

Rolls-Royce North East Training Centre

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

Rolls-Royce North East Training Centre (RRNETC) is a medium-sized training provider that offers apprenticeships in mechanical, fabrication and general engineering. The company is a commercial business unit within Rolls-Royce Newcastle. RRNETC contracts mainly with the Skills Funding Agency in the North East. It works with a diverse range of 81 companies in the region. Some 120 learners attend off-the-job training at the centre where they alternate blocks of four weeks in-centre and four weeks at college. Most learners follow a pre-apprenticeship programme at level 2 subcontracted from Tyne Metropolitan College. A few are employed at the start of the programme. Those learners who gain employment progress to advanced apprenticeships. Currently RRNETC manages 237 advanced apprentices who are employed in partner companies.

The most recent inspection report was published in May 2010. The provider was graded satisfactory for overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management. Provision in engineering, the only sector subject area offered by RRNETC, was judged to be satisfactory. This report focuses on the themes explored during this monitoring visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has RRNETC made in improving self-assessment and development planning to strengthen its provision?

Reasonable Progress

Capacity to make and sustain improvements was satisfactory at the time of the inspection. The self-assessment report was broadly satisfactory but it failed to identify some areas for improvement. The self-assessment process used to produce the self-assessment report in May 2011 was designed and implemented well. It involved all staff in contributing to an early draft of the report and staff are aware of and agree with the final version. It contains clear judgments and is well structured. An effective system is in place to gather, analyse and use feedback from learners and employers. Feedback has resulted in improvements to the provision. For example, RRNETC changed the college it uses to provide training for the technical certificates in response to critical feedback from learners and employers. RRNETC does not use a formal quality-improvement plan to manage improvements in teaching and learning. These improvements are discussed at meetings and a record is kept of progress, but it is not clear who is responsible for each improvement action, when they are to be completed and the actions are not specified in sufficient detail.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made in improving learners' outcomes since the last inspection?

Significant Progress

At the last inspection outcomes for learners were judged to be satisfactory. Success rates have improved markedly. In 2009/10 the overall success rate for levels 2 and 3 apprentices together was high and the rate of achievement of these apprenticeship frameworks within the planned duration of the programme also improved significantly and was high in that year. For advanced apprenticeships, the success rate was very high in 2009/10, at 97%. At the time of the visit the in-year success rates show further improvement. The majority of learners who are due to succeed this year are making at least satisfactory progress. Learners are kept well informed of their progress and are keen to complete their assessment tasks.

Most learners progress into employment within engineering. Progression between the pre-apprenticeship course and the advanced apprenticeship programme is very good. RRNETC is very effective at helping learners gain employment. Learners gain a good range of additional skills and qualifications to improve their employability and their career prospects. Learners continue to produce good quality work and develop good communication, employability and engineering skills.

Quality of Provision

What progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching and learning and its evaluation across all provision?

Reasonable Progress

At the time of the inspection, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Formal lesson plans were not in place and the targets set in learners' progress reviews were of a variable quality. Schemes of work and lesson plans are now in place for the centre-based training. Learners' progress is monitored effectively. A system of observation for teaching and learning exists but remains underdeveloped: it does not result in the identification of sufficient recommendations for improvement. The workshop resources at the training centre remain good and the classroom facilities have been improved. The procedures for assessment and verification of NVQ level 3 learning in the workplace have improved and are good. Informal discussion amongst the team of assessors takes place frequently but formal standardisation meetings are not held regularly. Reviews of learners' progress in the workplace now result in clear targets for learners which are of a consistent standard. Supervisors are generally consulted but are not sufficiently involved in discussion about what the apprentice can do next.

Leadership and management

What progress has RRNETC made in ensuring that learners are safe and that government legislative requirements for safeguarding are being met?

Reasonable Progress

Since the last inspection, RRNETC has improved its safeguarding arrangements for learners. Suitable policies and procedures are in place and are reviewed annually. Contact details for appropriate agencies are held centrally. All staff who have direct contact with learners are subject to enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks. A suitable central register is maintained and safeguarding requirements are included in recruitment policies for new staff. All staff have received recent training in safeguarding to level two. At induction, all learners receive safeguarding instruction and an information card which identifies the safeguarding officers and provides guidance with respect to safeguarding. Detailed posters in the training centre reinforce this information.

Progress reviews have been improved to include a discussion on safeguarding but this is not recorded well on the review documentation. RRNETC ensures that employers have procedures to safeguard apprentices but does not record compliance sufficiently formally. RRNETC is further developing its contact with the local safeguarding board who have confirmed a commitment to provide advice when required. RRNETC has made arrangements for the local safeguarding board to meet nominated safeguarding officers and provide further guidance.

What progress has RRNETC made in promoting equality and diversity?

Reasonable Progress

The promotion of equality and diversity at induction has been improved through the provision of informative presentations and discussions. Learners fully understand the expected standards of behaviour and conduct at work and in training and have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity and of their rights and responsibilities. Equality and diversity training for staff is satisfactory. All staff completed recent training in equality and diversity in the workplace and two staff have completed further training to level 2. Coverage of equality and diversity during learners' reviews has improved. During these reviews assessors use a selection of questions to test learners' understanding. However, learner responses are not well documented.

RRNETC provides very effective support to help unemployed learners to participate in training and to overcome barriers to employment. The number of women and the number of learners from minority-ethnic groups participating in training remain low. Learners' performance data are collected but are not used to identify the comparative performance of different groups. However, RRNETC evaluates the individual performance of all learners and provides good support for those at risk of failing. Most of the actions on the 2010 equality and diversity action plan have been completed but progress is not sufficiently well recorded.

What progress has been made in broadening staff experience through sharing and promoting good practice?	Reasonable Progress
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At the last inspection, inspectors identified the need for RRNETC to broaden staff experiences by extending their opportunities to share good practice and promoting development. Practice is now shared with another training provider within Rolls Royce. The company has developed a close working relationship with the college it now uses, which has created the opportunity to learn from practice at the college, such as in the observation of teaching and learning. Improvements in the provision have taken place, for example, in the effectiveness of learners' induction and in their progress reviews. The sharing of good practice within teams is good and has led to substantial developments. For example, discussion amongst colleagues has resulted in the development of an electronic portfolio system which meets the needs of the organisation. Improvements have also been made to the system of progress reviews used for learners while they are in the training centre, resulting in them being more helpful to the learners. Staff now gain qualifications and attend training events which extend their understanding and awareness of practice elsewhere. Sharing of good practice with other training providers is still an area for improvement. Comparisons and benchmarks are restricted by a reluctance to share information with competitor providers.

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