

SETA Ltd

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 54510

Name of lead inspector: Bob Cowdrey HMI

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Type of provider: Independent Learning Provider

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Information about the provider

Southampton Engineering Training Association Limited (SETA) is a group training association established in 1969. The head office is in Milbrook, Southampton, where its practical training centre is also located. SETA provides work-based learning (WBL) funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in engineering and manufacturing technologies, more specifically engineering maintenance and engineering construction. The association trains apprentices for national and local companies, most of which are located in Southampton and the surrounding areas. SETA has 43 full- and part-time employees and uses a small number of specialist lecturers. Approximately 50% of SETA’s funding comes from commercially sponsored training.

Southampton is ranked 91 out of 354 for the most deprived local authorities in England, and is the most deprived area in Hampshire. In Southampton in January 2009, 3.3% of the resident working-age population were unemployed and claiming job seekers’ allowance. The proportion of young people achieving a level 2 qualification by the age of 19 rose from 62.4% in 2004/05 to 65.8% in 2006/07, compared to the national averages of 69.3% and 73.9% respectively. In November 2008 the numbers of young people who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Southampton totalled 605 (9.2%).

At the time of the inspection, SETA had 222 funded learners on apprenticeship or advanced apprenticeship programmes, and 23 on young apprenticeship programmes.

SETA offers training on behalf of the following providers:

- Scottish and Southern Energy plc
- Siemens plc

The following organisations provide training on behalf of SETA:

- City College Southampton (BTEC National Certificate in Engineering)
- South Downs College (BTEC National Certificate in Engineering)
- Highbury College (BTEC National Certificate in Engineering)

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2007/08 (previous year)
Provision for young learners: 14 to16	58 learners
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	216 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
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Capacity to improve	Grade 3
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3

Subject areas	Grade
Engineering and manufacturing technology	3

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of SETA is satisfactory. SETA senior staff provide satisfactory leadership. Over the last two years SETA has improved arrangements for the delivery of key skills and technical certificates and much of this is now provided in the SETA centre. A decline in overall framework success rates for the two years prior to 2008/09 has been halted. Learners' achievements improved significantly in 2008/09, when overall framework success rates were high and well above national averages, especially for apprentices. Following changes in the delivery of training, achievement rates and completion within the agreed timescale also improved significantly. Current learners on all programmes are making very good progress and timely success rates for this group are higher still. Young apprentices achieve extremely well and success rates are outstanding, at over 90% for the last two years.

Learners thoroughly enjoy their practical training and are motivated well, often attending careers fairs to promote SETA. All advanced apprentices are employed and there are eight apprentices who are not employed. Learners develop excellent work skills and apply these effectively. Many learners progress to higher levels of study.

Practical training is good and assessment is satisfactory, although a small number of advanced apprentices receive insufficient observational assessments in the workplace. Arrangements for the small number of learners with additional learning

support needs are satisfactory. The range of programmes meets employers' and learners' needs well. Learners are supported well and feel safe. Safeguarding is satisfactory. There are strengths in arrangements for placing learners in private accommodation. However, not all employers and learners know who safeguarding contacts are at SETA. Learners' review of progress is satisfactory. Despite frequent changes to the documentation, some reviews still lack sufficient detail and target setting remains vague. Leadership and management have demonstrated they can improve their provision and have a satisfactory capacity to continue doing so.

Main findings

- Outcomes for apprentices and advanced apprentices are good. After the previous inspection, framework success rates declined and in 2007/08 were low. However, the rates in 2008/09 substantially improved and were high and significantly above national averages. Overall timely success rates have also improved and are now above the 2008/09 national average. Success rates for young apprentices are outstanding.
- SETA offers learners a good range of additional accredited training opportunities, including a range of additional National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) units, first aid, welding approvals and health and safety awards.
- SETA provides highly effective well managed training at the training centre. Learners develop good engineering skills through a good mix of training in practical work and theory. Many learners continue on to higher levels of study.
- SETA successfully promotes engineering to women and the number of female applications to SETA has increased year on year; several women are on apprenticeship programmes. However, equality and diversity is satisfactory; learners' knowledge and understanding is not regularly reinforced.
- SETA has developed strong and very effective links with employers over many years. Many are members of the group association and regularly use SETA to recruit their employees.
- Arrangements for safeguarding learners are satisfactory. Learners feel safe and clearly understand their rights and responsibilities. Safeguarding procedures for placing learners in private accommodation are thorough. However, not all employers or learners know who to contact at SETA regarding safeguarding issues.
- Assessment of the small number of advanced apprentices is weak. For some of these, work-based assessments are infrequent. A few learners in their final year have not yet had any direct observation of their working activities.
- Review of some learners' progress is insufficiently rigorous. Targets are frequently too vague and not time-bound.
- Processes for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching, training and learning are fragmented. Several formal systems are used, but these are not sufficiently coordinated to secure improvement.

