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Mr M Daw
Chief People Officer
Virgin Media Ltd
10–14 Bartley Wood Business Park
Hook
Hampshire
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Dear Mr Daw

Short inspection of Virgin Media

Following the short inspection on 7 and 8 March 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in August 2012.

This provider continues to be good.

Your apprentices continue to receive good-quality education and training. Your training management team work effectively with staff and apprentices to promote a strong learning culture that fully meets apprentices' and business needs. The vast majority of apprentices achieve their qualifications and the majority progress to either higher-level training and/or more demanding job roles within the company. Your managers and staff have maintained the very high standards of planning, delivery and monitoring of apprentices' performance.

Apprentices benefit from a particularly well-resourced programme. Managers and staff have maintained their high levels of technical competence and continually adapt and improve course content to reflect fully the changing demands of Virgin Media and the sector. From the outset, apprentices have a very clear understanding of the demands of the apprenticeship and how they will develop their skills throughout the programme.

Apprentices benefit from high-quality learning materials. They really enjoy the opportunities to develop their skills and demonstrate high levels of competence. Support for apprentices is particularly effective. Enthusiastic training staff, line managers and mentors communicate particularly well to ensure that apprentices make good progress in all aspects of their development. This ensures apprentices complete their qualifications and develop their technical and employability skills to the highest standards of which they are capable.

Operational management of the programme is very good. Managers and training staff constantly monitor the quality of the programme and use feedback from apprentices well to improve the programme and continue to meet Virgin Media's very high training standards. However, leaders have not addressed fully all recommendations from the previous inspection. The latest self-assessment report does not have a sufficiently detailed overview of the in-year quality of provision. For example, managers have a clear understanding of the high overall success rates but fail to recognise the variations in achievements by age or region in 2014/15.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your staff have maintained the high standards of safeguarding. Leaders and managers have a strong and well-established culture of safeguarding apprentices. Apprentices have an excellent understanding of health and safety. Managers and training staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and how to recognise and report apprentices who might be vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism. Training staff regularly use current affairs to promote apprentices' awareness of safeguarding, staying safe online and the 'Prevent' duty. Most apprentices have a good understanding of safeguarding, although a few were less clear about the 'Prevent' agenda.

Inspection findings

- The leadership and management of the apprenticeship programme continues to be good. The management of the quality and level of resources is very good. Committed staff at all levels constantly adapt and improve the standards of training to meet the changing needs of the apprentices and the business. Senior staff fully recognise the positive benefits of the apprenticeship programme for business efficiency and plans to introduce a broader range of vocational programmes are in development. The capacity of the apprenticeship training team to make sustained improvements is good. However, self-assessment is not sufficiently detailed in assessing all aspects of the provision and quality improvement action plans lack detailed impact measures.
- Apprentices enjoy learning and achieve well. Overall success rates are consistently high and current apprentices are progressing very well. They develop good technical and employability skills and make good progress towards improving their English and mathematics skills compared to their starting points. On completion, the majority progress on to higher-level training and/or gain promotion.
- Support for apprentices is comprehensive. Line managers, training staff and mentors combine effectively to ensure that apprentices make the best progress they can. Feedback on all aspects of the programme during the apprentices' development ensures that they have a very clear understanding of what needs to be completed and how they can develop their skills further. Apprentices at risk of falling behind are carefully and sympathetically coached and supported to achieve. Careers advice and guidance are good.

- Induction is good and the planning of learning is thorough. Knowledgeable and industry-competent trainers motivate apprentices well. Vocational on- and off-the-job training is particularly effective and apprentices benefit from high-quality and varied learning resources.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- self-assessment is comprehensive and judgemental and includes all management information and data available to accurately inform all staff of the quality of the provision and where to improve further
- actions to improve the quality of provision are precise, time-bound, accountable and measurable against challenging expectations
- all apprentices have a clear understanding of the 'Prevent' agenda.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Beaumont
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors were assisted by the head of talent and leadership as nominee. We met with your training team managers, and spoke to trainers and groups of apprentices. Inspectors reviewed learning plans and apprentices' progress files and reviewed apprentices' written work. We reviewed key training documents, including those relating to self-assessment, performance and safeguarding.