

# RWP Training Limited

## Focused monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 54232

**Name of lead inspector:** Shahram Safavi HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 26 October 2011

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** Chertsey House  
Chertsey Hill  
London Road  
Carlisle  
CA1 2QX

**Telephone number:** 01228 593446

## **Focused Monitoring Visit: Main Findings**

### **Context and focus of visit**

RWP Training limited (RWP, the company) is a privately-owned company that has provided government funded training since 1996. The company contracts with the Skills Funding Agency to provide apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes. RWP offers this provision in health, public services and care; retail and commercial enterprise; education and training; and business, administration and law. The company provides this provision for around 119 employers who employ most of RWP's learners.

This focused monitoring visit follows the inspection in October 2009 at which inspectors judged the outcomes for learners, quality of provision, leadership and management, including its arrangements to promote equality and diversity, and its overall effectiveness as satisfactory. They judged quality of provision in education and training as good and in hairdressing as satisfactory.

Since the previous inspection, the company has restructured into three departments: Business Development, Operations and Corporate Services. Very recently four subcontractors: All Care Training Consultants limited, Be Care Trained, D & A Training limited and New Era Enterprises Limited, have started to provide training to around 53% of the company's learners. Currently, hairdressing remains RWP's largest programme that the company directly offers.

### **Themes**

#### **Self-assessment and improvement planning**

<b>What progress has RWP made in ensuring that the self-assessment report accurately reflects the strengths of the organisation and that the process is rigorous and inclusive?</b>	<b>Reasonable progress</b>
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At the previous inspection, the self-assessment process was inadequate, insufficiently evaluative and critical. RWP has responded satisfactorily to the previous inspection's findings by devising a clear improvement plan, which is implemented effectively. It has developed new processes to involve learners, employers and staff in its self-assessment. Learners' views inform the self-assessment process and the report, for example, through questionnaires and formal and informal discussions. Involvement of staff in the self-assessment process has improved significantly, with staff being encouraged to evaluate all aspects of the provision, including leadership and management. Staff value the peer-group moderation as part of the self-assessment process and the opportunity which this offers them to evaluate and gain a better insight into the strengths and areas for development of the different sector subject areas that the company offers.

The use of data in the self-assessment report has significantly improved. The report is more evaluative and critical. However, it does not always consider the impact of the identified strengths and areas for improvement on learners. RWP's observation of teaching and learning is now systematic but the result of this process and other evaluative processes, is not sufficiently used to inform the self-assessment report. The improvement action plan is detailed, clearly identifies roles and responsibilities and has led to improvements in the provision.

## Outcomes for learners

<p><b>What progress has RWP made to improve the overall success rates, success rates within the planned timescale and progress for all learners, particularly for hairdressing learners?</b></p>	<p><b>Significant progress</b></p>
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At the previous inspection, too many hairdressing learners were making slow progress and many did not achieve their qualification within their planned training time.

Since the inspection, RWP has improved considerably the performance of hairdressing learners. Success rates for these learners are now good and are well above the national averages both for overall success rates and for those learners completing within their planned timescale. In 2010/11, overall success rates for hairdressing apprentices had risen from 56% to 70% and from 62% to 83% for advanced apprentices. All other programmes show a steady increase in overall success rates or continue to maintain high success rates. Good strategies to improve overall success rates and success rates within the planned timescale include: revised delivery models; setting specific targets and milestones for learners and assessors; and regular monitoring of learners' progress. Most learners, except hairdressing learners, use a digital portfolio which provides instant feedback on their progress and areas that remain outstanding. The most recent overall success rates for the relatively small number of early years learners are low. RWP has taken appropriate action to improve the performance of these learners.

## Quality of provision

<p><b>What progress has RWP made to improve the quality of teaching and learning sessions?</b></p>	<p><b>Reasonable progress</b></p>
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At the previous inspection, teaching and learning was judged as good; however, some hairdressing tutors did not sufficiently challenge the more able learners and opportunities to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills were frequently missed. Since then RWP has appointed a specialist numeracy and literacy tutor and learners have good opportunities to develop and improve their literacy and numeracy skills while undertaking vocational units of study. Learners also benefit from individual support in order to develop these skills in addition to their information and communication technology skills. RWP has introduced monthly discussion topics, 'hot

topics', to ensure that issues such as safeguarding, equality and diversity, and health and safety are regularly covered in sessions.

A comprehensive observation of teaching and learning system is now in place, which is bringing about improvements in teaching and learning and ensuring best practice is identified and shared. All tutors are observed at least twice a year, clearly identifying areas for development. RWP undertakes good analysis of the areas for development recorded on the lesson observation forms, providing the basis for well-considered staff training. A significant factor in bringing about improvements is the on-going commitment to continuing professional development. All staff have either completed or are working towards teaching qualifications.

**What progress has RWP made to improve the quality of progress reviews?**

**Reasonable progress**

At the inspection, targets set at progress reviews were insufficiently precise, particularly for hairdressing learners. They were often too broad, not always negotiated with the learner and employer and not monitored well. Since then RWP has made a number of changes so that targets set in the reviews are improved and are more effective in monitoring learners' progress. Progress reviews now routinely involve employers and learners, particularly in hairdressing where the inspection identified this as an area for improvement. Short-term targets are now clear and precise. However, for hairdressing learners long-term targets are still vague and imprecise. Progress review documents now appropriately capture learners' understanding of equality and diversity, safeguarding, and health and safety issues. Assessors make good use of the information generated in the digital portfolios for business administration learners to discuss and plan their progress. However, as hairdressing learners do not use digital portfolios, they do not benefit from this process. RWP is currently piloting new progress-review documentation to reduce the amount of paperwork and further improve the consistency of completing the forms.

**Leadership and management**

**What progress has RWP made on improving the safeguarding arrangements?**

**Reasonable progress**

At the previous inspection, arrangements for safeguarding were satisfactory. However, RWP's process to identify and respond to potential safeguarding issues was not sufficiently clear. Following the inspection, RWP has updated its safeguarding policies and procedures, which are now comprehensive and include a good focus on safe practices when learners use internet or communication technology devices. The company assesses appropriately many aspects of learners' training activities in relation to safeguarding risks, which includes good assessment of individual learners in relation to safeguarding issues. All staff continue to be appropriately vetted and receive training to ensure that they understand how to protect the learners.

Learners say that they benefit from discussions on safeguarding topics during teaching sessions and progress review meetings. RWP is in the process of updating

its progress review forms so that safeguarding discussions with learners are more easily and better recorded.

**What progress RWP has made to improve its quality arrangements?**

**Reasonable progress**

At the previous inspection, RWP did not implement its quality systems systematically. Since the inspection, the company has developed new quality-assurance policies, although not all of these policies are supported by clear procedures. The improvement in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning has been significant and monitoring of learners' progress reviews is now satisfactory. The company has worked hard and developed a 'scorecard' system, which aims to capture the most significant aspects of the training processes. The 'scorecard' includes two sets of information; one set uses data and includes information about the progress of learners, the number of progress review visits that they have received and a projection on their success rates within the planned time. This information is effective in planning actions to improve learners' progress and success rates. The 'scorecard' also includes a wide range of information that is based on audits of learning processes, such as learners' individual learning plans. This information is not always sufficiently reliable to bring about improvements and too often is based on very low samples. RWP monitors most aspects of training processes; the company acknowledges that the information that is generated from quality-monitoring activities needs to be better coordinated to avoid duplication and inconsistency of approach and use.

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