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Mr John Sims
Managing Director
Birmingham Electrical Training Limited
34 Brearley Street
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West Midlands
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Dear Mr Sims

Short inspection of Birmingham Electrical Training Limited

Following the short inspection on 2 and 3 May 2018, 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 June 2015.

This provider continues to be good.

You and your leadership team have ensured that apprentices continue to receive and benefit from a good standard of vocational training.

As a result of good operational management and effective quality improvement arrangements, leaders and managers continue to be successful in raising standards and improving the quality of provision. The self-assessment report continues to be analytical and appropriately judgemental, identifying accurately key strengths and areas for improvement.

Leaders and managers continue to demonstrate a precise and well-informed understanding of the needs of the electrical installation industry and the skills priorities of the Birmingham and Solihull local enterprise partnership. Leaders use their extensive knowledge of the construction sector well to ensure that training provision meets the needs of apprentices and employers across the West Midlands. Managers' actions to increase the proportion of apprentices from under-represented groups have not yet been successful.

As at the last inspection, teaching, learning and assessment continue to be of a good standard, reflecting the positive development of apprentices' technical and personal skills. Apprentices make strong progress in their electrical studies as a result of well-planned training, careful support and positive encouragement from trainers, assessors and employers.

Assessors and trainers support the development of apprentices' skills in

mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) well. However, further development work is required to ensure that all staff routinely promote high standards of English when reviewing and assessing apprentices' written work and in the ongoing promotion of good verbal communication skills.

Apprentices have a good work ethic and their attendance rates at work and in the training centre are high. They have a secure understanding of their rights and responsibilities. They routinely demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and in wider society.

The proportion of apprentices who successfully gain their qualifications by the planned end date has improved year on year and is well above the published national rate. Pass rates for the small minority of apprentices who join the course without GCSE qualifications in English, mathematics and ICT are high. All apprentices who successfully complete their course secure permanent employment.

Safeguarding is effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding exists across the company. Designated safeguarding officers are appropriately trained and experienced. They make good use of close links with a range of external agencies including Birmingham City Council and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children to ensure that apprentices who may need help are well supported. Safeguarding records are detailed and of a good quality.

Directors and managers continue to ensure that relevant safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly updated and fit for purpose. Protocols for checking the suitability for new staff to work with children and young people are effective.

All staff benefit from annual refresher training in both safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty; this ensures that their knowledge and understanding of these important aspects are current and up to date. Staff at all levels of the organisation are alert to any signs that indicate that apprentices may be at risk and the actions they need to take to help and protect them.

You and your staff have ensured that internet safety, including the use of social media, is introduced effectively to apprentices at induction and reinforced during assessment visits and progress reviews. As a result, apprentices have a good level of understanding of how to protect themselves while online from cyber bullying and online grooming. Apprentices report that they feel safe both at work and in the training centre and know whom to approach to report any concerns they may have.

Inspection findings

- Since the previous inspection, directors and managers, with the support of staff, have worked tirelessly to improve the quality of provision. As a result, they have raised success rates for apprentices, which are now very high and well above those reported nationally. Directors, managers and staff continue to be highly ambitious for the success of all apprentices.

- Strategic and operational business planning are good. Directors have well-considered plans to broaden the curriculum offer. These include the recent introduction of new standards-based apprenticeships in electrical installation and planned updates to professional accreditation courses, for example the introduction of the new 18th edition wiring regulations qualification. Strong contacts with local employers allow directors to play a valuable part in developing the curriculum to meet their needs and those of the industry.
- The small management team work well together and communicate effectively with staff and each other. Leaders and managers meet regularly to share information, plan actions for improvement and develop the provision. Management information systems provide staff at all levels within the company with quick access to accurate information about individual apprentices' progress and quickly alert them to any emerging concerns.
- Quality assurance arrangements continue to be good. Leaders have made strong progress in securing improvement against the majority of areas identified by inspectors as requiring improvement at the last inspection. For example, you and your team have strengthened the arrangements for observing teaching, learning and assessment, which are now closely aligned to the appraisal system. Staff value the detailed feedback that observers provide following an observation of learning and assessment. Where relevant, any developmental action points for training staff following observation are quickly followed up by managers through a well-designed continuous professional development programme. Similarly, as a result of well-considered improvement actions, apprentices now routinely benefit from good support from trainers that helps them to confidently develop and extend their skills in using ICT.
- Managers, trainers and assessors create a highly inclusive culture that meets apprentices' individual needs well. Managers' good use of data enables them to closely monitor operational performance and ensure that any differences in achievement rates for different groups of apprentices are narrowing over time. However, leaders' actions have not yet been successful in widening the participation of under-represented groups, so that apprentice recruitment is more reflective of the demographics of the local community.
- Directors set a very clear strategic direction for the company. Since the previous inspection they have judiciously prioritised investment in a range of enhanced training facilities that directly benefit apprentices and staff. Directors receive detailed monthly operational reports outlining in-year performance related to a wide range of financial and operational issues, enabling them to provide effective support and challenge to leaders and managers. They understand and use the data on apprenticeship outcomes well. They ask pertinent questions to make informed decisions about the quality of provision and to prioritise actions for improvement. As a result, the quality of provision for apprentices continues to be of a good and improving standard.
- Initial testing of apprentices' starting points is thorough. Staff accurately identify apprentices' starting points and training needs when they join the course and use this information well to ensure that they are placed on appropriate programmes.
- Experienced trainers and assessors use their good subject knowledge and

