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Paul Champion
Chief Executive Officer
Profound Services Limited
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Dear Mr Champion

Short inspection of Profound Services Limited

Following the short inspection on 6 and 7 April 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 April 2010.

This provider continues to be good.

- You and your management team have maintained the good quality of education and training in the organisation since the last inspection. You and your team have high expectations of learners' achievements and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and ensure continuous improvement. You and your managers use information on learners' performance effectively to address any areas of underachievement. The large majority of learners are making good or excellent progress in their learning. Courses with lower success rates are improving rapidly because of a rigorous and accurate self-assessment process and appropriate action plans.
- You and your managers have set a clear strategic plan for the company; this has resulted in the provision of new and good opportunities for local people. The large majority of your apprentices in the most recent year are progressing to employment. The majority of your learners on classroom-based courses have progressed to employment or further study.
- The chairperson and board support and challenge you, directors and managers well in their drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They rigorously interrogate the accurate information they receive on retention, progress, achievement and timeliness, comparing outcomes with targets.
- The implementation of the new apprenticeship requirements is effective. Clear progression routes are in place and are preparing apprentices well for their next

steps. The design of programmes includes an appropriate focus to improve English, mathematics and skills relevant to their specific job roles; as a result, apprentices produce high-quality work and a large majority progress to permanent employment.

- At the previous inspection, inspectors commended the organisation's success in focusing on the quality of achievements and standards. The inspectors identified that the key areas for improvement were: provide better and formal support for learners with literacy and numeracy needs; improve the initial assessment of literacy and numeracy; improve induction and develop a formal quality cycle. You have successfully addressed the very large majority of the areas requiring improvement at the last inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

- You and your managers give the highest priority to ensuring that learners are safe. The management team take very effective action to safeguard learners. Clear and comprehensive safeguarding and health and safety processes are in place, including the risk assessment of the workplace before apprentices start work and the vetting of staff before they are employed, ensuring that learners are safe.
- Learners behave particularly well and respect each other, their managers and training advisers. The most vulnerable learners are identified and kept safe as staff have very good relationships and work very effectively with a range of agencies in the region. All apprentices have a good understanding of their own health and safety and demonstrate this in their workplace and at the training centre.
- Staff are aware of their new responsibilities and have taken appropriate steps to protect learners from radicalisation and extremism. Although the majority of learners have a basic understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and how to protect themselves and others, their understanding of the wider 'Prevent' duty is not yet complete.

Inspection findings

- Success rates are high. In the most recent year, the large majority of apprentices successfully completed their programme within their agreed timescales and progressed into permanent employment. The very large majority of adults on classroom-based learning courses including functional skills achieve their qualification. The progress of all of the current apprentices and learners is good.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good. Learners become more confident and demonstrate good work-related skills at an appropriate level; for example, learners develop the skills and confidence to competently drive forklift trucks.
- Induction for learners is now effective. Apprentices are very positive about their induction, and particularly about the development of their understanding of the nature of their job role. Learners understand the course requirements and, where appropriate, participate in the selection of optional course units. Induction is also

effective in developing a high awareness of health and safety. Learners are developing a good awareness of safeguarding during induction, including where to take any concerns should they not feel safe. The majority of learners develop a basic understanding of the dangers of radicalisation.

- Training advisers effectively check the progress of learners regularly in the large majority of lessons. However, in a minority of lessons training advisers are not ensuring that the most-able learners are realising their full potential because assessment strategies are insufficiently challenging. Marked assignment work contains good checking of spelling and grammar and has clear information on how a learner can improve their performance.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is good. The initial assessment has been improved and it is now accurately identifying individual starting points of learners. Learners are receiving effective support, which is resulting in high pass rates in functional skills, English and mathematics.
- Apprentices develop very good employability skills such as problem solving and teamwork through effective individual support from training advisers and workplace managers. They develop their English and mathematics skills to a good standard. For example, warehousing learners practise percentage calculations to assist the projection of demand. Forklift truck learners are encouraged to estimate distance and angles when setting the forklift truck to lift heavy pallets.
- The implementation of the specifications of apprenticeship standards for England (SASE) is effective. Apprentices receive well-planned on- and off-the-job training. Staff, apprentices and their workplace managers work well together to ensure that the programme meets the needs of the individual well.
- In a minority of sessions, teachers do not sufficiently challenge learners to extend their learning and fully achieve their potential. In a minority of cases, targets are not sufficiently challenging to extend skills. Too many targets are task orientated rather than focusing on skill development. Training advisers are not setting individual targets once learners have achieved English and mathematics at level 2; as a result, a minority of apprentices are not developing these skills further.
- Leaders and managers are ensuring that the self-assessment process is accurately identifying areas that require improvement and that appropriate actions are in place. Leaders and managers have accurately identified that improvement is required in the quality of the provision in business administration and property letting apprenticeships, particularly at advanced level. Appropriate strategies are in place to improve these concerns. Learners' progress in these subjects in the current year is already improving.
- Managers are ensuring that lesson observations are broadly identifying strengths and areas for improvement, including in apprenticeships and subcontracted provision. However, some strengths are overstated and there is insufficient focus on the learning taking place. Individual development plans lack specific actions that will enable staff to effectively improve their practice quickly.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and managers should ensure that:

- the results of initial assessments are used to inform target setting in apprentices' individual learning plans in order to suitably challenge the most able in English and mathematics
- training advisers set challenging targets and ensure that assessment strategies provide opportunities for the most able to realise their full potential
- they accurately identify strengths and areas for improvement through focusing on the learning taking place in lesson observations, and ensuring that all staff have clear individual development plans to improve.

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

Andrea Machell
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we were assisted by the head of quality and compliance. We met you, directors and managers. We visited your main sites and a sample of off-site provision with members of the team to observe teaching, learning and assessment and to look at apprentices' and learners' work. We held meetings with apprentices, learners, staff, senior leaders and managers. We reviewed key documents including those relating to self-assessment, performance management 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 their managers during off-site activity.