

Sunderland Engineering Training Association Reinspection

Adult Learning Inspectorate Inspection Report: 14 December 2006

Reinspection date

11 October 2007

Inspection number

320438

Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Description of the provider.....	4
Overall effectiveness.....	4
Grades	5
About the reinspection	6
Leadership and management	7
Equality of opportunity.....	8
Quality improvement.....	8
Areas of learning	10
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	10

Background information

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- Grade 1 – Outstanding
- Grade 2 – Good
- Grade 3 – Satisfactory
- Grade 4 – Inadequate

Description of the provider

1. Sunderland Engineering Training Association (SETA) is a group training association established in the mid 1960s. SETA currently employs 13 staff and has 100 advanced apprentices. A board of non-executive directors has overall responsibility for the organisation. A senior management team comprising the chief executive, a works manager and an office manager manages the training centre. The organisation provides work-based learning programmes leading to advanced apprenticeships in a range of engineering disciplines funded by the Tyne and Wear Learning and Skills Council (LSC). All learners are employed.

Overall effectiveness

Reinspection Grade 2

2. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** SETA's arrangements for leadership and management and quality improvement are good. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. The provision in engineering is good.
3. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The provider has not produced another self-assessment report since the previous inspection in anticipation of the result of reinspection. At the previous inspection, inspectors judged some of the identified strengths as normal practice; however, the provider had identified most of the weaknesses. All staff contribute to the self-assessment process.
4. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** The provision in engineering has continued to improve since SETA was last inspected. Success rates remain well above national averages. Managers have addressed most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, particularly in leadership and management. Some of the processes are new and it is too soon to judge their effectiveness.

Grades

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2= good, grade 3= satisfactory, grade 4= inadequate

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management		4
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		4

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Engineering</i>		2	
Apprenticeships for young people	105	2	

Grades awarded at reinspection

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		3

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Engineering</i>		2	
Apprenticeships for young people	100	2	

About the reinspection

5. Inspectors reviewed all of the work-based learning in engineering for 100 advanced apprentices at SETA. Inspectors visited SETA on three occasions between August 2007 and October 2007, two of which were monitoring visits to give feedback on progress made in addressing the identified weaknesses. At the final visit, two inspectors carried out the reinspection of the engineering provision as well as the leadership and management of the organisation. Provision at SETA is in two parts, one year of off-the-job training at the SETA training centre followed by three years on-the-job training at employer premises. The report refers to both processes.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	6
Number of learners interviewed	12
Number of staff interviewed	11
Number of employers interviewed	3
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	3
Number of visits to the provider	3

Leadership and management

Grade 2

Strengths

- Good actions to improve identified weaknesses
- Good management of training
- Good links with employers

Weaknesses

- Insufficient detail in development planning
6. Leadership and management at SETA are good. Success rates have improved and are well above national averages. The managers of SETA have taken good actions to address the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. After a slow start, recent progress has accelerated in developing a clearer vision for the future of SETA. A draft strategic plan is in place for 2007 to 2010 which identifies SETA's objective and is satisfactory. The senior managers have received good support from the directors in developing this plan. A director has developed a spreadsheet with timescales which links each strategic objective activity to target dates.
 7. New policies and procedures have been introduced which complete the quality manual and cover all the key stages in the learner experience at SETA. An internal audit process records and monitors compliance of the quality systems. Observation of teaching and learning takes place at SETA and staff have access to college observation reports for training delivered at the partner colleges. Staff appraisal is satisfactory. All staff have undertaken an appraisal process with their line manager. However, records are unclear about the period covered by the appraisal. All staff roles have been allocated key performance indicators along with essential and desirable attributes. The chief executive does not have a formal appraisal.
 8. The management of the initial training programme at SETA continues to be good, as identified at the previous inspection. Training staff have maintained a well-structured programme containing detailed and clear schedules for training. All instructors are well qualified and hold a broad range of additional qualifications such as first aid, manual handling and counselling. A schedule of team meetings has now been developed and staff meet more regularly and formally. Assessment schedules and verification activities are well planned and timely. Learners and staff develop good working relationships quickly and the atmosphere in the workshop during training sessions is studious and pleasant. Learners produce good quality work quickly.
 9. SETA maintains good links with employers. Both member and non-member employers can now access modern apprenticeships. SETA has a partnership agreement with Sunderland College to deliver Train to Gain to employers. Last year 500 learners received support through the commercial training service for employers. Two local colleges deliver technical certificates to the apprentices. Most learners attend Sunderland College, the rest attend South Tyneside College. In some instances, learners progress to these colleges for higher-level qualifications after completing their apprenticeship. The good collaboration and sharing of resources and facilities continues as reported at the previous inspection.

