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Mr John Whitby
Chief executive
Salford and Trafford Engineering Group Training Association Limited
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Dear Mr Whitby

Short inspection of Salford and Trafford Engineering Group Training Association Limited

Following the short inspection on 28 and 29 April 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in November 2012.

This provider continues to be good.

- The leadership team has successfully implemented most of the key improvement areas identified at the previous inspection. Leaders have maintained high apprenticeship success rates. Staff have created a positive culture with the needs of apprentices and employers at its heart.
- In 2014–15, the apprenticeship success rate improved and the proportion of apprentices who attained their qualifications in the planned time was high. The majority of current apprentices are making good progress and likewise are on track to attain in the planned time.
- Many apprentices complete highly relevant and valuable additional qualifications to enhance their skills in the workplace. Staff have made excellent use of apprentice feedback to provide guidance and very good support for apprentices to achieve their career goals.
- Teaching, learning and assessment meet the needs of the apprentices and their employers. Teachers use a good range of teaching resources to enhance and consolidate learning. For example, very good use is made of in-house produced videos on a variety of subjects. This allows apprentices to access tuition on specific topics easily. Senior managers are aware that not enough teaching,

learning and assessment is outstanding and that the quality of provision across the provider's many subcontractors is too variable.

- Apprentices who have not yet achieved GCSE grade A* to C in English and mathematics understand the importance of developing these skills and they make good progress. Tutors focus well on the needs of individual apprentices and use initial and diagnostic assessments to plan learning and deliver customised lessons. Since September 2015, pass rates on functional skills tests have been high with many apprentices successfully passing at the first attempt. Teachers encourage apprentices to refer to a good range of resources to help them with more commonly misspelled technical terms. Most apprentices who already hold GCSEs A* to C in English and mathematics do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills to a higher level.
- Managers have introduced a well-organised national 'trailblazer' advanced technician apprenticeship in railway design. It includes good employer involvement to ensure it meets the needs of employers and apprentices. Successful apprentices gain engineering technician status. Almost all of the apprentices who started the programme in September 2015 are still in learning and are making good progress.
- The board of governors provides good levels of support and challenge to senior managers. The composition of the board provides good expertise from employers and from the education sector, with one governor appropriately taking responsibility for safeguarding. However, the board does not yet contain expertise from the rail engineering design sector. The board receives data on the quality of provision but the records of board meetings do not accurately capture the depth of discussion around key topics such as the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and success rates across the organisation. Governors are not sufficiently involved in a timely manner in the self-assessment process.

Safeguarding is effective.

- Safeguarding has a very high profile within the organisation and is promoted well within the organisation and with apprentices and employers. The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and apprentices' safety and well-being are assured.
- Staff responsibilities for safeguarding are defined clearly. Managers receive timely information on the checks completed for new staff and renewed checks on existing staff, and the information is collated in a central record.
- Apprentices feel safe. Health and safety is promoted well during apprentice reviews and, as a result, apprentices have a good understanding of safe working practices. They demonstrate safe working practices well, use appropriate personal protective equipment in the workplace and apply company policies when working with machinery.
- Apprentices receive good-quality information and advice on safeguarding and equality and diversity, particularly during induction. Highly visible posters and detailed information within apprentice portfolios ensure that all apprentices are aware of the safeguarding procedures that are in place to protect them and they know who to contact in the case of a safeguarding concern. Apprentices' portfolios contain clear evidence of their understanding of British values and the risks associated with terrorism and radicalisation. Staff check apprentices'

understanding of the wider aspects of safeguarding and equality and diversity, through the use of key relevant questions at one-to-one reviews. However, staff do not sufficiently expand apprentices' detailed understanding during discussions at reviews.

- The chief executive is the lead safeguarding officer and is supported by another member of staff. Both designated safeguarding officers have accessed suitable higher-level safeguarding training. All staff have received good online and face-to-face safeguarding training, which includes e-safety, terrorism, radicalisation and extremism. A board member with safeguarding experience in their job role is the governor responsible for safeguarding. The board is kept well informed of any safeguarding matters. Managers have yet to fully check that all governors have completed their safeguarding training.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and managers have developed a very supportive, positive learning environment. Managers have strengthened the arrangements for improving teaching, learning and assessment. Procedures to assure the quality of teaching are good; following observations, tutors are set clear targets to improve. Tutors have good access to professional development opportunities and they are encouraged to reflect on their practice. Plans to improve the work of individual tutors have a clear focus on learning and on apprentices' progress.
- The proportion of apprentices achieving their targets within expected timescales has improved since the previous inspection and is good. The majority of current apprentices are making good progress and are on track to achieve in their planned time. Many apprentices complete relevant and additional qualifications such as forklift truck training, manual handling, abrasive wheel training and welding qualifications, to enhance their skills in the workplace. Staff have made excellent use of apprentice feedback to provide support for apprentices to research and improve their personal statements to achieve their career aspirations.
- Employer partnerships are extremely effective and employers value the accessible communications with the provider. The range of provision meets the needs of the employer well and equips apprentices with a wide range of skills which enable them to contribute effectively to the values and goals of their employer's business. Employers acknowledge that the provider has been supportive of their apprentices and speak highly of the quality of their apprentices' training. STEGTA is flexible, adaptable and responsive to employers' business needs.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment meets the needs of the apprentices and their employers. Apprentices benefit from customised learning methods and appreciate the flexibility of online learning resources. The arrangements for the assessment of apprentices' skill development and progress in the workplace are good and supported well by employers. Managers are aware that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the providers' many subcontractors is too variable.
- Teachers use electronic teaching resources well to enable apprentices to undertake independent study. Teachers make very good use of in-house produced videos on a variety of topics to support apprentices' learning and good

progress. For example, a smartphone was used to watch a video on how to measure using a Vernier calliper; apprentices could then tackle the problem quickly and accurately.

- Apprentices develop their functional skills well and understand the relevance of developing skills in English and mathematics to enhance their job performance and their future careers. Functional skills lessons are highly individualised to address identified weaknesses. Apprentices are encouraged to refer to a range of resources and glossaries to help them with the spelling of technical terms.
- The national 'trailblazer' advanced technician apprenticeship pilot in railway design involves 10 employers, 58 apprentices and seven colleges. The programme develops apprentices' higher-level design skills to achieve engineering technician status and support progression in the workplace. Almost all of the apprentices who started the pilot programme in September 2015 are still in learning, making good progress, and are expected to achieve in the planned time. These apprentices have aspirational career plans in the railway engineering sector. They develop high levels of confidence, good team building and team working skills.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- best practice is shared widely, including with subcontractors, to ensure consistently high-quality learning for all apprentices
- apprentices who have already achieved grades A* to C in GCSE English and/or mathematics are challenged to develop their skills further and have the opportunity to progress to higher levels
- all staff and governors are fully trained in their 'Prevent' duties and that apprentices' knowledge and understanding of all aspects of safeguarding are developed further
- governors have sufficient opportunity to make timely contributions to the providers' own self-assessment process and are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses across the organisation
- staff record apprentices' understanding of safeguarding and of equality and diversity accurately in apprentices' progress reviews.

Yours sincerely

Bob Busby
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Ofsted inspectors (OI), assisted by the chief executive as nominee, carried out the short inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on apprentices' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of apprentices and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision.