

Vector Aerospace International Limited

Employer

Inspection dates		9–11 July 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
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:

- Achievement is good, and consistently above national rates. Apprentices make very good progress and achieve their qualifications within the planned timescales.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good.
- Instructors use their professional experience and expertise well and support learners to acquire excellent engineering skills in a wide range of aerospace specialisms.
- Teachers successfully develop learners' English and mathematical skills, effectively integrating them into learning and training activities. Learners make good progress and apply these skills well in the workplace.
- Learners' develop good safe working practices and apply these well in while at work. .
- Many learners progress into sustained employment.
- Leaders have developed an effective strategy to sustain the apprenticeship programme that benefits learners and meets the needs of the business well.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is too low.
- Assessment in the workplace is not carried out on a sufficiently frequent basis.
- The observation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment process, does not give sufficient emphasis to learners' progress or how instructors can improve their practise.
- The self-assessment report is too descriptive and does not provide sufficiently clear judgements to support quality improvement.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality assurance of teaching, learning and assessment so that instructors clearly understand the characteristics of outstanding teaching and learning and in particular, how to effectively check learners progress.
- Increase the frequency of assessment activities so that learners receive more regular guidance from assessors on the standards of their competence. This will support progression and technical skills development.
- Improve the impact of self-assessment by ensuring the self-assessment report makes clear judgements about strengths and areas for improvement that lead to the specification of actions for improvement in the quality improvement plan.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes are good. Although the proportion of apprentices successfully completing their qualifications declined slightly in 2012/13, they are significantly above the performance of other similar providers and have remained so for the last three years. In addition, the proportion of engineering apprentices on advanced level courses who complete their programmes within the planned timescale has rapidly improved over the last 12 months and is now very high.
- Outcomes for apprentices aged 16 to 18 are outstanding, with all learners successfully completing their course within their planned timescales. However, for the largest group of learners, the proportion of apprentices aged 19 to 24 who successfully completed qualifications, declined in 2012/13, although remain well above published national rates. The proportion of adult apprentices who complete their courses within the planned timeframe has steadily improved and is now very high.
- Monitoring data show that current apprentices are making good progress and a minority are making significantly better than expected progress in completing their qualifications.
- There are few differences in the achievement of learners from different backgrounds and all achieve well compared to national rates. Learners' attendance at subcontracted providers is good. Staff closely monitor attendance rates and rigorously follow up any absences.
- The development of apprentices' English and mathematical functional skills is particularly good and pass rates are very high. Apprentices use these skills very well in their daily work. For example, apprentices routinely use complex technical information obtained from aircraft manuals with confidence when communicating with supervisors, other work colleagues and customers.
- Learners develop good personal, social and team-work skills through participating in community initiatives, charity fundraising activities and skill competitions. In addition, they can describe clearly the positive impact of these skills on their life, outside the requirements of their qualifications.
- In the workplace, apprentices quickly learn to work to the precise quality standards and pace required in the aerospace industry. They rapidly improve their confidence and demonstrate their ability to work diligently and to take the initiative. They show enthusiasm to progress on to more complex and challenging tasks. For example, apprentices use their mathematical skills particularly well when comparing component tolerances against manufacturers' specifications in order to evaluate the wear of precision-engineered parts.

- Supervisors value the technical and diagnostic skills that apprentices quickly develop in relation to the maintenance and repair skills of complex rotary and fixed wing aircraft. Apprentices swiftly add value to the company.
- The very large majority of apprentices are successful at gaining permanent employment positions on completion of their qualifications. A small minority progress onto higher-level qualifications and a few have gained early promotion to supervisory positions.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Apprentices develop very good practical skills and gain a thorough understanding of key theoretical concepts related to aircraft maintenance and repair. Instructors have very good vocational knowledge and use their extensive industry skills and experience well to support and motivate learners. Instructors and supervisors have high expectations for apprentices and set demanding standards. The majority of apprentices produce work that is well above the requirements of their course and that of the awarding body. They also make rapid progress in completing practical tasks.
- In the training centre, teaching in practical lessons is good. Apprentices develop good vocational hand skills and use specialist tools and equipment particularly well, producing work to the high standards required by the aerospace industry. Instructors give good verbal feedback to learners; however, written feedback needs to be more detailed to ensure that learners understand what they need to do to improve.
- Learners take pride in producing work which is both technically complex and fit for purpose. They closely follow detailed health and safety procedures and have a good awareness of the importance of safety in their work.
- Theory teaching is good. Instructors plan learning well, but do not always incorporate recent changes in technology in lesson plans or written resources. They use interactive learning technology and visual aids well and encourage apprentices to become independent learners. Learners' portfolios contain good-quality evidence.
- Apprentices benefit from significant daily oversight by skilled technicians in the workplace, however, assessment is not sufficiently frequent or regular. A strategy is now in place to address this but it is too soon to judge its impact.
- Resources and equipment in the training centre are of a satisfactory standard. Learners have access to industry standard hand tools however, the two instructional helicopters are dated.
- The quality of learners' progress reviews in the training centre and at college is good. Reviews for those learners working in allocated work placements are less effective. Feedback from line managers and supervisors is not always available in advance of reviews. In addition, instructors do not sufficiently promote equality and diversity to help learners appreciate the significance of these in the modern world. Targets set at reviews are relevant, challenging and revisited at subsequent reviews.
- Learners' NVQ portfolios contain good evidence of their progress. However, there is currently no detailed tracking of progress either in training workshops or workplaces to inform learners of their steps forward or to provide instructors with an early indication of any slow progress. Instructors keep detailed records of learners' attendance and they are in regular contact with the training centre and workplace managers to record and act upon any issues.
- Initial assessment is thorough. Apprentices receive good advice and guidance throughout their training from their instructors, assessors and managers. Care, guidance and support are good and the induction and recruitment programme is very thorough. First year apprentices also spend a day in the workplace every two months to gain understanding of the world of work and to familiarise themselves with the varied career roles on offer when they qualify.
- The development of learners' English and mathematics is very good. Nearly all learners complete their portfolios to a very high standard and the few spelling mistakes are quickly corrected. Learners make good use of glossaries of technical terms, abbreviations and acronyms

