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Mrs T Turner
FNCT Training and Consultancy Ltd
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Dear Mrs Turner

Short inspection of FNCT Training and Consultancy Limited

Following the short inspection on 23 and 24 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 you were judged to be good in October 2011.

This provider continues to be good.

FNCT continues to be a good provider and makes a significant contribution to improving the skills and experience of trainees and apprentices in Hampshire, Dorset, Wiltshire and the Isle of Wight.

You and your senior leadership team set high expectations and have high ambitions for your learners. You have a good, well-established and consistently reviewed strategy to provide high-quality training that meets the needs of learners and employers across the region. You have carefully monitored, assessed and improved the provision you offer. You and your managers make good use of data to monitor frequently the work of staff and learners and take swift action to tackle underperformance. Employers speak highly of the training you provide. A significant number of learners told inspectors how they had gone on to study higher-level qualifications and gained the confidence to progress to management positions. You gather and comprehensively analyse information about the destinations of all your learners, which has enabled you to identify the impact of your provision in meeting the needs of the employers and the sectors you work with.

Almost all learners successfully complete their training within agreed timescales. Success rates in English, mathematics and information and communications technology (ICT) are all good, along with your success in helping learners gain GCSE English and mathematics with improved grades. You have worked hard to

make training consistently good and to help your staff integrate English and mathematics into their everyday teaching. This work has significantly helped learners to develop and use their functional skills on a daily basis at work and at home.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the leadership team have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that you and your staff take appropriate action to safeguard learners. Appropriate training is provided for staff and learners in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Working closely with external agencies, you have placed a high priority on implementing an action plan to establish policies and training for Prevent, and monitor and support learners deemed at risk.

Learners and apprentices feel safe and know how and when to report concerns about safeguarding and extremism. Staff respond well to their concerns, maintain comprehensive records, and take swift and effective action where needed.

You have worked closely with employers to ensure that they understand about safeguarding and the risks of extremism. You rapidly identify your most vulnerable learners and provide effective pastoral or welfare support, involving employers, external agencies and parents, where appropriate.

Staff in direct contact with learners are appropriately subject to disclosure and barring checks.

Inspection findings

- Leaders place a high priority on effective working with partner organisations, and many employers have strong, trusting relationships with FNTC. Managers work closely and successfully with employers, provider networks and local strategic partnerships to identify and respond to local skills needs. Managers have designed provision which successfully targets and recruits learners directly from school onto trainee and apprenticeship programmes, especially in childcare.
- Employers value highly the flexible and effective support your staff provide to learners. Staff work closely with employers to ensure that trainees and apprentices study units of learning that replicate the working environment, to ensure that learners can complete all aspects of their qualification in the workplace. FNTC staff work with employers to help them appreciate and understand the expectations of the 'Prevent' duty and how to apply it in their working practices.
- Learners quickly develop confidence in English and mathematics as tutors and assessors purposefully integrate numeracy and language tasks into assessments and projects. You quickly identify and arrange support for learners who need extra help in these subjects. Learners confidently and successfully complete their functional skills assessments. The majority of learners who sit GCSEs in English and mathematics improve their grades and achieve a grade C or better, although performance in mathematics is

better than in English. Learners on traineeship programmes have a very clear focus on improving their English and mathematical skills; they recognise these studies as an important part of their training, and success rates are high in functional skills tests. However, managers do not analyse the data in enough detail to identify trends or the reasons why a minority of learners are not successful at achieving improved grades in their GCSEs, or in passing a functional skills assessment.

- Managers' observations of teaching and learning, which focus strongly on what the learner can do, and on the impact of the teaching, are having a positive impact. Since the last inspection, managers have improved the process for observing all tutors and assessors, and these changes have led to higher standards and a better quality of teaching and learning. Managers clearly define with individual staff the improvement actions they need to take, and promptly establish any support they need. Managers identify good practice and share it well with tutors and assessors, along with good resource materials, especially to help them integrate English and mathematics into their courses. They provide well-focused training sessions for tutors and assessors, picking up concerns identified during the observation process.
- Senior managers have good access to high-quality management information and use it very well to monitor, analyse and improve all aspects of the provision. A detailed performance dashboard based on key data enables senior managers to know how well both staff and learners are performing. Where managers identify weaker teaching, or poor progress and outcomes for learners, they quickly put in place and implement an improvement plan. Through regular staff meetings and manager-led reviews, leaders ensure that all staff are aware of their performance and participate in frequent opportunities for training and sharing good practice.
- All staff have high expectations and aspirations for their learners; this ambition has a very positive impact on their performance. Staff identify very early any problems learners have with learning, and quickly put in place strategies to manage these. Through regular progress reviews, which include updates on personal and pastoral concerns, tutors and assessors encourage vulnerable learners to confide in them, knowing that they will get purposeful support. This rapid intervention enables learners, especially those on traineeship programmes, to progress confidently in developing the employability and transferable skills required to sustain employment. Staff record learners' skills and confidence when starting training programmes; however, staff do not use them effectively to help learners evaluate how much they have learned or developed through the training.
- Managers capture and record very well, for the vast majority of learners, information about their destinations on completion of their training. Managers use this data well to inform curriculum planning and to support labour market intelligence, specifically in care and customer service. However, in some cases, the information is not sufficiently detailed to identify the exact nature of a learner's job role, and is therefore not as useful as it might be to inform strategic development and curriculum planning.

- Learners on all programmes progress well through their qualifications, which they use to good effect to gain promotion at work. Most learners on traineeships transfer to apprenticeships. A significant number of apprentices gain managerial roles, with several learners having progressed from level 2 to level 5 and on to university. However, staff do not provide sufficiently detailed advice, guidance and exit information, to enable learners to plan beyond higher-level apprenticeships.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and managers should:

- further improve the management information systems to identify and analyse the performance of all learners, especially in English and mathematics
- identify better the value that FNTC adds to learners' prior skills and knowledge as they progress through training
- develop and enhance the exit information, advice and guidance for learners progressing beyond higher-level apprenticeships.

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

Yours sincerely

Martin Hughes
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection the team was assisted by you, as nominee. We held meetings with you and senior leaders, managers and tutors. We observed teaching, learning and assessment and looked at learners' and apprentices' work. We spoke with employers, apprentice supervisors, apprentices, trainees and some past learners, both face to face and by telephone. We reviewed key documentation, including those relating to strategy, performance, self-assessment, teaching and learning and safeguarding. We considered the views of employers and learners by reviewing the comments received on Ofsted's online questionnaires and by seeking their views throughout the inspection.