

# Seetec Business Technology

Focused monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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## FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

### Context and focus of visit

Seetec Business Technology Centre Limited (Seetec) was founded in 1984 as an information technology centre. It is a private limited company owned by fifteen employees. It provides training and employment services both privately and through programmes funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The SFA funded provision includes apprenticeships, entry to employment (E2E) and Train to Gain programmes. At present, there are 129 apprentices and 264 Train to Gain learners on programme. The company employs 800 staff of whom 40 are directly involved in the SFA and DWP programmes.

Seetec was last inspected in July 2007. The overall effectiveness of the provision was judged to be good as was its capacity to improve, achievement and standards and leadership and management. The quality of provision and equality of opportunity were judged to be satisfactory of the five sector subject areas inspected, business administration and law and marketing and sales were judged to be good while engineering and manufacturing technology, ICT and retail and commercial enterprise were judged to be satisfactory. This report focuses on the two mandatory themes, of self-assessment and improvement planning and outcomes for learners and four other areas for improvement from the previous inspection report. These areas are ineffective target-setting, insufficient monitoring of learners' progress, insufficient reinforcement of learners' awareness of equality and diversity, insufficient planning to meet learners' individual training needs and insufficient arrangements to support learners with additional support needs

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

How much progress has Seetec made in maintaining and further developing its self-assessment process and developing an effective quality improvement plan?	Reasonable progress
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Seetec has made reasonable progress in maintaining the quality of its self-assessment process, with satisfactory use of data to support judgements. At the previous inspection, the self-assessment process was found to be well established and thorough. The use of self-assessment reports from individual areas of learning contributes to an overall organisational report. The previous inspection judgement was that the report was largely accurate and closely matched the inspection findings.

The process of self-assessment remains inclusive involving all stakeholders and both learners and employer feedback continues to be collected. Programme teams first assess the areas of learning and identify strengths and areas for improvement. Data is used satisfactorily to support issues identified. However, the report is overly

descriptive not fully evaluative and judgements do not focus on the impact on learners sufficiently.

Seetec has developed and implemented a comprehensive post inspection action plan, which has a positive impact on outcomes for learners. Detailed action plans have been developed to improve the majority of areas of weakness identified at the previous inspection. The plans clearly identify individual responsibility and progress is assessed on a monthly basis. The action plan lacks specific dates for actions to be completed.

### Outcomes for learners

What progress has Seetec made in maintaining and improving success rates across all programmes including timely outcomes for different groups of learners? Reasonable progress

Seetec has made reasonable progress overall in increasing success rates. However, there has been some variability over the last three years. At the previous inspection, overall apprenticeship success rates were satisfactory at 64%. These improved by 9 percentage points in 2008/09. Current data indicates that overall success rates have risen to 81% for 2009/10. The number of learners completing in the planned timescale has improved over the last three years but remains low at 64%.

The majority of Train to Gain learners are on level 2 NVQ programmes. In 2007/08, overall success rates were high at 87% but declined to 84% in 2008/09. Success rates have risen to the current level of 87% for 2009/10. Although the number of learners on this programme completing in the planned time scale declined from 69% in 2008/09 to 64% the following year, data indicates this number has risen in the current year to 72%.

For learners on skills for life Train to Gain programmes overall success rates have risen from 70% in 2008/09 to the current level of 81% for 2010. However, the number of learners who complete in the planned timescale has remained low at around 60%.

### Quality of provision

What progress has Seetec made in improving target setting? Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, Seetec has given a high priority to improving the skills of relevant staff in setting and recording effective targets. Staff have attended appropriate training that has included refresher sessions to reinforce learning. More rigorous monitoring of the quality of target setting for learners has shown that the training has had an impact. However, there remain inconsistencies in quality of

targets set across the provision. A minority are insufficiently specific or detailed while others lack appropriately challenging time constraints.'

Targets set for learners are not always sufficiently time constrained, detailed or specific enough. During progress reviews, personal or social development targets are not routinely set.

What progress has Seetec made in improving the monitoring of learners' progress? Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, Seetec has introduced an effective computer-based NVQ and apprentice framework learner progress monitoring system. In addition, the provider has significantly improved the management and use of reports to support the checking of learner progress.

A detailed training needs analyses identified a requirement for training in data analysis and evaluation skills. Seetec is currently piloting a new monitoring system designed to enable managers to monitor more effectively the daily performance of assessors and the progress made by learners against agreed targets. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this and other newly introduced improvement actions. The provider holds regular and frequent meetings to review programme quality that includes a review of learners' progress. However, as identified by Seetec, the meetings do not sufficiently evaluate data to identify areas for development or fully address remedial areas with an effective action plan. At the time of the monitoring visit, a significant number of learners had not completed their programme by the planned date. Seetec has implemented appropriate action to help learners where it has identified reasons for slow progress.

What progress has Seetec made in ensuring the effective reinforcement of learners' awareness of equality and diversity? Insufficient progress

Since the previous inspection, Seetec has introduced useful and relevant documentation to support learners' introduction to equality and diversity. Seetec surveys learners, provider staff and employers to assess their perceptions of how well they understand equality and diversity. However, arrangements for the reinforcement of learners' awareness of equality and diversity are inadequate and not given sufficient priority throughout the learning journey. Seetec has not sufficiently reviewed and evaluated all relevant procedures to assess their effectiveness. Monitoring processes are weak. The provider uses a bank of standard questions at progress reviews to test and reinforce learners understanding. The questions are generic and do not reflect the type of work found in an individual learner's employment.

Key issues such as bullying are not addressed. Not all the model answers available to Seetec staff are correct. Where recorded, questions asked at progress reviews are briefly noted with little recording of learners responses. No evaluation of the learning is carried out by staff or used to set further tasks to reinforce understanding.

Employers are not effectively involved in reinforcing learners' awareness of equality and diversity issues.

What progress has Seetec made in improving planning to meet learners' individual training needs and its arrangements to support learners with additional learning needs?	Insufficient progress
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Seetec has made insufficient progress in improving planning to meet learners' individual training and additional learning needs. At the previous inspection there was insufficient planning to meet learners' individual training needs and inadequate arrangements to support learners with additional learning support needs. Learners have access to an appropriate range of learning material. However, Seetec does not effectively plan individual learning programmes to meet identified training needs. At induction, learners complete a questionnaire to assess their preferred learning style. Outcomes from this process are not always appropriately recorded to inform individual learning strategies. Monitoring and recording of the effectiveness of planning to meet individual training needs is weak. Seetec does not adequately use individual learning plans to tailor a learner's programme to the demands of their work and personal needs. A significant number of learners have identical or similar targets that include the same interim targets for programme completion and start and end dates.

Seetec has made insufficient progress in its arrangements to support learners with additional learning needs. Policies to support this aspect of the provision are unclear. The tool used to first assess learners literacy and numeracy is over inadequate. The outcomes of the basic skills assessment are not followed through to a formal diagnostic assessment, which would effectively inform action planning. Assessors are not appropriately qualified to provide additional learning support although there is a skills for life tutor overseeing the provision.

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