10. Development plans contain insufficient detail to aid management decision-making. For example, the current development plan for 2006-07 describes a range of key priorities with little or no reference to information or data to support the plan. Recruitment targets for apprentices have increased by 10% but the plan does not include sufficient detail to describe the full impact of the increase on income, staffing and costs. Plans to develop a Programme Led Pathway do not include target figures or detailed costings to illustrate the business value of such a development. The newly developed strategic plan is more detailed than previous versions but still lacks detailed analysis and explanation of how staff will achieve the key objectives, and the cost factors involved.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

11. Equality of opportunity at SETA is satisfactory. A detailed policy clearly describes the approach taken by SETA in its commitment to equality and diversity. The policy contains reference to all relevant legislation. SETA continues to take actions highlighted by an external equality and diversity health-check assessment. Activities take place to encourage recruitment of apprentices from under-represented groups. Marketing campaigns include targeting local communities and attending school and Connexions events. Some taster events are specifically aimed at recruiting females onto the programme.
12. Promotion of equality of opportunity remains satisfactory. Learners have a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity provided through the induction and completion of the employee rights and responsibilities unit. Progress reviews include discussion on health and safety and equality and diversity but the recording of the discussion is often too brief. In most cases, staff ask closed questions requiring a yes or no response which limits the discussion.

Review records rarely contain additional detail other than the closed question responses. Training staff now maintain a log of incidents and record actions taken. Training staff take appropriate action to address inappropriate language or behaviour in the training centre.

13. Learners with mobility difficulties have easier access to the premises. New sliding main doors and ramps from the car park area have been installed since the previous inspection.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

14. Quality improvement at SETA is now satisfactory. Policies and procedures cover all the key stages of the learner experience. Additional policies now cover staff recruitment and promotion, appraisal and development. Each job role within SETA has been allocated essential and desirable attributes in the form of key performance indicators. These contribute to effective discussions at staff appraisals. All staff at SETA have had an annual appraisal. The documents used are satisfactory overall although some records are too brief and the period covered by the appraisal is unclear. Staff development plans are satisfactory. SETA provides good support to staff to meet both their professional and personal development needs.

15. A comprehensive audit process ensures SETA complies with key policies and procedures. The observation of teaching and learning is satisfactory and monitors quality and performance effectively. Observations are not graded.
16. Managers and staff have improved access to data and information on learners. Data reports are used effectively at staff meetings although the minutes of meetings are not accurately recorded. Reports include the number of funded weeks left for each learner, learners in training, learners new to training, learners who leave and learners who achieve. Additional reports are available by request.
17. Self-assessment is satisfactory, all staff contribute to the process and the draft version is prepared by the chief executive officer and reviewed by all staff before publishing.
18. The chief executive officer reports quarterly to directors but the reports contain insufficient information on the quantifiable or measurable factors which identify clear trends in performance. Staff recruitment is underway to address the shortages in on-the-job assessment and internal verification.

Areas of learning

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Engineering</i>		<i>2</i>
Apprenticeships for young people	100	2

19. SETA has 100 learners on the advanced apprenticeship in engineering and manufacturing technologies. Learners select one of five routes to achieve the apprenticeship covering mechanical manufacturing engineering, fabrication and welding, maintenance, tool-making and electrical and electronic engineering. SETA delivers the initial part of the programme as a 28-week off-the-job training programme. During this programme, learners achieve the required key skills. SETA subcontracts delivery of the technical certificate to two local colleges. All learners are employed from the start of their training.