industry expertise effectively to plan and provide challenging learning that motivates apprentices and stimulates their interest. Trainers skilfully use a good range of well-planned activities and vocational resources to extend apprentices' technical knowledge and understanding. For example, they assist apprentices to use confidently industry-approved technical installation guides when assisting qualified electricians with the fitting of mains-powered electrical metering systems to commercial and residential properties.

- Trainers and assessors have high expectations for apprentices and set high standards. As a result, most apprentices make rapid progress in their skills development. They successfully achieve all the component elements of the apprenticeship qualification within the target time for completion. Apprentices benefit from good-quality coaching and assessment in their workplaces. Employers provide a good range of relevant job roles and, in consultation with assessors, are fully involved in arranging training and assessment opportunities for apprentices. This enables apprentices to develop a wide range of skills and complete their assessments on work-related tasks. However, the most able apprentices are often given the same practical tasks irrespective of their work role and, as a result, are not challenged sufficiently by the learning process.
- Workplace mentors provide good help, guidance and support by ensuring that apprentices model high standards of behaviour, particularly in adhering to health and safety practices when installing and commissioning a range of electrical equipment.
- Assessors are highly flexible in their approach. Assessors' visits to the workplace are frequent and their regularity increases if an apprentice needs more support. This flexible approach means that apprentices can progress at a pace that meets their and their employers' needs. Assessors provide apprentices with detailed, developmental feedback that enables them to improve their practical work and ensure that it meets the standards required both by the awarding body and their employers.
- The large majority of apprentices continue to make good use of the e-portfolio system to submit a wide range of evidence that demonstrates the development of their vocational competence and to accurately track their individual progress against their qualification framework. However, for the small minority of apprentices who have recently started on the new apprenticeship standards, assessors do not make skilful use of all the available workplace evidence to help them to track and record the development of behavioural competencies. As a result, these apprentices and their assessors have a limited understanding of progress towards the end-point assessment.
- Most apprentices develop their mathematical and ICT skills well and successfully achieve their functional skills tests at the first attempt. However, as at the previous inspection, in a small minority of instances, trainers' and assessors' feedback on the standard of apprentices' English in their written work continues to be too cursory and fails to identify areas for further improvement. Most training staff correct errors in apprentices' spelling, grammar and language skills; however, they fail to provide a small minority of apprentices with sufficient strategies or learning activities to improve and use these skills

routinely in their everyday work. As a result, apprentices repeat the same mistakes over time.

- Apprentices develop good attitudes to learning and effectively apply knowledge to their workplace practice gained through their off-the-job-learning. They work productively with employers, other work colleagues and their assessors. They undertake suitably challenging tasks, develop skills and relate new learning to practical work situations that benefit them in their job roles and enhance their future employability. Apprentices exhibit a good understanding of why the quality of their work is important to them and their employer.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications has risen substantially since the previous inspection and is very high, as is the proportion who achieve in the planned time. Current apprentices make very good progress; the large majority are on track to achieve in the planned time and most stay on their programme of study. All apprentices who complete their qualifications progress into sustained employment. However, tutors do not routinely provide apprentices with impartial next steps careers advice and guidance on careers opportunities outside of the electrical installation industry.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- apprentices working towards the new apprenticeship standards receive precise guidance that details the evidence requirements associated with end-point assessment. Leaders should ensure that assessors routinely support apprentices to record and track their progress accurately, to demonstrate both the technical skills and behavioural competencies required to gain the new apprenticeship qualification
- trainers and assessors consistently promote the importance of high standards of English in apprentices' written and verbal communications by routinely providing them with detailed and developmental feedback on how to improve these skills
- trainers and assessors skilfully use information about apprentices' skills at the start of the course to plan and provide learning that challenges the most able apprentices to progress in line with their identified potential
- they quickly develop a well-considered strategy to work in partnership with external agencies and other providers who can assist both in extending the organisation's approach to the recruitment of prospective apprentices from traditionally under-represented groups and in providing apprentices who have completed their courses with impartial careers guidance.

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

Yours sincerely

Victor Reid
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection the managing director, as nominee, assisted the team. We held meetings with you, members of your management team, trainers, assessors and with a range of apprentices at different stages of their training. We observed a range of teaching, learning and assessment delivered at your training centre and in the workplace with members of your staff. We reviewed key documents, including those relating to the organisation's business strategy, self-assessment, performance and safeguarding. We considered the views of apprentices and employers by reviewing the comments received on Ofsted's online questionnaires and by seeking their views during on-site inspection activities.