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Mr Michael Needham
Chief Executive Officer
Tyne North Training
Embleton Avenue
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Tyne and Wear
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Dear Mr Needham

Short inspection of Tyne North Training Limited (TNT)

Following the short inspection on 13–14 January 2016 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in August 2012.

This provider continues to be good.

- You and your leadership team have maintained a good quality of training at TNT since the previous inspection in 2012. You have placed a strong emphasis on the areas identified as requiring improvement at the previous inspection, with the large majority of these areas improving. You have revised and successfully implemented agreements with subcontractors; including detailed performance standards which they must meet successfully. Additionally, you have gained full access to the observation grades profiles which you use effectively as a tool to monitor the performance of subcontractors. The quality of target setting has improved, which has led to aspirational targets being set, which support learners and challenge the most-able to achieve more. This has led to timely success rates being significantly above those of similar providers nationally, and a higher proportion of learners progressing to higher level qualifications.
- You, your staff and governors are fully committed to meeting the needs of your member companies, learners, and the demand for skilled engineers, which encapsulates the principles of the Group Training Association model. The very strong partnerships which you have nurtured with member companies and other employers have contributed to a demonstrable impact on the success of learners on your programmes. You and your colleagues' expertise in the engineering sector stimulates professional dialogue with

employers to jointly create opportunities for the youth of the North East of England, while meeting the skills requirements of employers.

- You and your managers have generated very good links with partner colleges to meet the needs of the North East engineering sector. You work collaboratively with college managers, ensuring that learners receive the best possible training to prepare them for a career in their chosen discipline, which learners and employers greatly appreciate.
- Although you have made good progress in addressing many of the weaknesses from the previous inspection, your self-assessment report does not fully identify all of the strengths and areas of improvement of TNT. Your quality improvement plan requires more detailed actions, as illustrated in your very effective one-to-one meetings.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and action is taken to safeguard learners. Three experienced and well-trained designated safeguarding officers, led by the quality manager, respond to safeguarding concerns swiftly and in accordance with the organisation's policies and procedures. They work very effectively with other agencies such as the local safeguarding team, social services and the police to safeguard learners.

Managers have recently updated safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance in relation to the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty and have created an effective action plan to implement the requirements of the duty. This has led to all staff receiving the appropriate level of training for their roles in the organisation. Learners receive suitable advice and guidance about the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, and the process they must follow to escalate concerns is fully understood.

Inspection findings

- The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. The chief executive officer and senior managers have a clear vision for the organisation and have taken appropriate action since the previous inspection to maintain the good quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The operational management of TNT is highly effective and a key strength of the provider.
- Governors do not invite or receive a sufficient breadth of information to inform them of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They do not have a detailed understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provider, which limits their ability to hold senior managers to account to make rapid improvements. Although broad strategic targets are set on an annual basis by governors based on recruitment and financial expectations, insufficient priority is placed on setting targets which will improve the quality of provision further or engage a more proportionate cross-section of learners from the

community. For example, targets have not been set to improve the proportion of female learners in engineering, which was an area of improvement from the previous inspection.

- Managers have successfully prioritised the effective promotion of equality and diversity, which are regularly discussed to good effect at tutorials and progress reviews. TNT has developed very effective partnerships with local schools, colleges and community groups to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to the local community. Recently, training advisers contributed to the design and delivery of a 'Girls into Engineering' event with a local partner college, which generated considerable interest in the profession from this under-represented group nationally and at TNT.
- Learners enjoy their learning at TNT and feel well supported, resulting in good attendance at off-the-job learning, leading to good levels of achievement since the last inspection. TNT and its partner colleges promote the principles of British values very well through a range of innovative and thought-provoking 'fact or opinion' topics in functional skills sessions. These highly effective sessions allow learners to explore individually and in groups the importance of British values, both in the workplace and in the community. A number of learners spoke confidently to inspectors about the benefits of these activities, such as their consciousness of the importance of democracy and freedom of choice when voting for a new government, promoting the values of a free and democratic society.
- Managers ensure that aspirational targets are used to support learners to achieve their personal goals and challenge more-able learners to develop their skills to reach their potential. Initial assessments of skills prior to enrolling on their apprenticeship are used well to support learners' individual learning needs. For example, following assessment, learners who require support on written English tasks are supported well by training officers to develop these skills, while assessment methods are adjusted to allow progress to be maintained on practical activities.
- Training officers make good use of specific and closely monitored targets which assist learners in making good progress in developing high-quality skills and knowledge that allow them to complete complex, demanding tasks in the workplace. For example, learners in one engineering company worked independently to complete a full electrical installation in their newly refurbished training centre.
- The operational performance management of staff and subcontractors is good. Managers have recently developed a highly effective performance management system. A robust appraisal process supported by quarterly reviews and two-weekly performance meetings systematically focus all staff on the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment, which has led to achievement being consistently above national rates. These exacting systems are used similarly at partner colleges to good effect with almost all learners achieving their qualifications, which has significantly contributed to good apprenticeship achievement.

- TNT's observation of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement to focus more attention on the development of skills associated with English, mathematics, personal development, behaviour and welfare. Conversely, partner colleges use effective systems to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and use well-developed systems to improve teaching and learning in sessions.
- Leaders and managers have not fully evaluated their key strengths and areas of improvement in the annual self-assessment report. The report requires more concise evaluation of the provision to allow improvements to be rapidly completed. Although extensive improvement planning takes place in one-to-one meetings, the organisation's quality improvement plan does not sufficiently detail the actions needed to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and requires further development to allow governors to scrutinise, support and challenge managers.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- Governors receive regular updates on the performance of the provider and the plans which are in place to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Managers accurately evaluate the key strengths and areas for improvement of TNT in their self-assessment report
- Managers create robust and succinct action plans to address areas of improvement identified in the self-assessment report to further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and share these plans with governors and staff
- Managers complete observations that include evaluations of English and mathematics and personal development, behaviour and welfare, developing robust development plans where performance is not good enough.

Yours sincerely

Paul Cocker
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors were assisted by the Quality Manager as nominee. We met your senior leaders, managers and governors. We visited your head office in Newcastle, observed sessions taking place in the workplace and visited two partner colleges to observe teaching, learning and assessment and scrutinise apprentices' work. We held meetings with apprentices, staff and managers. We reviewed key documents

relating to self-assessment, improvement planning, performance management, strategic plans and safeguarding. We considered the views of learners by reviewing the comments received on Ofsted's online questionnaires and by seeking the views of apprentices and employers during on-site activity.