- Internal verification meets awarding body requirements but assessment practices are inconsistent across the provision and insufficient support is provided to assessors.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. New line management structures are in place but their effectiveness is often hindered because communication and reporting arrangements lack formality.

What does SETA need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and frequency of work-based assessment to enable learners to make better progress towards their qualifications, especially for advanced apprentices.
- Improve the review of learners' progress to ensure that progress towards completion of key skills, technical certificates and the NVQ are regularly discussed with learners and employers. Ensure that all learners understand their targets for improvement.
- Improve the internal communications structures and processes to better support continuous improvement and ensure consistency of practice across the organisation.
- Implement a cohesive internal verification structure which ensures good support for assessors, consistency of assessment and verification, and sharing of good practice.
- Continue to develop a cohesive and evaluative structure for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching, training and learning, particularly in the theory-learning sessions.
- Improve the reinforcement of equality and diversity with learners and staff.
- Ensure that employers and learners are aware of SETA contacts for safeguarding.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- learning a lot of new skills
- knowing how they are progressing in their training
- having practical training at SETA
- gaining qualifications.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more practical work
- more frequent assessor visits
- a wider range of jobs at work.

What employers like:

- the level of practical skills learners achieve in the training centre
- apprentices being work ready when they get to employers
- good and regular communication from SETA staff
- lots of help with recruitment processes
- excellent support for finding and vetting learners' accommodation.

What employers would like to see improved:

- making the reports on learners' progress more specific and relevant
- feeding back aptitude tests consistently to learners and employers.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

SETA has implemented several well-planned improvements since the previous inspection. The company has improved its provision by offering City & Guilds technical certificates and key skills qualifications in the training centre in Southampton. This has ensured that learners have the opportunity to gain their apprenticeship framework in the first 20 weeks' full-time training. This has significantly improved framework achievement overall and timely success rates for apprentices. Overall achievement of apprenticeship frameworks, a weakness at the previous inspection, has improved substantially over the last year and is now good. The majority of learners achieve within agreed timescales. Current learners are progressing very well through their frameworks. More work needs to be done to improve further the timely success rates for advanced apprentices.

Self-assessment is used effectively to identify strengths and areas for development to improve the provision. Learners' and employers' views are considered in the process. The self-assessment report identifies accurately the strengths and areas for improvement and links well to the improvement plan. Progress is monitored sufficiently. The approach to monitoring the quality of training and assessment is satisfactory but variable across the provision. Several different systems for observing training exist and, at the time of inspection, had not been fully integrated into a cohesive framework. The provision in key skills, a weakness at the previous inspection, is managed well in the training centre.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

Overall outcomes are good. Framework achievement success rates are high at 80% and significantly above national figures of 65%. Timely success rates have improved over the previous three years and are now significantly above the national average for apprentices, and around the national average for advanced apprentices. Current learners (2008/09) are making very good progress towards their framework, with overall success rates of 91% and timely success rates of 74%.

Young apprentices achieve particularly well. Success rates for the last two years have been outstanding at 93%.

Learners' achievement of key skills is high, with 95% of learners achieving five key skills at level 2 during their apprenticeship. This prepares learners well for their advanced apprenticeship. Learners thoroughly enjoy their learning experience, feel safe and know their rights and responsibilities. Learners increase their employability by progressing to further and higher education courses and undertaking additional training offered by SETA and funded by employers.

SETA provides very good first year training for apprentices that prepares learners well for their future in engineering and engineering construction. Their basic engineering practical skills are well developed and a good sense of safe working environments is learned. Employers appreciate the high standard of learners' practical skills. The development of learners' skills in the workplace is good. Advanced apprentices build on their basic engineering skills and develop very effective levels of skill that meet the requirements of their employers.

Learners gain a good range of additional qualifications. Currently 22 learners have progressed from national certificates onto higher national certificates. The majority of learners achieve extra qualifications including, for example, additional units in NVQ level 2 and abrasive wheels certificate,

The quality of provision

Grade 3

Teaching, training and learning are broadly satisfactory. Staff are appropriately skilled and qualified. Many have or are working towards formal teaching and training qualifications. In theory lessons, tutors make good use of practical teaching aids to reinforce topics and relate theory to practice by allowing learners to observe actual component parts, for example engineering cutting tools. Tutors sometimes use questions and answers well to establish knowledge and understanding. However, in some lessons there is little checking that learning has taken place.

In the training centre, in well-planned practical lessons, learners are encouraged to evaluate their own work before submitting it for formal assessment. Clear and helpful feedback on improvement is given to each learner. Learners' work is assessed rigorously and helpful targets for improvement are written in learners' portfolios.