Engineering

Strengths

- Very high success rates
- Very effective off-the-job training
- Good enhancement opportunities for learners

Weaknesses

- Ineffective progress reviews
- Insufficient planning of on-the-job training

Achievement and standards

20. Success rates are very high at 25% above national averages. Success rates have risen from 66% in 2004-5 to 84% in 2006-07. The timely success rate is around the national average of 40% and has improved from 39% in 2004-05 and 17% in 2005-06. Most learners who stay in training beyond their planned end date complete their programme within five months. Success rates for the NVQ at Level 2 in performing engineering operations are outstanding at 100% in 2006-07. Key skills success rates are high at 88% in 2006-07.

21. The standard of learner's work is good. Learners quickly acquire a good range of practical engineering skills during the first year of off-the-job training. These skills enable learners to make a smooth transition to the workplace.

The quality of provision

22. Teaching and learning are good at the SETA training centre. Learning sessions are well planned. Learners work very productively and achieve high standards. Working

relationships between instructors and learners are good. The development of skills by learners is very good. Off-the-job training is very effective in preparing learners for employment. Learners and employers fully understand that these skills provide a good preparation for work. Health and safety training during off-the-job training is thorough. Learners attain high standards of health and safety and transfer these to the workplace. Personal development is good and focuses on developing self-confidence with particular attention paid to attendance and punctuality, which are very good.

23. Learners have good opportunities for enhancements and access a good range of additional qualifications and training. For example, learners regularly take additional units to the NVQ Level 2 and Level 3 to meet their specific needs, and those of their employer. Short courses are available and accessed on topics such as computer aided design and electrical courses. The progression route from national certificate onto the higher national certificate and diplomas is very good and well established. Forty-three learners are enrolled on to the higher national certificate and three on to the higher national diploma.
24. Progress reviews are ineffective. The 12-weekly schedule of reviews makes no allowance for missed meetings. Additional monthly visits to employers do not include discussions on progress. Information from the colleges on learners' progress on the technical certificate is not available at the review meetings. Systems for monitoring learners' progress on the NVQ Level 3 are under-developed. Not all employers attend progress reviews and records are not sufficiently detail. Action plans do not set learners clear and specific targets. Staff use too many closed questions when discussing health and safety and equality of opportunity. Records do not monitor issues in sufficient depth.
25. Standards of health and safety are adequate. The discussion on health and safety during the induction is thorough and is reinforced during on-the-job workshop sessions, in the workplace and during reviews. There are some minor items of poor health and safety practice in the training centre. For example, the untidy storage of material and damaged safety signs in the workshop.
26. Initial assessment arrangements are satisfactory. All learners complete a basic skills assessment and aptitude tests at the initial interview stage. Employers use these results to select apprentices. SETA uses them to identify support needs. Learners starting in 2007 were re-assessed for literacy and numeracy using the on-line key skills tests. Learners receive additional literacy and numeracy support from the colleges but the scheduling of support is not always at convenient times.

Leadership and management

27. Leadership and management are good. The initial off-the-job training is well managed and very effective. Resources in the SETA training centre are sufficient and adequate. There is a good range of equipment on which learners acquire the initial engineering skills required by the NVQ Level 2 programmes. The training is structured and organised well. Small groups of learners rotate through a range of activities that are designed to develop the necessary skills for the NVQ.
28. Planning of the on-the-job training is insufficient. The work programme, technical certificate and assessment processes are not co-ordinated effectively to help learners progress. Poorly planned workplace assessments do not focus in sufficient detail on the NVQ. Some learners are registered too late for the NVQ Level 3 and there are delays in gathering evidence.
29. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The induction programme covers equality and diversity effectively. Learners have a satisfactory awareness of equality of opportunity. Staff do not ask enough open questions at reviews.
30. Internal verification is now satisfactory. A sampling plan records all internal verification activity at the centre. This takes place at various stages during the programme rather than just at the end. The plan also includes the observation of assessors. Internal verifiers are appropriately qualified. Internal verification records and feedback to assessors use awarding body documentation effectively.