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19 May 2016

Mrs Karen Polyblank
Managing Director
RWP Training Limited
Chertsey House
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Dear Mrs Polyblank

Short inspection of RWP Training Limited

Following the short inspection on 27 April 2016 and 28 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 April 2013.

This provider continues to be good.

You have maintained the good quality of apprenticeship provision the inspectors found at your last inspection. You and your team have a good capacity to improve the provision. The strengths observed at the last inspection have been maintained and good progress made in dealing with most of the areas for improvement.

You swiftly took action to improve apprenticeship success rates that had declined in 2014. Consequently, the achievement of apprentices in 2015 returned to the previously high rates, with most apprentices achieving their qualifications within their planned time. Your team has a strong focus on apprentices developing the broader skills required to become effective employees, and inspectors found apprentices working to a high standard.

Your apprentices enjoy their learning and are particularly appreciative of the frequent off-the-job training sessions they attend in your training centres. This allows the apprentices to share ideas and to explore and discuss how the theoretical aspects of their studies are relevant in different workplaces.

Your provision is strongly focused on providing apprenticeship opportunities to people aged under 23 and in particular to those young people aged 16 to 19. A very high proportion of these young people continue in permanent employment following their apprenticeship. Employers speak highly of your provision and value the high quality of the training and assessment provided by your staff and the good communication that you maintain.

Safeguarding is effective.

You, your managers and all your staff place a high priority on ensuring that apprentices are safe. The structure for managing safeguarding is appropriate and led by suitably-trained designated officers. You and your managers ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are fit for purpose and frequently reviewed and revised to reflect changing expectations. All staff have undergone the required security checks and receive appropriate training and updates. Apprentices show a good level of understanding of how to keep themselves safe, both personally and in the workplace.

The small number of safeguarding incidents that have occurred have been managed well with appropriate referral to external safeguarding partners such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and good use made of support agencies, such as mental health services, where appropriate. Your staff are all trained in the 'Prevent' duty and are aware of the Channel process of referral for people who are considered to be vulnerable to radicalisation or extremism.

British values are promoted strongly during off-the-job training and apprentices show at least a basic awareness of the signs and dangers of radicalisation and extremism; they know who to contact if they have concerns. Your managers are currently revising the apprenticeship induction materials and the employers' handbook to strengthen their understanding further.

Inspection findings

- Leaders, managers and staff show a good capacity to continue to improve the quality of the provision. A structure of frequent team and individual meetings is strongly focused on actions to resolve areas for improvement. Close monitoring takes place of apprentices' performance and progress at individual and group levels. Strengths from the last inspection have been maintained while most areas for improvement have been resolved or are in the process of being addressed.
- Good working relationships have been established with organisations representing work-based learning providers and with a headteachers' consortium. Links with the local enterprise partnerships are good in Lancashire but less well developed in Cumbria. Business development staff are very active in liaising with schools, the National Careers Service and establishments that educate children in care. The provision is actively marketed and promoted. Provision is available in a limited range of occupational sectors. Consideration is now being given to broadening the offer to include higher-level progression routes to other related apprenticeships.
- Your self-assessment report is accurate. The areas for improvement you have recognised closely align with those identified by inspectors. However, the self-assessment process does not have sufficient direct involvement of staff below management level, apprentices or employers when gathering evidence to arrive at key judgements. Similarly, the quality improvement

- plan does not identify the contributions needed by staff below management level to achieve improvements to quality.
- Your process for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment is used well to ensure that most teaching is effective and none is inadequate. The process does not focus sufficiently on improving teaching so that it is of the highest quality.
 - You took swift and effective action in response to a dip in success rates in 2013. Considerable improvements were made in all subjects except for hairdressing, which further declined, although remaining above the national average. The success rates for 2015 for most intermediate- and advanced-level apprenticeships returned to their previously high levels.
 - Supporting teaching and learning, the apprenticeship programme with the largest proportion of learners, is particularly successful. In-year data indicates that further actions to improve overall performance in hairdressing are now being successful.
 - The large majority of apprentices are making good progress and achieving well. Apprentices are displaying high levels of skills development. Trainers and assessors pay close attention to developing apprentices' broader employment skills such as team-working, using initiative, response to change and showing resilience. Development of these skills is assessed as part of every progress review and included in the short-term targets set for the next review period.
 - Good off-the-job training sessions are held every two weeks in the providers' training centres and apprentices are required to attend. These sessions provide apprentices with appropriate theoretical knowledge and understanding which are invaluable to them in their workplaces. Behaviour in classes is good. Apprentices work collaboratively, share and discuss ideas, and show a good level of respect for each other and for their tutors.
 - Tutors' assessment of apprentices' work is effective and most apprentices produce work of a high standard. Tutors and assessors are competent and enthusiastic. They have developed very good relationships with apprentices and employers. Assessors visit apprentices regularly in their workplaces to review their progress and to deal with any issues that may have arisen since their previous visit. This close monitoring is having a positive impact on improving success rates.
 - The business development unit identifies and works with a wide range of supportive, committed and high-quality employers who provide very good on-the-job training and development for apprentices. A strength at the last inspection was the skilful matching of apprentices to appropriate vacancies and this is still the case. On the rare occasions when work placements deteriorate and apprentices are not making the required progress, they are found alternative placements as quickly as possible and apprentices are not placed with those employers again.
 - Good recent progress has been made in developing the use of information learning technology (ILT) to support teaching and learning. The virtual learning environment is being thoroughly revised and updated and a new member of staff is an ILT champion. Much more emphasis is now placed on apprentices becoming independent learners and the improved ILT system is helping to facilitate this.

- Apprentices produce work of a high standard. The quality of written feedback given to apprentices has improved and is now good. Internal verifiers monitor the quality and usefulness of tutors' feedback to their apprentices vigilantly. Internal verifiers work closely with tutors to ensure that improvements continue and that feedback to apprentices is of maximum benefit in helping them to improve and make good progress. Apprentices' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar are improving as a result of attention being paid by tutors to any errors in their work.
- A very high percentage of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship or advanced apprenticeship are retained by their employers and obtain permanent paid employment. A high proportion of intermediate apprentices on the supporting teaching and learning programme progress to advanced level. Progression rates for all other apprenticeship programmes, although improving, are low. Data about apprentices' employment on completion of their programme is collected and recorded by assessors but it is not consistently collated and does not capture all the relevant information, for example any progression to other courses with alternative training providers.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders should ensure that:

- the system for observing and monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is revised to have a sharper focus on securing excellence in learning and that it provides staff with a clear plan of what they need to do to improve their practices
- the process for self-assessment is developed to enable all staff, and as many employers and apprentices as is possible, to directly contribute to the evidence base underpinning the judgements
- the quality improvement plan identifies clearly the actions required by staff at all levels with clear allocation of responsibilities for delivering the improvements
- apprentices and their employers are clear about the opportunities available to them to progress to higher-level apprenticeships and other relevant qualifications
apprentices' progression data is captured systematically and analysed by managers to inform curriculum developments to meet employers' needs.

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

Mike White

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors assisted by three Ofsted inspectors and the head of operations, as nominee, carried out the inspection. We met with you and members of your staff, tutors, assessors and apprentices at both of your training centres. We carried out lesson observations and visited employers and apprentices in the workplace. We reviewed a range of important documentation and policies and procedures relating to the agreed lines of enquiry.