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24 October 2017

Patricia Stretton  
Interim Head of Learning and Development  
Vector Aerospace International Limited  
Fareham Road  
Gosport  
PO13 0AA

Dear Ms Stretton

### **Short inspection of Vector Aerospace International Limited**

Following the short inspection on 27 September 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 good in July 2014.

#### **This provider continues to be good.**

Since the previous inspection, Airbus has put Vector Aerospace up for sale. This has affected significantly the apprenticeship programme and apprenticeship training team. Vector Aerospace has not recruited any apprentices for the past two years and currently only has six apprentices, who are in their final year. Five instructors and managers left and were not replaced. The apprenticeship training team now comprises the apprentice training manager and the training and development adviser. You subcontract more of the apprentices' training and assessment to Fareham College and PETA than at the previous inspection.

The apprenticeship training team has maintained a good-quality programme through this period of uncertainty. They have dealt with some, but not all, of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The apprenticeship training team has improved the self-assessment process. They use data and apprentices' views better to make more reliable judgements about the quality of apprenticeships and to set suitable actions in the quality improvement plan. However, the apprenticeship training team has yet to improve the process for observing the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, they do not know enough about the quality of training with subcontractors or in the workplace. One of your subcontractors provides effective assessment for the majority of apprentices, which was not the case at the previous inspection. You have yet to improve assessment on the electrical engineering apprenticeship.

The apprenticeship training team has taken very effective action to build on many of the strengths from the previous inspection. They increased apprentices'

achievement rates significantly over the past three years, and these are now outstanding. The majority of apprentices make good progress. They enjoy their training and the opportunities they have to learn at work. Vector Aerospace purchased Lynx and Sea King helicopters for the training centre so that learners can gain skills and knowledge in repairing a broader range of aircraft.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and managers have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are effective and take action to safeguard apprentices. They manage safeguarding well but have not updated recently the safeguarding policy for apprentices. The apprenticeship training team holds frequent meetings with apprentices to update their health and safety knowledge and share good practice. Apprentices feel safe and work safely in workshops. The apprenticeship training team takes apprentices' concerns very seriously and places emphasis on their well-being and welfare. Several apprentices have had support from the employee assistance programme or were referred to external health experts.

The safeguarding champion manages safeguarding incidents particularly well. Apprentices who have raised concerns had these dealt with sensitively, allowing them to stay on their programme and make good progress. Leaders and managers analyse incidents well and prioritise training, such as 'dignity at work' sessions, for staff and business units. Apprentices understand the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, which they learn about through poster competitions and regular quizzes.

### **Inspection findings**

- Staff in the apprenticeship training team take highly effective action to raise and sustain very high achievement rates. They monitor apprentices' attendance, progress and achievements thoroughly to identify those at risk of not achieving. Apprentices receive good coaching and pastoral support to help them stay on their programme and achieve. As a result, achievement rates have risen significantly over the past three years.
- Apprentices' achievement of qualifications is outstanding. Almost all apprentices achieve their qualifications and most do so on time. The vast majority of current apprentices make good progress. A few apprentices achieve better than they anticipated because their assessors motivate them to produce high standards of assignment work.
- Apprentices develop excellent engineering skills at work. Highly skilled and experienced workplace mentors coach them very well, setting activities that increase in complexity as apprentices' skills develop. Apprentices interpret job cards and diagrams accurately to produce high-quality machined components that meet the exacting industry standards.
- Apprentices take on positions of greater responsibility at work and become valued members of the workforce. Many take additional units or higher-level qualifications that allow them to work in different areas of the business and help their career progression.

- Assessors provide frequent good-quality assessments for mechanical engineering apprentices, who make up the majority of current learners. They plan assessment well to make sure mechanical engineering apprentices make good progress. Assessors give apprentices constructive feedback that they use to improve the quality of their work.
- Assessment on the electrical engineering apprenticeship requires improvement. No assessment has taken place on this programme for six months. The apprenticeship training team has very recently identified a suitably experienced electrical engineering assessor, who has yet to take up the role.
- The apprenticeship training team has insufficient measures in place to assure and improve the quality of training. The process for observing instructors and assessors does not include training given by workplace mentors and subcontractors. As a result, the apprenticeship training team does not have a complete picture of the quality of teaching and learning to use for self-assessment and quality improvement actions.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- as a matter of urgency, electrical engineering apprentices start to receive frequent and effective assessment
- the apprenticeship team develops and implements suitable arrangements to assure and raise further the quality of all teaching and learning
- managers review and update policies, where appropriate, to reflect changes in legislation and practice.

I am copying this letter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Rodgers  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Ofsted Inspector, assisted by the training and development adviser, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors met with you, the training and development adviser, human resources staff and learners. They did not observe training or assessment as none was taking place during the inspection. Inspectors reviewed key documents, including those relating to self-assessment, quality improvement plans, safeguarding and learners' achievements. They scrutinised examples of learners' marked work and assessors' feedback.