners from Black and minority ethnic communities and learners who report learning difficulties or disabilities preclude statistical comparisons but all of these groups succeed well, mostly within their expected timescales.
- Learners acquire high levels of knowledge and understanding that prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Vocational skills acquisition, team working and problem solving skills are good. The development of English and, particularly, mathematics is good.

- Most of the current learners are making good progress. The majority of learners progress onto higher education programmes and into employment with their sponsoring employers upon completion of their apprenticeships.

<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and relate well with the outcomes for apprentices which are also good. Vocational instructors and assessor/verifiers have realistic and demanding expectations for their apprentices and encourage them to develop independence in learning. Relevant and achievable aims and objectives are set and supported by a good range of teaching activities that challenge apprentices and promote learning. The very well-planned sessions have clear strategies to identify and plan for learners at all levels.
- Taught sessions in the training centre are good and effectively develop team-building and peer working skills. Assessor/verifiers and employers offer good support through workplace coaching and assessment. The development of problem-solving skills and techniques during coaching sessions in the workplace is also very good. Safe working practices and procedures are given a very high priority and are effectively promoted during all learning activities, both in the training centre and in the workplace.
- Vocational instructors and assessor/verifiers are very experienced and demonstrate high levels of vocational expertise. They communicate these well to learners. The well-planned taught sessions have clear aims and objectives and include a wide range of teaching and learning strategies. For example, group discussions, demonstrations, time-countdown activities, team-based assembly tasks and the use of learner mini-white-boards to display answers are used well in combination to promote learning. Checking of learners' understanding is generally good. However, in a minority of sessions, checking is ineffective and abbreviations are overused, which inhibits the effectiveness of learning for some learners.
- Workshops are spacious and well equipped with relevant industry standard equipment and machinery. Much of the equipment is old but remains fit for purpose. Specialist equipment is of a high standard, particularly for process engineering, and there are good facilities for such activities as confined space working and permit to work procedures. The computer equipment in the workshop areas is in need of updating and refurbishing to comply with current standards. Health and safety are very well promoted in workshop areas.
- Progress of apprentices is accurately recorded and monitored. In the workplace, those at risk of not achieving within expected timescales are quickly identified and prompt management action is taken. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving the numbers of learners who achieve within their planned end date. Tracking documents effectively contribute to the good workplace reviews. Apprentices are visited in the workplace ever four weeks or more frequently if required. Assessment is flexible and is often provided on demand when workplace evidence opportunities occur. Verbal and written feedback is effective in ensuring good progress is made and explains clearly to learners on how to improve. Good feedback is given through electronic portfolios, which includes corrections to spelling and grammar to improve learners' performance.
- Centre based reviews are carried out on a frequent basis and appropriately include the involvement of employers and TTE staff. However, TTE recognise that centre-based reviews are less effective than those in the workplace as they are not sufficiently informed by the tracking documentation and review staff do not always have a good knowledge of the learner. The provider has taken action to standardise the review process but it is too early to judge the impact.
- Vocational instructors and assessor/verifiers provide useful guidance to apprentices when submitting written work, suggesting improvements and allowing time for rework and resubmission to maximise the quality of evidence. This is done in a supportive manner and encourages good progress. Clear and precise time-bound targets are set to monitor progress. Company line managers are often actively involved in coaching and review sessions and are able to monitor progress through an on-line e-portfolio and the comprehensive tracking documents.

- The development of English and mathematics is good in taught sessions within the centre, in review and coaching sessions. For example, in one taught session apprentices actively discussed the various uses of nouns and verbs in reporting findings from team activities. Mathematics is studied at a higher level than framework requirements to enable progression on to higher-level courses. However, there are missed opportunities to promote English and mathematics in a minority of taught sessions.
- Initial advice guidance and assessment are good. They are thorough and effective at identifying apprentices' starting points. Employers value highly the recruitment and selection service offered by TTE prior to offers of employed sponsorship.
- Promotion of equality and diversity in the workplace is good. In the better reviews, apprentices are presented with scenarios for discussion. These are at a good depth and stretch their understanding of race and gender issues. However, this promotion is inconsistent. The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is variable. In the better sessions observed learners demonstrate a clear understanding of equality and diversity through their responses. However, this is not consistent and opportunities to promote these issues are occasionally missed.

