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Mr Jon Adams, CEO
ATG Training
Future Centre
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Buckinghamshire
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Dear Mr Adams

Short inspection of ATG Training.

Following the short inspection on 13 and 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 July 2010.

This provider continues to be good.

Leaders have maintained the good-quality training and assessment for apprentices since the previous inspection. You have played a significant and valued role in developing the standards and awards for cycle mechanics in conjunction with the Association of Cycle Traders. You have continued to work with a variety of excellent employers in the engineering and manufacturing sector. Your apprenticeship programmes continue to provide apprentices with the skills, knowledge and qualifications they need for employment. These provide high-quality employment opportunities and career progression to higher-level job roles and qualifications. You also provide apprenticeship training in the North West and the Midlands through well-managed subcontracted arrangements. You have recently started a highly successful pre-employment training programme through a subcontracted arrangement with a training provider in Berkshire.

The large majority of apprentices successfully complete their apprenticeship and an increasing number do so within the planned and expected time. Most apprentices enter full-time employment with their employer on completion of their apprenticeship. Apprentices demonstrate very high levels of technical and personal skills. They quickly develop the skills and attitudes to make a significant contribution to their employer's business and are a credit to the organisation. For example, their skills in manufacturing and assembling intricate components for aircraft ejector seats are extremely well developed and highly valued by the employer.

Teaching, learning and assessment continue to be of a high standard. Resources are of a very good standard, particularly for the cycle mechanics' programmes. Trainers are very experienced, well qualified and provide a good learning experience; apprentices enjoy the practical training. Trainers and apprentices use an electronic recording system very effectively to collect and store evidence for assessment purposes. You have increased the number of trainers and assessors and most assessment and review visits are carried out frequently. Apprentices are making good progress towards completing their frameworks. The large majority of employers are fully involved in reviewing apprentices' progress, and this is reflected in the increased number of apprentices completing within the planned time.

Managers are now monitoring teaching, learning and assessment more effectively, particularly where training and assessment are delivered by subcontractors. However, you recognise that you need to do more to challenge yourselves and providers to raise the level of good-quality teaching, learning and assessment further in order to achieve your aspiration to be an outstanding provider.

Managers have access to a wide range of information on the progress apprentices make and you have continued to make improvements to monitoring the performance of subcontractors. A senior member of staff monitored subcontractors very effectively through a rigorous risk assessment process informed by external inspection. The member of staff had sole responsibility for monitoring and reporting on performance until very recently. You have a detailed draft plan to change the structure to ensure that you continue to manage your subcontractors efficiently and effectively. You need to implement the plan as a matter of urgency to ensure a seamless transition to the new arrangements.

Safeguarding is effective.

Managers have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are effective and take appropriate action to safeguard learners. ATG Training places the safety of all staff at the heart of everything it does, and in particular the safety of young people. Training centres provide a welcoming and safe environment and apprentices demonstrate a good understanding of safe working at work and outside the work environment. Arrangements to help apprentices stay safe online are effective. All subcontractors provide a safe environment and have clear and thorough processes to support apprentices. Any concerns raised are recorded in detail, though the outcomes of actions taken are not always recorded sufficiently. Managers have made satisfactory progress in implementing the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty, and this momentum needs to be maintained.

Inspection findings

- Managers have maintained the good quality of teaching, learning and assessment for apprentices. Highly experienced training coordinators, the excellent training facilities and highly supportive employers ensure that apprentices learn well, are accurately assessed and achieve successfully.
- Managers monitor closely the quality of reviews and assessments. They ensure that apprentices and employers are fully involved in providing apprentices with opportunities in the workplace to develop skills to meet the requirements of the apprenticeship frameworks. Managers also monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment effectively. Observations focus clearly on learning and learners' progress. However, managers have not identified sufficiently specific targets to raise the quality to an outstanding level.
- Managers ensure that the apprenticeship programme continues to meet the needs of the highly respected and valued employers. Employer representatives on the board of trustees support senior managers and provide a close link to industry and commerce. Employers have a high level of confidence in ATG and in the quality of the training provided by the organisation. For example, one employer has trained an employee as an assessor. These strong relationships between employers and ATG staff ensure that apprentices have the technical and personal skills necessary to gain meaningful employment and successful careers.
- Managers communicate very effectively with subcontractors to ensure that concerns and underperformance are quickly identified, and they support them well to resolve problems. However, arrangements have lapsed following very recent staff changes. Plans to reinstate stronger and more effective management of subcontractors are at an advanced stage. These have been shared with subcontractors, who recognise that the change will strengthen the management process.
- Trainers monitor the progress of apprentices well in the workplace and in the training centres. Apprentices have a thorough understanding of what they need to do to complete their apprenticeship. Apprentices are supported well and given high standards of support by trainers and assessors, particularly in developing their English and mathematics skills. However, for a small minority of apprentices, the targets set during formal progress reviews are not sufficiently clear and do not ensure that they progress as quickly as they are able.
- Outcomes for apprentices are good. The large majority of apprentices successfully achieve their apprenticeships within planned and expected timescales and progress to full employment. They gain very good technical and employability skills and are able to apply these well at work. Employers encourage apprentices to progress to higher-level qualifications and many are successful and achieve well.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders should ensure that:

- managers monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and put in place challenging actions to improve the provision and motivate staff to help ATG become an outstanding provider
- new processes to manage the performance of subcontractors are quickly implemented so that actions can be taken to bring about further improvements
- the outcomes of actions taken to deal with any safeguarding concerns are fully recorded.

Yours sincerely

Bob Cowdrey
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we were assisted by you, the Chief Executive Officer, as nominee. We met with you, your programme managers, and a sample of apprentices, assessors, trainers and employers. We observed apprentices in the training centre and at work, and looked at their assessed work. We reviewed key policies and documents, including those relating to self-assessment, performance and safeguarding. We also considered the views of apprentices.