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Ms Therese Timlin  
Manager  
Buzz Learning Limited  
8 Esther Court  
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Northumberland  
NE63 8AP

Dear Ms Timlin

### **Short inspection of Buzz Learning Limited**

Following the short inspection on 5 and 6 July 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in June 2014.

#### **This provider continues to be good.**

You and your staff have successfully addressed almost all the recommendations made at your previous inspection and consequently learners are still receiving high-quality education.

You and your newly introduced advisory board have a clear vision for the future of Buzz Learning Limited. Plans are in place to expand the provision for learners with high needs and this carefully links to the needs and priorities of the local authority, which is supportive of this ambition.

You have strengthened your quality improvement arrangements, and these are effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the quality of provision. You ensure that appropriate targets are set, monitored and achieved.

You and your staff know your provision well. Where it has not been possible to secure sustained improvements, such as in the very small proportion of study programmes for young people who were not previously in education, employment or training, you have taken the decision to remove these programmes from your curriculum offer and, instead, refer learners to other providers.

#### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Learners feel safe and demonstrate safe working practices. Teachers ensure that learners have good knowledge of the risks to their safety by skilfully integrating

topics such as terrorism and online grooming into their lessons. Learners produce high-quality pieces of work that demonstrate their understanding of such issues.

Well-planned processes to protect learners are in place and understood by staff. Good relationships with the local authority and local police force ensure that staff swiftly identify any learners who are potentially at risk and take appropriate action to keep them safe. Staff keep clear and detailed records relating to potential safeguarding incidents. However, the 'Prevent' risk assessment and action plan need updating to reflect better the local threats that learners face.

The designated safeguarding officer and her deputy have carried out appropriate training, and they ensure that all members of staff complete regular training to refresh their understanding of safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and British values.

### **Inspection findings**

- An advisory board is now in place to support and challenge managers. The appointment of three external professionals with different specialisms means that managers are more accountable for the quality of provision. There is a clear focus on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment from all managers and advisory board members. This focus has had a positive impact on the experience of learners.
- Managers have a clear ambition for the future direction of Buzz Learning Limited, and they articulate this very clearly. They ensure that the curriculum meets local needs and have strong relationships with the local authority. They made the decision to expand the provision for learners with high needs and cease working with learners who were not previously in education, employment or training after careful consideration.
- Leaders and advisory board members know the provider well. They make good use of self-assessment to review carefully the quality of the provision. As a result, they accurately identify weaknesses and provide appropriate support to enable staff to make improvements. Managers are clear about what actions they need to take to improve the quality of provision further.
- Performance management is effective at maintaining the quality of provision. All members of staff have annual appraisals, and managers set clear objectives for staff to achieve. The appointment of a dedicated quality manager to focus on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has resulted in a series of successful training events that have had a positive impact on teachers' understanding of key topics, such as the 'Prevent' duty and planning for learners with different needs.
- Managers evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment accurately by observing lessons regularly. They identify improvement actions for teachers following observations, and closely monitor the progress that teachers make towards overcoming weaknesses. As a result, most teachers improve their teaching skills.
- Teachers take account of learners' starting points very effectively when planning

learning. They use information about learners' prior skills and knowledge well when setting academic and personal targets. Staff regularly review learners' progress towards their targets and make appropriate adjustments throughout the year to ensure that targets become progressively more challenging. This helps learners to make good progress towards achieving their aspirations.

- Learners successfully develop the skills that they need for their future progression. They benefit from teachers' use of interesting and engaging learning activities. Teachers in different subjects work well and collaboratively to help learners achieve their individual targets; for example, teachers highlight when learners are using English skills in a mathematics session. As a result, learners develop their confidence, independence and team-working skills, and are aware of what they need to do next to improve further.
- Learners develop their skills in English and mathematics well. All learners have individualised targets for English and mathematics based on their initial assessments and teachers use these well to ensure that learners take part in activities that develop their knowledge in these subjects. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on learners' spoken English and broader communication skills. As a result, learners are more confident in speaking to their parents and key workers. However, the proportion of learners who achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics is too low and has been for at least two years.
- Careers education, advice and guidance are good. Most learners have very clear plans for their next steps and know what they need to do to reach their intended destinations. The few learners who do not know what they are planning to do when their current course ends receive appropriate ongoing advice from the provider's careers adviser. Where appropriate, learners are referred to external agencies for further support. Managers now use training staff more appropriately to complete student interviews that ensure that learners start on the right programme.
- Staff manage work experience for learners with high needs effectively. Nearly all learners with high needs take part in external work experience placements. Staff carefully select work placements that allow them to agree vocationally relevant targets with learners and employers. Staff review these targets regularly and evaluate the progress of learners in formal reviews. As a result, learners develop the skills that they need for future progression into supported internships or paid employment. However, work placement arrangements for learners on other study programmes are less effective, and this further supports the decision to remove this provision from the curriculum offer for 2017/18.
- Support for learners is effective. Managers work closely with the local authority to review education, health and care plans for learners with high needs. Where learners do not have a previous assessment for an education, health and care plan, managers use their strong links with the local authority to ensure that support is put in place that is appropriate to the learners' needs. Parents value the support that they receive from the provider's staff and this support helps parents better understand the challenges that their children face in their learning. Appropriately qualified learning support assistants provide helpful support for

learners during most lessons. However, in a few instances, assistants are not deployed well enough to ensure that the learners whom they support, particularly the most able, make sufficiently rapid progress.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a larger proportion of learners achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics
- all support staff challenge learners, including the most able, to make rapid progress
- the positive actions to keep learners safe from the risks of radicalisation and extremism are formalised into an updated risk assessment and action plan.

I am copying this letter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Ken Merry  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, two of Her Majesty's Inspectors were assisted by the manager as nominee. We met with a range of staff, made telephone calls to appropriate agencies and observed lessons. We scrutinised key strategic and policy documents, including those related to self-assessment, quality assurance and safeguarding. We also considered the views of learners and parents through Ofsted's online questionnaire and through face-to-face and telephone interviews.