obtained from aircraft technical manuals to ensure their use of technical English is precise and accurate.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. Board members and leaders have set a very clear strategic direction for the organisation and have high expectations of all staff, including the achievement and progress of apprentices. Leaders demonstrate a high level of commitment to ensuring that apprentices are able to continue their programme despite a reduction in overall staffing levels. Strategic priorities are effectively communicated to staff through regular team meetings, newsletters and presentations.
- The Board gives appropriate importance to training in achieving broader business objectives. They set challenging targets for finance, recruitment, attendance and outcomes for learners, they also closely monitor performance against these targets well. Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have implemented a number of effective actions that have maintained the high outcomes for learners and led to the rapid increase in the proportion of apprentices who complete their qualifications within the planned timescales.
- Managers closely monitor the performance of subcontractors. Service level agreements are appropriately detailed and regularly monitored to evaluate accurately the quality of subcontracted provision and ensure high standards.
- Managers regularly review the performance of all staff and quickly identify and take action with any underperformance. Managers clearly identify training needs and provide good support and training opportunities to meet these. For example, in recent months, training centre staff have completed training to refresh their knowledge and understanding of current safeguarding requirements.
- The observation of teaching and learning requires improvement to increase its effectiveness in improving the performance of instructors and in further raising the quality of the provision. Current observation judgements focus too much on what the instructors are doing rather than on learning or on the delivery of activities that inspire and challenge all learners.
- Since the previous inspection, managers have a much clearer understanding of the quality of the provision and know what they need to do to improve further. In addition, data are now used more effectively to support quality judgements. However, although the self-assessment process now takes into account the views of learners, supervisors and subcontractors, these are not gathered systematically nor adequately analysed by managers to identify improvements precisely enough.
- References to teaching and learning in the self-assessment report are not sufficiently comprehensive or evaluative and some reported strengths merely reflect standard practice. Although inspectors identified some inconsistencies in the recording of lesson observations, early indications are that, where areas for improvement are identified, appropriate action is effectively taken.
- Vector successfully prepares learners to move into well-paid and sustainable employment. Virtually all learners remain with the company following completion of their apprenticeships. Leaders and managers continue to provide further specialised skills development in advanced engineering trades that meet the specific operational needs of the company.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Learners have a good understanding of how to deal with bullying, harassment and discrimination. However, managers do not sufficiently check that trainers make effective use of naturally-occurring opportunities in the workplace to prepare learners for working in culturally diverse environments. Learners are very well behaved, courteous and treat each other and staff with respect. Instructors provide good personal support for all learners to enable them to participate fully in their training.
- The company meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. An appropriately-trained senior manager is in charge of safeguarding arrangements. Learners have a good

awareness of what to do if they have any concerns and safeguarding is given an appropriate high level of prominence. Staff recruitment practices meet legislative requirements and central records show that all training staff undertake an appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service check.

- Vector sets high standards for health and safety, both in the training environment and in the work placements. As a result, learners feel safe and adopt safe working practices at all times. Apprentices benefit from a wide range of policies and procedures linked with employee well-being.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Vector Aerospace International Limited

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Engineering	2

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+
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+	
	-	-	12	18	-		-	
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	-							
Part-time	-							
Number of community learners	-							
Number of employability learners	-							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fareham College PETA Ltd 							

Contextual information

Vector Aerospace International Limited (Vector) is owned by Eurocopter Holdings. The company is involved in the maintenance, repair and overhaul services for helicopters and fixed wing aircraft operators with facilities in Africa, Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Vector employs approximately 2,500 employees worldwide. In 2008, Vector Aerospace acquired the Defence Aviation Repair Agency Rotary Wing and Components Businesses located in Fleetlands, Gosport, from the Ministry of Defence.

The facility in Fleetlands, Gosport, provides authorised maintenance, repair and overhaul services for both civil and military helicopters. Just under 1,000 people are based at the Fleetlands site, making it one of the largest employers in the Gosport area. The company contracts directly with the National Apprenticeship Service to provide apprenticeships for new recruits.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Victor Reid HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the Training and Development Manager (UK) 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 relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject area 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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