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Ms Tracy Munchin
Operational Director
Bedfordshire & Luton Education Business Partnership
15 Doolittle Mill
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Dear Ms Munchin

**Short inspection of Bedfordshire & Luton Education Business Partnership
(trading as Develop)**

Following the short inspection on 1 and 2 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 January 2014.

This provider continues to be good.

You and your staff have successfully carried out the large majority of the recommendations from the previous inspection report. For much of the provision, the impact of your work has resulted in improved outcomes for learners over the past three years. However, developing provision in mathematics and English was a priority from the last inspection. You have taken steps to strengthen this provision, but recognise the ongoing need to prioritise improvements in learners' English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

You have maintained the strong vision and sense of purpose for the organisation, which you communicate effectively to all your staff and subcontractors. You have ensured that most of your learners receive a good standard of teaching and assessment. Monitoring of most aspects of the provision is rigorous. Where the quality of teaching, learning and assessment does not meet your expectations, you generally take swift and effective action to improve tutors' practice.

You and your team have strengthened the arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and learning across all of the provision, including the work of tutors employed by your subcontractors. The observations of provision are timely, effective and provide opportunities for valued professional discussions with teaching staff. As a result, tutors who are new to teaching, or require development, receive constructive feedback and effective coaching to improve their practice.

Since the last inspection, the board of directors, senior leaders and managers have continued to ensure that the quality of education and training for the courses delivered by their own staff, or through subcontractor arrangements, meets the principles of the 16 to 19 study programmes. Along with the board and senior leaders, you have established a broad range of learning opportunities which are highly responsive to the needs of individuals and the communities you serve.

You ensure that staff have high expectations of their learners. Learners continue to develop high levels of personal, social and vocational skills. Most learners make significant gains in self-confidence and in developing problem-solving skills. They work well in small teams and enjoy the experience of working in their local learning centres. Your recent actions to ensure that more learners make good progress and achieve their English and mathematics qualifications are beginning to take effect but are at too early a stage to secure sufficient improvement.

Safeguarding is effective.

Together, the board of directors and senior leaders place all aspects of learners' safety at the core of their work. They have ensured that procedures to keep learners safe are comprehensive and thorough. As a result, learners are safe and know how to report any concerns with confidence, knowing that staff will act appropriately to resolve any worries. Any concerns raised by staff or learners are investigated and dealt with in a timely manner, with the appropriate involvement of internal and external agencies.

Leaders ensure that all staff, including those working in subcontracted provision, receive regular safeguarding updating and training. Consequently, staff are very aware of local safeguarding concerns, such as knife crime and race hatred issues. Strong links with external agencies, including housing, probation and the police, ensure that staff are able to fully support their learners. Staff have established an inclusive and respectful culture, where learners who are often from very different backgrounds work harmoniously together.

Staff provide appropriate tasks and activities in lessons and tutorials to ensure that the majority of learners have a good understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. However, some learners do not understand how radicalisation and extremism relates to their workplace and/or communities they live in.

Inspection findings

- Leaders keep the board of directors well informed by providing them with regular and accurate reports to understand the work and impact of the provision. As a result, directors effectively hold leaders to account for performance.
- The proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications has increased over time. Each year, a greater proportion of learners develop essential skills, make good progress, achieve their qualifications and improve their future prospects. However, not enough learners make good progress and achieve their

qualifications on their English and mathematics courses.

- Regular staff meetings ensure that all staff have sufficient and up-to-date information concerning issues affecting their learners. Leaders have ensured that effective arrangements are in place to support staff who work regularly with learners who are experiencing difficulties in their personal lives.
- Leaders have strengthened arrangements for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment. All tutors working directly for the provider receive regular observations that lead to timely and effective professional discussions between the observer and the tutor that help tutors to improve their practice. Managers take swift action to put in place coaching, support and development activities to rectify areas of weaker practice.
- Leaders recognised that tutors working with subcontractors did not have sufficient opportunities to improve their practice through observation. As a result, they now ensure that these tutors receive observations that focus specifically on improving all aspects of their teaching.
- Leaders and managers have established a broad range of relevant training for tutors that is fully informed by the findings of observations. Staff regularly share good practice in teaching and assessment. As a result, most teachers improve their practice further. For example, creative technology tutors work well with a local university on improving their own practice in teaching topics such as digital graphics.
- Staff ensure that learners develop their confidence, as well as their vocational and employability skills. The majority of learners studying computing demonstrate very good skills beyond the requirements of the qualification. For example, manipulating structured query language to access a good range of information from very large databases.
- Most learners with previously poor experience of education thrive. These learners benefit from a flexible and supportive learning environment. Staff clearly identify learners' starting points and enrol them on the right courses at the right level. Learners have good opportunities to sample vocational areas before they decide what subjects to study.
- Leaders and managers now collect and use data effectively to understand how well learners improve their English and mathematics skills. Their revised actions to ensure that more learners make good progress and achieve their English and mathematics qualifications are now securing improvement.
- The majority of tutors provide stimulating tasks and activities that motivate and ensure that their learners improve their English and mathematics skills. Tutors often provide additional tuition to help learners consolidate these essential skills. For example, tutors working for Training 4 U Ltd provide weekend lessons to help learners to develop these skills and practice exam techniques. However, some tutors do not challenge learners to hone their reading and writing skills or proficiently solve mathematical problems.
- Staff monitor learners' progress effectively and arrange appropriate interventions to ensure that any who are struggling stay in learning. For example, staff provide catch-up sessions at convenient times for learners who fall behind to ensure that

they make at least their expected progress.

- Staff ensure that learners with high needs now improve their work-related skills through appropriate work experience. As a result, most learners use these experiences to make appropriate choices upon completing their courses and progress into employment or learning at a higher level.
- Learners who have complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective training in preparing to live independently. For example, they demonstrate adeptly their safe use of domestic appliances such as washing machines, tumble dryers and irons. Managers and tutors are trialling a series of pilot activities, including peer reviews, to ensure that learners are set demanding targets that challenge them to make good progress.
- Some staff do not make sure that their learners adopt good study habits, such as recording their learning in lessons. Not enough learners studying for hair and beauty qualifications are prepared well for the industry expectations of the sector; for example, they are not required to wear professional attire when carrying out practical work.
- Some tutors do not effectively check learners' progress or provide precise feedback that helps learners improve their skills beyond the minimum requirements of their qualifications.
- Learners receive good, impartial careers information, advice and guidance. Staff work with learners to identify their needs, interests and barriers and enrol them on to appropriate programmes of study. As a result, almost all learners who complete their courses progress to employment or to study for higher-level qualifications.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they further improve the teaching of English and mathematics to enable learners to make good progress and achieve their qualifications
- staff make sure that their learners are ready to learn, including recording their learning and wearing appropriate professional attire when working in practical lessons
- tutors are trained to effectively check learners' progress and provide precise feedback that helps learners improve their skills beyond the minimum requirements of their qualifications
- all learners have a good awareness of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

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

Yours sincerely

Ruth Harrison
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors, assisted by the operational director, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors met with managers, staff, subcontractors and learners. They observed lessons and reviewed key documents, including those related to contract monitoring, quality improvement activity, learners' work and safeguarding.