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Dr A Birch  
Dealer Training Manager  
Land Rover  
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Dear Dr Birch

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: good practice in apprenticeship training

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, during my visit on Tuesday 17 November 2009 to look at good practice in motor vehicle apprenticeship training.

The visit provided valuable information that will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included discussions with key members of staff, learners and key partners.

Features of good practice

- Successful young apprenticeship programmes helping recruitment to apprenticeship programmes.

Land Rover has run a young apprenticeship programme since 2004 and, for this year alone, is involved in training 280 young apprentices. Some of the young people completing these programmes are being recruited to the main apprenticeship programmes. The main advantages of this are that their previously gained knowledge and skills help them to be 'fast-tracked' through the apprenticeship framework in a timely manner. They have also already worked at motor vehicle dealerships as part of their work experience and, as a result, are often known to their future employers. This helps to provide a good workplace match and is an encouragement for the employer to recruit an apprentice.

- Excellent brand-specific training and resources motivate apprentices' learning.

The training centre has the very latest vehicles and equipment specific to Land Rover, Jaguar and Aston Martin products. Tutors have access to the most up-to-date information and training from manufacturers to pass on to the learners. Learners attending block-release training at the centre work on vehicles and equipment that are relevant to the vehicle dealerships that employ them. This helps to keep learners well motivated and fully engaged in their programmes. The block-release training process provides sufficient time for learning about complex systems and to gain sufficient repair and maintenance skills to be able to carry out similar tasks at their workplaces.

- Additional training courses from manufacturers provide additional evidence for apprenticeship framework completion.

Learners attend additional manufacturer product-specific technical training courses as part of their employment. They are able to use the skills and knowledge obtained as direct evidence towards their National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), technical certificates and key skills accreditations. The common skills and knowledge gained are relevant evidence that is used to good effect. This prevents unnecessary repetition of work and maximises evidence collection opportunities. Tutors for the courses are responsible for the delivery and assessment of all aspects of the apprenticeship framework. The tutors have a caseload of learners that they train off-the-job and also assess their competencies on-the-job. This helps to maintain good communication with both learners and employers, ensuring a detailed knowledge of the abilities and development needs of every learner.

- Good personal and social development of learners, beyond the apprenticeship requirements, increasing employability skills.

Apprentices are involved in raising funds for a charity called 'making a difference'. Funds raised go towards a project researched and organised by learners to help others. Learners gain additional skills and knowledge both in fundraising and organising tasks to carry out the project. A previous project involved renovating a building in Kenya, and providing books and shelving to make it into a library for local schools to use. This year, apprentices are raising money to provide a specially adapted vehicle for pupils with disabilities to use at a specialist school in the United Kingdom. This project work is all completed during their apprenticeship. When learners finish the apprenticeship framework requirements they then complete the planned project. Learners, employers and staff report big improvements in team working, organisational skills, confidence, maturity, social awareness and a better understanding of the needs of others, both during and following the project.

- The monthly target-setting and monitoring of outcomes help to maintain learners' progression and high timely success rates.

Close attention to monitoring apprentices' progress is achieved through the setting and close monitoring of monthly achievement targets. The frequent checks allow managers to identify when progress is below that required and to take any necessary action to rectify this. The need for up-to-date and

comprehensive progression data is seen to be critical to achieving high timely success rates. The previous management information system was found to be too complex and a simpler system that is easier to maintain has been purchased. Until the new system is fully functional, a manual process of monitoring targets against planned expectations is in use.

- Learners enjoy their training and are supported well by staff and employers to achieve frameworks.

Learners say that they really enjoy attending the training centre as the training is planned well and carried out using up-to-date industry-standard equipment. They report that tutors are good at explaining complex systems and are very supportive of their needs. Following the blocks of training, tutors send a report to employers about the progress of their learners. They also specify the type of work the learners will be capable of doing and will need evidence of completing while at work. A workplace mentor is responsible for witnessing evidence, providing guidance and supporting the learners at work. The well-planned and supported training, together with good-quality workplaces, help to ensure that learners enjoy their programmes and achieve all of the apprenticeship framework requirements.

#### Areas for development

- Continue to develop the management information system to allow the accurate and timely production of management reports for decision-making.

The decision to replace a complex and time consuming management information system has led, initially, to delays in producing management reports. The ability for the new system to produce bespoke progress reports is being further developed and managers are working with the software developers to tailor it to provide the information needed in a timely manner.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop apprenticeship training in your organisation.

As I explained previously, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local Learning and Skills Council and will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Grimmer  
Her Majesty's Inspector