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Emma Lambert
Director
Redwood Education and Skills Limited
Ashley House
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Dear Ms Lambert

Short inspection of Redwood Education and Skills Limited

Following the short inspection on 7 and 8 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 inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in November 2011.

This provider continues to be good.

Senior managers have maintained the good quality of provision seen at the previous inspection. You and your team of managers have instilled successfully in staff and learners an attitude of high expectations and demanding standards. Your strategic direction continues to focus sharply on meeting the education and training needs of local learners and skilfully matching their needs to the skills requirements of employers, and now offers apprenticeship qualifications in almost all subject areas.

Learners continue to make good progress with their learning. Managers recognise that the proportion of apprentices overall who complete their qualification within the time planned for them could be higher. A very high proportion of apprentices who complete their training with subcontracted partners achieve well. Managers and staff have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. Managers are quick to take appropriate action when the performance of staff or learners does not meet the high standards expected. Managers and staff take the views of employers and learners seriously and respond appropriately to their concerns, ensuring that the quality of learning remains good.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is highly effective and managers have taken very good steps to ensure that they meet their obligations under the new 'Prevent' duty.

All staff, subcontractor partners and learners have a very good understanding of the potential risks of radicalisation and violent extremism. Training for staff and subcontractors has been well managed and thorough. High-quality learning resources are used by staff effectively to introduce learners to fundamental British values and to deepen learners' awareness of life in modern Britain throughout their programme of learning.

Learners are very safe at Redwood Education and Skills. Learners have a highly developed understanding of how to keep themselves and their peers safe. Online safety is given the highest priority by staff; learners speak eloquently and well about how they should act and behave when working and socialising online.

Inspection findings

- The management of subcontractors is good. All learners are currently making good progress with their learning. Managers take seriously their responsibility to train and help subcontractor staff to improve their performance. Subcontractor staff benefit from the comprehensive training that Redwood Education and Skills provides for its own staff. Managers use data reporting well to monitor closely the performance of subcontractors. Frequent performance meetings focus sharply on the quality of learners' experience and on learners' performance. As a result, managers have reduced very effectively the proportion of learners who have exceeded their expected programme completion date. Managers recognise that they need to continue to concentrate on ensuring that the vast majority of learners complete their programme in good time. They need to use data to identify more effectively potential trends in subcontractor performance over time.
- Learners on traineeships develop good skills for employment, such as managing their time well and speaking confidently to clients, which are valued by employers. Most learners are making good progress with completing their qualification and an increasing proportion are securing sustainable work or gaining apprenticeships on completing their programme.
- Managers continue to pay good attention to the development of learners' skills in English, mathematics and information and communications technology (ICT). The discrete teaching, learning and assessment of English and mathematics is good, and the results from assessments at the start of the course of learners' skills and knowledge in English and mathematics is used well by teachers to plan teaching and learning. An increasing proportion of current learners are passing their functional skills qualifications, and assessors are now more adept at planning for learners to improve their technical and professional language in the workplace.
- The previous inspection found that the quality and consistency of learners' progress reviews was not always good enough. Managers identify this as an area to improve further and have worked hard to help assessors to improve their practice. Assessors review individual learners' progress frequently and thoroughly and personal help and guidance is a strong feature of most reviews, ensuring that learners continue with their training. Learners understand the progress they are making and many take an active part in monitoring their own learning. However, assessors do not always ensure

that learners complete the components of their apprenticeship qualification quickly enough. They do not always plan ongoing skills and knowledge development in the workplace sufficiently closely or involve employers and managers enough to ensure that learners' work schedules accurately reflect the tasks and activities learners need to practise to refine their skills further.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders should ensure that:

- managers and staff continue to concentrate on ensuring that all learners complete their programme in the planned time
- managers use data to identify more effectively potential trends in subcontractor performance over time
- assessors plan learners' ongoing skills and knowledge development in the workplace more closely to ensure that learners' work schedules accurately reflect the tasks and activities learners need to practise and hone to complete their qualification in a timely manner.

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

Jules Steele
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors, assisted by the quality manager, as nominee. We visited employer and subcontractor sites to observe teaching, learning and assessments and to look at learners' work. We met with learners, employers and line managers, assessors, senior managers and tutors. We reviewed key documents including the provider's most recent self-assessment report, development plans, data related to the performance of learners currently on programmes, and safeguarding. We considered the views of learners and employers by reviewing the results of Ofsted's online questionnaires.