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Mr David Todhunter
Chief Executive
Kirkdale Industrial Training Services Limited
Kirkdale House
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West Yorkshire
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Dear Mr Todhunter

Short inspection of Kirkdale Industrial Training Services Limited

Following the short inspection on 16 and 17 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 the provider was judged to be good in January 2014.

This provider continues to be good.

You have ensured that apprentices continue to receive good-quality education and training. You provide good care, support and guidance, which apprentices appreciate and which results in the large majority achieving their qualification and almost all progressing into employment.

The proportion of 16- to 18-year-old and adult apprentices who achieve their qualification is higher than that at similar providers. Apprentices receive effective initial advice and guidance that help them to understand the options available to them to make informed decisions. Consequently, a very high proportion of apprentices progress from an intermediate- to advanced-level apprenticeship; this enhances their opportunity for progression at work.

While the proportion of apprentices who achieve within the planned timescale is higher than that at similar providers, it is still too low. Around a third of apprentices do not complete their apprenticeship within the planned time. The proportion of apprentices who completed the transport operations intermediate-level programme in 2015/16 was too low. You, trustees and managers have put actions in place to improve this programme and are monitoring the impact of these actions on apprentices' progress carefully. This is resulting in a higher proportion of apprentices in the current year on the intermediate-level transport operations making good progress. A higher proportion are also achieving within their planned timescale than did previously.

You have addressed successfully the majority of improvements identified at the previous inspection. You have increased the proportion of 16- to 18-year-old apprentices at advanced level and the proportion of 19- to 23-year-old apprentices at intermediate level who achieve their qualification. The very small number of female apprentices make good progress. However, apprentices from minority ethnic groups do not achieve as well as their peers do. Apprentices develop good English and mathematical skills, and the large majority now receive helpful feedback which helps them to improve their work.

You and your managers self-assess the provision rigorously and accurately, and effective action plans are in place to improve the quality of provision. The board of trustees provides expertise and holds senior leaders to account effectively. Board members scrutinise performance regularly and challenge senior leaders rigorously when areas require improvement.

Effective performance management processes are in place. Managers accurately identify key strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment during their observations of learning both in the training centre and at employers' premises. Staff receive good training and development to help them to improve their practice. Managers and staff closely track and monitor their apprentices' progress in achieving the component parts of their qualification. Managers ensure that improvements are made quickly when needed, including in the provision that is contracted out to a general further education college.

The majority of current apprentices are making good progress towards achieving their qualification. Advisers use coaching skills well; they motivate apprentices and, as a result, apprentices enjoy their learning. Teaching, learning and assessment are preparing apprentices well for the world of work; apprentices develop the skills and technical knowledge they need for work. For example, apprentices use a range of equipment competently to make component parts with a high level of accuracy.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have maintained the effective safeguarding arrangements identified at the last inspection, and have revised them in respect of the 'Prevent' duty. This ensures that apprentices are safe and feel safe. Managers and staff continue to prioritise safeguarding. Designated safeguarding officers, staff and trustees have received regular training, including on the 'Prevent' duty. Staff ensure that the majority of apprentices have a good understanding of the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism and how this applies in their workplace. For example, apprentices demonstrate that they understand the security concerns when working with fluid power equipment and systems.

Managers carry out appropriate staff recruitment checks and keep accurate records. Through effective training, staff know how to ensure and maintain safe working practices and are clear about how to report any concerns about their apprentices' safety.

Staff maintain good relationships with a number of agencies, which ensures that the most vulnerable apprentices are kept safe.

Managers place a high priority in ensuring that workshop environments are well-maintained and safe. Apprentices demonstrate a good understanding of the requirement to work safely, both in the training centre and in their workplace. They competently carry out risk-assessments before starting a task when in the workshops.

Inspection findings

- Managers plan apprenticeship programmes that meet apprentices' and employers' needs well. Programmes provide the required on- and off-the-job training. Apprentices undertake relevant knowledge-based qualifications and, consequently, they develop a range of technical skills and competencies, which link well to their job role.
- The majority of apprentices benefit from an impressive range of industry standard equipment and machinery in well-equipped workshops. Managers ensure that apprentices work with high-quality employers who provide a good range of industry-standard equipment and opportunities for apprentices to develop further the advanced technical skills that they need for work.
- Apprentices achieve a range of additional qualifications in health and safety. For example, they gain qualifications in working safely, working at heights, and asbestos awareness. This prepares apprentices well for work and enhances their understanding of health and safety in their workplace.
- Instructors provide apprentices with regular opportunities to improve their English, mathematical and information, communication and technology skills in lessons and through on- and off-the-job training. The standard of the majority of apprentices' written work is good, particularly at advanced level. Apprentices apply their mathematical skills effectively to programme and run computer numerical control machines. Advanced-level apprentices are able to analyse the cost effectiveness of mass production compared to a single batch production.
- In a small number of instances, instructors and tutors do not identify spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in apprentices' written work and, consequently, apprentices repeat their mistakes over time and do not improve their writing skills.
- Apprentices develop a good understanding of work and life in Britain. They demonstrate tolerance and respect for each other, their colleagues and their instructors, tutors and advisers. Apprentices take part in debates and discussions about relevant topics that develop their understanding of life in Britain; for example, they debate the impact of leaving the European Union.
- The majority of apprentices make good progress in developing the personal and social skills that they need for work. They develop good speaking and listening skills, which enable them to communicate more effectively with their colleagues and customers within their workplace.

- Managers maintain the good standard of teaching, learning and assessment by accurately assessing the performance of staff and provide appropriate support and challenge when needed. However, not all areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment report have been fully addressed; for example, in too many instances, instructors and tutors do not carry out sufficient checks in lessons to assess apprentices' understanding fully. This is particularly the case in the subcontracted provision.
- In too many instances, instructors make insufficient demands on apprentices in lessons, particularly the most able. Consequently, too many apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable in these lessons or extend their knowledge beyond that of the qualification.
- Although staff now assess their apprentices' starting points, advisers do not use this information well enough to plan learning that meets individual apprentices' needs. Consequently, the most able apprentices do not make the rapid progress they are capable of achieving.
- In too many instances, advisers do not routinely involve employers in their apprentices' training programme and progress reviews. Where employers are involved, apprentices made quicker progress.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- instructors, tutors and advisers use apprentices' starting points to plan learning so that all apprentices, including the most able, develop and extend their skills and knowledge and make the progress of which they are capable
- instructors and tutors use effective assessment strategies to check the learning and progress of apprentices in lessons
- advisers involve employers routinely in reviewing their apprentices' progress so that apprentices extend and develop their skills further
- they increase the proportion of apprentices who complete their programme within their planned timescales, particularly on the intermediate-level transport operations framework
- they increase the proportion of apprentices from minority ethnic backgrounds who achieve their qualifications.

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 you and the administration and quality manager, as nominee. We met with members of the leadership team, instructors, tutors, advisers, apprentices and employers. We observed sessions in the training centre and in the workplace. We reviewed apprentices' assessed work and paper-based and electronic portfolios. We obtained learners' views through face to-face interviews. We reviewed key strategic and policy documents, including those relating to strategic planning, lesson planning and assessment, quality assurance and performance monitoring and safeguarding.