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

Good

- TTE has a very clear mission which stresses its commitment to enhancing people's lives by providing an excellent learner experience. TTE's work relates directly to the employment needs of the manufacturing, engineering and science sectors in the region. The mission builds upon a thorough understanding of the sector, which informs its evolving strategic plan.
- Governance is provided effectively by the board, which has overseen a successful financial recovery following the impact of the economic downturn. Board members and staff have high expectations of learners. Success rates are high and TTE is aware of the need to ensure that a greater proportion of its apprentices complete their qualifications before the planned end date. However, the analysis by board members and senior managers of learners' performance data over time to understand trends and to make national comparisons is insufficient.
- Significant and effective actions have been taken to improve teaching, learning and assessment over the last year. The observation of teaching, assessment and reviews is now much more frequent and is conducted by highly experienced staff who follow up areas for improvement with timely professional development and re-observation.
- The proportion of good or better teaching, learning and assessment has risen and is reflected in the good outcomes for learners. Staff are well qualified and appropriately experienced and resources to support learning, particularly on-the-job training, are of a high standard. However, not enough teaching and learning are yet outstanding.
- Apprentices benefit from access to specialised off-the-job resources which are primarily used in the extensive commercial training programmes offered by TTE. Arrangements for managing the performance of staff are not sufficiently rigorous and require improvement.
- Self-assessment processes are well established and quality improvement arrangements have proved to be effective. The self-assessment report, which is succinct and sharply focused on TTE's publicly funded provision, accurately identifies most of the key strengths and areas for improvement.
- Good use is made of learners' views and the outcomes of observations of teaching and learning in order to improve the provision. There is scope for a greater degree of involvement by all staff, and there is insufficient involvement of employers, in self-assessment. Arrangements for monitoring the quality of sub-contracted provision work well.
- TTE's provision meets the needs and interests of employers very well. Links with employers are particularly good. The company is very responsive to local and regional needs and works well with a broad range of employers from large multi-nationals to small engineering companies.

- Although predominantly serving the engineering sector, a wide range of disciplines within that sector and beyond is provided for. Involvement in partnerships is strong and links with other providers of education and training are developed well to benefit learners and to open up pathways to careers in engineering.
- A strong ethos of respect for all is apparent throughout the organisation, and apprentices from different groups are well supported. Many staff have worked overseas and draw on their experience of cultural diversity to enrich their own teaching. While any instances of discrimination are extremely rare, the response from management is very firm and timely.
- The promotion of equality and diversity was identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection. Since then, progress has been sporadic. Some early improvements were not sustained while the company went through a period of restructuring. In 2012/13, there has been a renewed effort to better promote diversity by appointing an equalities champion and teachers and assessors have received training on how to promote diversity within learning sessions. There are some signs that this is having an impact, but this aspect of TTE's work is not yet sufficiently well embedded across the organisation and so it remains an area for improvement.
- TTE meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners and staff. Thorough checks are carried out before staff are allowed to work with individual learners. Staff have received relevant training this year. The incidence of bullying or harassment is extremely rare. Health and safety are given a particularly high priority and high standards permeate the whole organisation. Learners feel safe.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)****The TTE Technical Training Group**

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

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



## Additional socio-economic information

TTE offers advanced apprenticeships in engineering, laboratory activities and process operations in Tees Valley and the north-east of England. The percentage of pupils in the local area gaining five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Mathematics is 4.4% below the national average. Unemployment is 2.3% above the rate for the north-east and 4.5% above the national average. The proportion of the local population who have no qualifications is 13%, which is 3.3% more than nationally. The proportion of the local population who hold qualifications at advanced level or above is 48.8%, which is 6.3% below the national average. The main employment in the local area is in professional occupations and in skilled trade occupations.

## Information about this inspection

<b>Lead inspector</b>	Bob Busby, HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the business performance 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 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>

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