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Mrs Majella Cocks
Curriculum Director
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Dear Mrs Cocks

Short inspection of E.Quality Training Limited

Following the short inspection on 15 and 16 March 2017, 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 your provision was judged to be good in June 2013.

This provider continues to be good.

At the previous inspection, teaching and learning were good, and learners received a high standard of individual coaching and particularly good practical training. Most learners achieved their qualifications and the majority progressed into further education, training or employment as their next step. Most learners completed their programmes because good information, advice, guidance and personal support ensured that they chose programmes that suited their needs. They benefited from good work placements that helped them to develop skills to equip them for sustained employment.

The recommendations from the previous inspection were to:

- ensure that lesson observation feedback helped teachers to focus on how well learners were learning in lessons and to make better use of information and learning technology (ILT) to promote independent learning
- bring together all information on planning learning and learners' targets to provide a single, coherent plan to guide learners through their programme of study
- ensure that tutors identify and correct spelling, punctuation and grammatical

errors in learners' work and that learners receive clear guidance on how to improve in these areas

- ensure that learners' understanding of equality and diversity was actively promoted and that areas of good practice were shared and adopted.

You have identified key themes for staff development activities that are based on the findings of your observations of teaching, learning and assessment. These themes focus on the impact on learning, including how to challenge all learners to make the progress in line with their potential, be self-motivated as learners and understand the progress they are making, and make good use of the available ILT resources. You have ensured that staff have had training in all these areas. The feedback to staff after observations is particularly useful, resulting in improvements in the grades awarded. Teachers concentrate successfully on helping learners to reach their full potential and believe in themselves – a reaction to the increased number of learners with anxiety and mental health issues. You plan to introduce more training on the 'growth mind set' concept in September to try to develop learners' resilience and self-confidence.

Study programme requirements were introduced in September 2013, shortly after the previous inspection. You have ensured very effectively that the principles are met and that learners understand the overall structure of their programmes. Learners who do not already have qualifications in English and/or mathematics at level 2 are required to study these subjects alongside their vocational core qualification. Most learners are working towards childcare, health and social care, or hairdressing and beauty therapy qualifications. They take part in carefully chosen, relevant, external work experience and enrichment activities such as entering skills competitions.

You have developed a clear strategy to improve the teaching of English and mathematics and link the functional skills lessons to the context of the vocational subjects. You have developed practical recommendations for teachers such as making sure that they display relevant technical terms in their classrooms (observed in some lessons), correcting all work and highlighting grammatical errors, encouraging learners to submit first drafts of their assignments and develop the habit of proofreading through the use of writing exercises. These initiatives have been supported with training for staff, a checklist of the most common grammatical mistakes to look out for and worksheets to help learners understand how, for example, to use apostrophes. Teachers are now concentrating on examination techniques such as reading and understanding the question to ensure that learners have a better chance of passing their GCSE examinations. Staff have been encouraged to retake level 2 qualifications themselves but the take-up has been low. In a few instances, teachers themselves make grammatical errors when correcting work, writing on flip charts or preparing handouts and assignments.

You have ensured that teachers have a strong focus on developing learners' understanding of equality and diversity and are supporting teachers to meet the needs of all their learners. The support for teachers is led by a member of staff who helps to ensure that they use an effective range of resources. Standardisation

meetings include attention to how well these topics are embedded in lesson plans and schemes of work, and how well teachers use resources to reflect diversity. The lead staff member monitors closely how learners have become more knowledgeable about equality and diversity.

Overall qualification achievement rates declined in 2014/15 but recovered well in 2015/16 to be at least 10 percentage points above the rates for similar providers. Despite a small decline in 2015/16, achievement rates in functional skills English and mathematics remain high and above those for similar providers. At the end of their course, most learners progress directly into employment or into further education or training, including apprenticeships. This represents a marked improvement since the previous inspection when the equivalent measure was just over half.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your team have ensured that safeguarding arrangements remain fit for purpose and action is taken to safeguard learners. You have introduced staff training in line with the 'Prevent' duty which has ensured that learners are familiar with the dangers of being influenced by others with extremist views or radical tendencies. You have developed good links with relevant external agencies to support both staff training and learners at risk. You maintain a very detailed register of concerns raised about your learners and are aware that many of these concerns relate to anxiety, mental health or family and personal relationships. Your staff provide a strong pastoral system which ensures that learners get the support they need. Learners trust staff and are confident that staff will respond to any issues or concerns they may have. They know that bullying and harassment are not tolerated and welcome the supportive environment prevalent in each centre.

Learners can see the links between British values and respect for diversity, and how these aspects can affect their role at work. For example, learners working towards a childcare qualification talked confidently about signs of extremism and radicalisation they might see on placement, while learners on hairdressing courses talked about respect and tolerance in the context of their occupational area. Most learners are able to describe measures that they should take to keep themselves safe in the internet age and are aware of the dangers of sharing personal information through social media sites.

