

# Inspection of Leonardo UK Limited

Inspection dates:

11–13 January 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Good**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Apprenticeships

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## **Information about this provider**

Leonardo UK Ltd (LUK) designs and manufactures a wide range of products, including helicopters and electronic systems for military applications. LUK has headquarters in London, five sites across southern England and one site in Edinburgh. LUK's apprenticeship contract began in May 2017. At the time of the inspection, there were six apprentices in learning, studying apprenticeship frameworks in mechanical engineering technologies at level 3. LUK has two sub-contractors.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Apprentices receive excellent training which goes well beyond the requirements of their qualifications. Apprentices gain academic qualifications in engineering at level 4 or above, in addition to their apprenticeship framework. Apprentices develop exceptional skills and knowledge which prepare them superbly for their careers as engineers. Apprentices work within projects that enable them to research, design, produce and evaluate precision-engineering systems. Apprentices are highly skilled and work with senior engineers to refine their knowledge of electronics. They source and create system drawings, for example for a miniature techniques generator, enabling them to move to the complex tasks required by the defence industry.

Apprentices are strongly motivated to achieve their apprenticeships and are valued by their employer. Apprentices are proud to represent their employer at external events as ambassador apprentices. Such events include contributing to a meeting at the House of Commons intended to shape the future of apprenticeships.

Apprentices enjoy learning in a positive working environment, where there is respect between apprentices, supervisors and the teams they work with. Apprentices are well supported by LUK staff, who know them well. They benefit from the excellent relationship that exists between LUK staff and apprentices' managers at work.

Apprentices feel safe and know who to share their concerns with. Apprentices quickly develop their understanding of how to keep themselves and their colleagues safe. Their work environment is characterized by open and transparent communications that result in high levels of trust.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and managers have very high expectations of apprentices. Leaders have been successful in establishing an ambitious curriculum in which apprentices are inspired to develop exceptional skills and knowledge. Effective planning of on-the-job training develops the knowledge and skills apprentices learn off the job. For example, circuit-analysis workshops deepen and extend apprentices' understanding of complex electronics and equip them with highly specialised and valuable skills.

Apprentices develop and apply their English and mathematics skills to a high standard. Apprentices excel in specific mathematics units at level 3 and study level 4 mathematics units as part of their additional qualifications. Apprentices develop their English skills through projects in their workplace and the many additional activities available to them. As a result, apprentices become engineers with an excellent breadth of skills that complements their technical knowledge. Apprentices complete high-level technical tasks, particularly in electronics and specifically in the fields of antennae, microwave electronics and microcircuits.

Apprentices benefit from training plans that give them an outstanding breadth of experience across different departments in the workplace. Apprentices' existing skills

and knowledge are mapped in a detailed skills matrix that is reviewed by placement managers to ensure that apprentices develop the key skills they need. As a result, apprentices gain both a thorough knowledge of precision engineering and an understanding of how each department functions. At the end of each placement, apprentices reflect on their learning and produce a detailed report which they present to peers, colleagues and managers. Apprentices reported, for example, on the advanced engineering systems required for defence technologies, such as laser targeting systems and micro-electronics.

Tutors ensure that apprentices receive constructive and purposeful feedback on their work. Apprentices understand what is required to improve their work products. As a result, apprentices can produce infrared guidance systems components to the exacting standards required of the defence sector.

Apprentices develop high levels of resilience and excel at teamwork. Apprentices exhibit exceptional standards of behaviour and professionalism. A vibrant apprentice community is in place. Apprentices participate in group activities, such as charity or community events. An example would be when apprentices worked as a team to plan and make a motion-sensor system providing assistive technology devices for people who are elderly or have disabilities. They demonstrated the product on behalf of LUK at a digital manufacturing exposition and won a national award from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

Staff provide apprentices with very good help to manage their mental health and well-being. Apprentices develop good techniques for discussing their own mental health and that of their peers. Apprentices understand how to listen without judgement, ask what they can do to help and provide the reassurance of their presence. Apprentices have direct access to independent advice from a health provider through LUK's occupational health scheme. However, leaders have yet to include training for apprentices about the importance of developing an understanding of healthy relationships.

Leaders and managers have not developed a structured, ongoing careers-development programme. Apprentices compare their experiences and training with engineering apprentices from similar employers. However, these meetings are not designed for apprentices to consider alternative careers. As a result, although apprentices know how their skills will enhance their careers as engineers, they are not aware of how they could use these skills outside their current sector.

Leaders' management of subcontractors and the quality of subcontracted provision is highly effective. When leaders identified a poorly performing subcontractor, they took swift action to enable apprentices to complete their training before terminating the contract. Leaders' rigorous quality assurance procedures include detailed input from employers. Leaders analyse and improve the education and training they provide effectively.

Governors provide robust challenge and hold senior leaders and managers to account for continually improving the quality of learning. The highly qualified

governing body includes national directors for learning and development in both LUK divisions, helicopters and electronics. Governors have detailed knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the apprenticeship provision. They have direct access to apprentices which informs their decision-making. Governors know well what it is like to be an apprentice at LUK.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Apprentices feel safe. Apprentices routinely adopt safe working practices. LUK has zero-tolerance policies for bullying and harassment, which are positively reinforced through all elements of the education and training apprentices receive. Apprentices have a good understanding of risks associated with their work, including how they may be targeted by those who would attempt to bribe them. Apprentices understand the potential dangers within their locality, including knife crime and exploitation through county lines. As a result, apprentices thrive in training and make excellent use of their work placements.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders need to ensure that apprentices receive meaningful, impartial, ongoing careers advice and guidance to enable them to make informed choices about their next steps and future careers. Apprentices need to understand how the many skills they gain are transferable beyond the engineering and defence sectors.
- Leaders need to ensure that they include opportunities for apprentices to develop an understanding of healthy relationships through the wider education and training provided by LUK.

## Provider details

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<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Cathy Cunningham
<b>Provider type</b>	Employer provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Bedford College South East Essex College

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of apprenticeship management (UK), as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

Chris Bealey, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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