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Kathy Barnes
Managing Director
Achievement Training
Norwich Union House
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Dear Ms Barnes

Short inspection of Achievement Training

Following the short inspection on 20 to 21 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 July 2011.

This provider continues to be good.

The strengths observed at the previous inspection have been maintained and there has been good progress to deal with most of the areas for improvement.

Outcomes for learners have remained high and learners make good progress on most courses. Outcomes for apprentices are well above national rates for overall success and for those completing their apprenticeship within the planned timescale. Managers have successfully introduced traineeships and these learners have been able to progress into further education or employment.

Achievement Training continues to provide good education and training for Plymouth and is designed to meet the employment needs within the locality. Learners report that the staff are very welcoming and supportive and that the courses offered meet their educational needs well. Employers speak highly of the provider and value the quality of the training and the good communication.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and action is taken to safeguard learners. All staff have had the appropriate security checks, which are registered on a central database. Designated safeguarding officers have been trained to an appropriate level. All staff have been trained in safeguarding

procedures and are kept up to date with additional in-house training. Learners have a good understanding of safeguarding and state that they feel safe.

Staff know about safeguarding procedures and manage the small number of incidents that have been reported appropriately. Managers promote the government's 'Prevent' strategy effectively and all staff are aware of the Channel procedure as a result of the training they have received. Most learners are aware of matters concerning extremism and radicalisation. Managers and other staff continue to develop this work further.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and managers plan strategically to ensure that the courses offered meet local employment needs and the needs of learners and are in line with government strategy. Links with local employers are strong and they report very favourably on the relationship they have with Achievement Training.
- Managers have maintained the high proportion of learners who successfully complete their qualifications within the allocated time. This number of successful learners is significantly above the national rate and has been consistently so over the previous three years. The number of 16 to 18 year old learners completing their learning aims in English and mathematics is low but this is due to the majority of them progressing into further education or employment before completing their traineeship.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is generally good and meets the needs of learners well. Staff use a good range of teaching resources to enhance learning. Procedures to assure the quality of teaching are robust and used well by staff to improve teaching skills and vocational competence through continuing professional education. However, observations of teaching and learning focus too much on teaching with too little emphasis on the learning taking place.
- Good-quality information, advice and guidance are made available to learners, who are aware of what they need to do to complete their qualification and move into their chosen career.
- Managers have trained all staff in equality and diversity, safeguarding and 'Prevent' and these topics are included at each learner's review. However, this does not always lead on to a discussion at a sufficiently high level to explore the topic fully. This also applies to the promotion of fundamental British values, in spite of good poster displays around the provider and the fact that some of these values are already embedded within teaching.
- As a result of the reduction of referrals to short employability courses the number of learners over the age of 19 taking English and mathematics courses is lower than in previous years; however, performance in this area remains good. The proportion of these learners successfully completing their English and mathematics qualifications has been consistently above the national rate for the last three years.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders should ensure that:

- tutors engage learners in discussions at an appropriate level to promote their understanding of equality and diversity, fundamental British values and how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation and extremism
- the management of courses for 16 to 18 year old learners allows them to complete their qualifications in English and mathematics
- they evaluate the standard of learners' work, the skills they develop and their progress on the course.

A copy of this letter will be sent to the Skills Funding Agency and it will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Charles Clark
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors were assisted by the provider's managing director as nominee. We met with you, members of your staff, tutors and learners. We carried out lesson observations and visited apprentices and employers in the workplace. We scrutinised key strategic and policy documents, including those relating to quality assurance, safeguarding, performance and management. We also analysed data on learners' achievements and learners' progress relative to their starting points. We also analysed feedback from learners and employers.