Inspection findings

- Overall, learners make good progress in lessons. They are eager to learn, grow in confidence, and develop good technical skills and knowledge that are enhanced through the well-managed programme of work placements. Most teachers skilfully plan learning which supports an appropriate range of learning activities that motivate and engage learners successfully. They are skilled at asking questions which check and extend learning. Where questioning or observation indicate gaps in understanding or low skill levels, teachers give clear and effective guidance which enables learners to meet the expected standards.

Learners focus on their work, enjoy their learning and produce work of a good standard. For example in hairdressing, learners worked with confidence dressing clients' hair around the theme of 'Project Prom' which enabled them to develop techniques for washing, curling and blow-drying hair to create a style befitting a graduation 'Prom'. Learners demonstrate good recall and consolidation of previous learning and are encouraged by the relevance to the workplace of what they learn.

- In a few lessons teachers fail to check learning at the end of one phase of learning before moving onto the next. Consequently, during the subsequent practical task too much time is taken up repeating the explanation and guidance, which slows learners' progress. In a similarly small number of lessons, teachers plan little variation in activities and questioning, so that some learners become disengaged because they are unable to answer questions or get the most from the planned activities.
- Learners have good access to computers, smartphones and interactive display boards in each centre, but teachers do not use these resources interactively to enhance learning and progress. For example, in a childcare lesson the display board was used simply to display health and safety images, while in hairdressing learners simply used digital cameras to capture pictures of their 'Prom' hairstyles.
- Learners are enthusiastic about the arrangements for work experience and can describe how much they value the enrichment activities they have undertaken. For example, hairdressing learners describe gains in confidence through working with clients, while childcare learners talk about the application of their learning in the workplace setting. Around two thirds are already on placement for at least a day a week with arrangements well advanced for the remainder to go out next term.
- Learners value the information, advice and guidance they receive from the start of their course, which ensure that they know how they will be assessed and what they can do after they complete their programme. They are ambitious to succeed and progress. Learners have a good knowledge of the progress they are making. They can describe the new skills they have learned and whether or not they are on track to complete all aspects of their programme because of their knowledge of the progress trackers and their regular reviews with teachers.
- Learners have targets recorded in their individual learning plans that are reviewed termly but they mainly refer to units of qualifications to be achieved rather than skills or knowledge to be developed in order to achieve the units. This limits their understanding of what they need to do to improve and restricts the development of their independent learning skills. A few groups of learners also know that they have personal skills targets, such as to attend punctually all lessons or talk more frequently to customers in the salon, but this knowledge is not consistent across all courses. Targets are not sufficiently specific or measurable in either technical or personal development, even for improving attendance, making it difficult for learners to know when they achieve a target.
- Learners understand and accept the reasoning behind the requirement to study English and mathematics alongside their vocational qualification to enable them to achieve at least a level 2 qualification in these subjects. They recognise and

value the importance of good English and communication skills for their future job and training options. Learners are reminded of the links between certain functional English skills and the assignments they are set. Staff check if learners have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and offer both very carefully targeted individual and group support. However, despite the considerable focus on this area in staff training, the extent to which teachers correct spelling errors and support the development of English varies too much. Spelling and grammatical errors are not routinely corrected, and inspectors found too many incorrect spellings marked as correct in one centre. Feedback to learners is not sufficiently detailed to help them improve their written communication skills, which is having an impact on first-time pass rates in the functional skills examination. A small minority of learners' work is poorly presented.

- Learners have a good understanding of the importance and relevance of equality and diversity in their vocational area. Both childcare and hairdressing learners were able to explain how their understanding impacted on their practice at work and could describe how they would respond appropriately to different scenarios in the workplace. For example, childcare learners talked about children from different cultural backgrounds being treated fairly. They cited the potential for gender stereotyping in the selection of toys and how it is important to be aware of religious beliefs when choosing food. Hairdressing learners discussed working with clients and staff from different backgrounds and how this might affect preferred styles or the use of particular products. Teachers promote learners' awareness of non-stereotypical employees or learners in their vocational areas, such as the two male workers in childcare.
- An increasing number of learners who take functional skills examinations in English or mathematics are now entering level 2 rather than level 1. First-time pass rates for current learners are high for level 1 examinations but need to be improved for level 2 written English examinations. GCSE examinations in English and mathematics were offered for the first time in 2015/16. Although around a quarter of learners improved their previous low grades, too few achieved a grade C or better.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- managers use the system for observing lessons and assessment sessions to report more consistently on the progress learners are making towards becoming confident and accurate in their use of English and how effectively all teachers correct written errors
- teachers review the way learners' targets are worded so that they refer to the skills and knowledge learners need to develop in order to achieve their qualifications units and/or personal learning goals, and make sure targets are specific so that learners will be able to recognise when they have achieved them.

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

Nick Gadfield
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, we were assisted by you as curriculum director. We held meetings with staff and managers. We observed teaching, learning and assessment jointly with your managers and looked at learners' work and the facilities available to them. We spoke to learners wherever we found them and incorporated their views in our findings. We reviewed key documents including those relating to self-assessment, performance and safeguarding as well as the qualification achievements for 2015/16.