

Inspection of SETA

Inspection dates:

18 to 21 July 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Information about this provider

Southampton Engineering Training Association (SETA) is an established charity operating since 1970. SETA comprises of a board of non-executive directors as trustees who oversee the running of the charity. SETA specialises in the training of a range of engineering apprenticeships. At the time of this inspection, approximately 200 apprentices were on framework or standards-based apprenticeships. Of these, five were studying level 2 general welder, 56 were studying level 3 maintenance and operations engineering technician, 31 were studying level 3 engineering fitter, 25 were studying level 3 science industry maintenance technician, 18 were studying level 3 engineering technician, 17 were studying level 3 engineering design and draughts person and five were studying level 4 engineering manufacturing technician apprenticeships. Forty-four of these apprentices were aged 16 to 18 years.

SETA does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Apprentices are taught, and demonstrate an understanding of, equality, diversity and inclusion. Too many apprentices report or have experienced offensive, derogatory or unwelcome comments, behaviours and attitudes from a small minority of male staff at the provider. Apprentices recognise that this does not align to the culture they experience and observe in the workplace. Apprentices are resilient in the face of these difficulties but are not always confident that leaders will take appropriate action when they raise concerns.

Apprentices benefit from a detailed personal development curriculum in their first year of learning. Apprentices access a range of topics, which are carefully selected by leaders. These topics ensure that apprentices know how to keep themselves safe and healthy, and they reflect current affairs and successfully prepare apprentices to become positive citizens. For example, an effective apprentice council provides apprentice representatives the opportunity to effect beneficial changes in the organisation. However, not all apprentices benefit from updates on these topics and current issues, as they are not routinely revisited and reinforced throughout the apprenticeship.

Apprentices exhibit consistently positive attitudes and commitment to their training and learning. Most apprentices are able to work diligently, independently and model positive behaviours that are relevant in the professional workplace. Apprentices attend well and are punctual.

Apprentices value the engineering training they receive from skilled and experienced instructors. Apprentices studying welding can skilfully use nitric acid to test the quality of their weld, the grain structures and the depth of penetration achieved. Apprentices studying the science industry maintenance technician apprenticeship complete a range of engineering projects. For example, apprentices consolidate and apply their core skills in soldering, welding, bench fitting and electrical circuits in the construction of a Geneva mechanism. Apprentices can apply and articulate clearly the skills and knowledge they develop.

Apprentices develop a solid understanding of health and safety practices in engineering. Apprentices learn early on how to act and work safely, completing additional training in areas such as abrasive wheels and first aid at work, and they achieve their work ready safety passport. Apprentices adhere to safe working practices within the engineering environments.

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

Leaders have not ensured that professional behaviours have been consistently practised by all staff. Leaders and managers have recognised this and have taken appropriate steps to stamp out this negative culture. Leaders have taken positive action to manage staff behaviours through disciplinary processes and holding forums

with female apprentices to identify concerns. Staff are able to express their role in ensuring an inclusive culture following equality, diversity and inclusion training. Leaders have a robust plan and procedures in place to change the culture of this small minority swiftly. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this plan.

Leaders do not consistently provide useful opportunities for apprentices to understand the wider opportunities open to them on completion of the apprenticeship. Leaders provide useful opportunities for learners to consider ambitions and future goals within the engineering sector as part of the tutorial programme in the first year of the apprenticeship. However, too few apprentices receive timely guidance throughout the apprenticeship to fully understand wider education, training and future employment opportunities available to them on completion of their apprenticeship.

Leaders have not routinely involved or informed all employers of their apprentices' progress. In too many cases, training staff do not work closely enough with employers to ensure they fully understand the support apprentices require to make the expected progress. Where this is done well, employers know the progress apprentices are making and intervene when concerns arise. However, too many apprentices have not completed their apprenticeship within the expected time.

Instructors do not provide all apprentices with timely and robust feedback. Too many apprentices do not receive feedback quickly enough. When they do, it is often brief and not clear on what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. As a result, apprentices do not always feel that the feedback meets their needs, and they do not always make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

Leaders have not utilised intelligence from quality assurance processes to support staff to continually improve. Leaders rightly monitor apprentices' achievements and the quality of education to identify areas for improvement. However, leaders do not systematically utilise this information to provide professional development for staff in teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, not all elements of the apprentice's education are at the high standard leaders would expect.

Leaders have selected apprenticeships that address skills shortages in the engineering sector in the south of England. Leaders have focused their curriculum on a range of engineering apprenticeships that develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to work in a wide range of engineering careers. As a result, apprentices are valued by employers, and the vast majority remain within their current organisations on completion of their apprenticeship.

Leaders have sequenced teaching to build apprentices' knowledge and skills progressively and incrementally. Apprentices are taught full time at SETA in their first year before progressing to the workplace. Apprentices complete a series of rotations, starting with the fundamentals of engineering, before progressing on to more advanced, complex skills. Apprentices' confidence within engineering has improved, and they are able to clearly articulate and apply the new skills they acquire effectively.

Apprentices benefit from the valuable guidance they receive in the workplace. Leaders offer useful training to apprentice mentors to enable them to support and coach apprentices in the workplace effectively. Apprentices settle into the workplace quickly and recognise the positive impact the workplace mentors have on them and their progress on the apprenticeship.

Employers report that apprentices are confident and quickly have a positive impact on their organisations following their first year of learning. For example, apprentices studying maintenance and operations engineering with no prior experience of electrical maintenance can competently wire complex circuits before entering the workplace. As a result, employers value the flexibility and training leaders provide.

Instructors prepare most apprentices well for their end-point assessment. Training staff ensure that apprentices have a clear understanding of what is required and the expectations of the end-point assessment through a wide range of activities, such as mock tests and professional discussions. Consequently, apprentices have ambitious aspirations to achieve a high grade in their end-point assessment, which most do.

Leaders benefit from highly skilled and experienced trustees. They challenge and support leaders effectively, particularly around finance, facilities, and the strategic direction of the organisation. However, leaders do not currently share safeguarding and quality assurance themes that ensure trustees are aware and can sufficiently challenge leaders in these areas.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have appropriate policies and procedures in place to recruit staff and keep apprentices safe. All staff in contact with apprentices complete a Disclosure and Barring Service check. Apprentices appreciate the use of lanyards and the signing in and out services to ensure no one can be on site without permission. All staff complete mandatory training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty, and leaders hold termly staff development days, where staff receive updates.

Leaders ensure that apprentices are provided with support on how to keep themselves safe. For example, apprentices benefit from partnerships leaders organise with other organisations, such as the local 'Prevent' coordinator providing updates on the 'Prevent' duty guidance, a representative from the the NHS teaching awareness on sexual health, consent and contraception, and driving safely by 'Safe Drive Stay Alive'. Leaders are quick to teach apprentices about local risks as they become aware of concerns such as awareness around drinks being spiked, knife crime and staying safe online. As a result, apprentices have a sound awareness of issues that affect their personal and working lives.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that all staff behaviours and attitudes are appropriate and professional.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices benefit from a comprehensive personal development curriculum throughout their apprenticeship.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that all employers are routinely informed of the progress their apprentices are making to support their training effectively.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices receive appropriate and timely feedback that helps them make swift and sustained progress.
- Leaders should provide support to staff to continually develop their teaching, learning and assessment abilities.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54510
Address	First Avenue Millbrook SO15 0LJ
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Website	www.setatraining.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Julie Gough
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	16 to 18 November 2016

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief operating officer, 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

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