Assessment of the small number of advanced apprentices is weak. For some learners, work-based assessments are infrequent. A few learners in their final year have not yet had any direct observation of their working activities. Work-based assessors receive insufficient support from their internal verifiers, an aspect acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

The quality of the review process is poor for some learners. Progression targets are frequently vague and not time-bound. Targets are often not checked at the following review. Learners' progress through their framework is measured but rarely compared with where they should be in their programme.

Additional support for learners is satisfactory. Few learners require additional support; learners that do, are supported effectively on an individual basis.

The range of training provision is good and covers many skill areas up to level 3. Regular communication with employers ensures training content is up to date and relevant to their needs. Employers are flexible in providing job opportunities to enable successful collection of NVQ evidence.

Young apprentices are supported well in finding suitable employment with local companies. Employer partnerships are strong and SETA provides good assistance to companies in recruiting their apprentices. However, the information from aptitude tests is not always shared with learners and employers. The comprehensive induction programme covers health and safety, equality and diversity, and the requirements of the apprenticeship.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

SETA has clear strategies to develop the organisation and a strong focus on meeting employers' and learners' needs. The company has played a significant role in the community since its inception, providing high quality training for national and local employers. Employers state that SETA is responsive and flexible to their needs.

SETA's arrangements for equality and diversity are satisfactory. Overall, there is satisfactory promotion of equality and diversity. The promotion of engineering courses to women, however, is good. SETA effectively uses a well-produced DVD for the recruitment of young apprentices, which prominently features young female learners at work in the engineering industry. Marketing and learning materials are carefully designed to guard against discrimination and to encourage women and minority ethnic groups into engineering; the number of female applications for courses has risen steadily over the last three years. Staff regularly attend local recruitment events and good use is made of learners as ambassadors to support enrolment of learners. Adequate checks are made of subcontractors and employers to make sure they promote equality of opportunities effectively.

The company has clear policies for equality and diversity that have been recently reviewed and updated. Unaided access to the training centre for those with restricted mobility is limited, although suitable arrangements are made for learners where required. Adequate reinforcement of equality and diversity is given to learners at induction but their knowledge and understanding is not regularly reinforced. The staff's understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory but requires additional updating concerning current legislative requirements. Data on different groups of learners are collected and analysed, and this information is adequately utilised to inform management decisions and ensure learners from different groups are not disadvantaged.

SETA's safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. All staff involved directly with learners, including the owners of lodging accommodation used by SETA, have completed a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. The chief executive officer of SETA is responsible for safeguarding, although employers are not routinely made aware of this. There are thorough and regular checks made of lodging accommodation to ensure learners are safe. Similarly, appropriate checks are made of employers used for work placements to make sure of learners' safety. Good care is taken to ensure young apprentices are well cared for at the training centre and appropriate health and safety risk assessments are regularly undertaken. SETA staff have received suitable training on child protection, although this is now in need of

updating. SETA is making appropriate preparation to implement vetting and barring procedures required by the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Clinically conducted random drug tests are carried out on learners at the training centre to mirror good practice undertaken in some areas of the engineering industry. Clear information of this process, and its implications, are given to learners at induction.

Self-assessment is satisfactory. The latest report closely matches the findings of the inspection and is linked clearly to an improvement plan. The views of stakeholders are used effectively to inform the self-assessment report. Staff have a clear understanding of the self-assessment process. Learners' views are sought through questionnaires. However, learners receive limited feedback on the outcomes of these or changes SETA has made as a result of their views.

Value for money is satisfactory. Outcomes for learners have improved significantly in 2008/09. Timely success rates require further improvement. The improved delivery of key skills and technical certificates is good and effective. The company has secured funding to expand its training centre but this has yet to be implemented.

The recent changes to the management structures have not yet been fully effective. The company has recognised the need to improve its formal communications and quality improvement processes to ensure consistency and share best practice among staff. Processes for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching, training and learning are fragmented. Several formal systems are used, including observation through teacher training courses, external verification and SETA's observation process. These are not sufficiently coordinated. Internal verification meets awarding body requirements but assessment practices are inconsistent across the provision and insufficient support is provided to assessors.

Information about the inspection

1. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's work-based learning manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local LSC and other funding bodies, Framework for Excellence indicators, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's monitoring visit and data on students and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
2. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had completed on behalf of the provider. They also visited learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Southampton Engineering Training Association Ltd
Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full-time and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including E2E); **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners	222				222
Part-time learners	23	23			
Overall effectiveness	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Capacity to improve	3				
Outcomes for learners	2	1	n/a	n/a	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a				
Quality of provision	3	2	n/a	n/a	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3				
Leadership and management	3	3	n/a	n/a	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	n/a				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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