

# RWP Training Limited

## Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		8–12 April 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

## Summary of key findings for learners

### This provider is good because:

- Learners' qualification success rates have greatly increased in the last three years and are good with some areas of excellence. Learners develop very good personal, employability and occupational skills. Almost all of the younger apprentices gain sustainable employment.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good with tutors providing very good role models and encouraging high levels of personal aspiration.
- Assessors have good levels of professional experience and expertise that they use well to support and develop learners.
- The strong support and guidance that learners receive motivates them to learn, make good progress and achieve their qualification.
- Managers and staff work together very effectively, setting high standards for learners and using good performance-management processes to ensure improvements in teaching and learning.
- There is a clear vision for improvement based on a very good understanding of the regional and local needs, and good partnership working that develops good opportunities for learners.

### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Too few learners are progressing from intermediate qualifications to higher levels and/or developing English and mathematics skills to help them do so.
- Too few learners experience outstanding teaching, learning and assessment. They do not receive sufficient written feedback or use enough information learning technologies (ILT) to improve.
- Directors and senior managers do not sufficiently use long-term strategic action planning to promote the development of cross-company themes such as equality and diversity and functional skills.
- Managers are not ensuring that all quality systems work well enough to improve all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more learners develop higher level English and mathematics skills to enable them to progress to further levels of study by providing extra support, including specialist functional skills support, more use of e-learning, and increased staff training and development.
- Develop trainers' teaching, learning and assessment skills, particularly in giving written feedback and in the use of ILT, by further staff training, peer support, sharing of practice and improved use of the observation process.
- Develop robust action planning that encompasses longer-term strategic planning as well as the development of key cross-company themes, particularly to improve the teaching of English and mathematics and promotion of equality and diversity. Ensure that planning is based on accurate data and information that are shared with, and understood by, all staff. Ensure that it is clear to all staff who, and how, leadership of each theme will be driven.
- Further improve quality systems so that they provide good information in a timely way that helps to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Use working groups of staff to identify any gaps and pilot improved processes. Evaluate their effectiveness and adopt as necessary. Work with external partners to identify other good practice.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Overall success rates have improved steadily over the last three years, are well above national averages and are good. The rate that learners achieve qualifications within their planned timescales has improved extremely well over this same period and is now outstanding, being significantly above national averages. Apprentices on intermediate programmes achieve slightly better than higher-level apprentices. Learners at subcontractors achieve at a similarly high rate.
- Success rates for health and social care apprentices and adults on workplace programmes, who represent the largest number of learners, are good. Business administration learners' overall success rates and those gained within planned timescales are outstanding. Teaching assistants and most hairdressing learners' success rates are also high. However, a small minority of advanced hairdressing and childcare apprentices achieve at a lower rate.
- Apprentices and workplace learners develop very good skills that they use well at work and in home life, for example, learners in childcare plan creative play activities for children, and business administration learners attend house auctions, prepare high quality information for clients using further research and liaise with them thereafter.
- Hairdressers are gaining good reputations and are building their own customer lists. Teaching assistants are highly valued by their headteachers and often lead group sessions. Learners across programmes are developing team-work skills, taking on tasks that demonstrate their ability to work independently and take the initiative.
- Younger learners benefit particularly well by gaining employment through the company's recruitment and matching processes, with almost all gaining sustainable jobs. Some apprentices gain promotion on completion of their qualification. Learners in health and care complete additional useful qualifications. Learners' progress through their programmes is good.
- Learners' progression from intermediate level courses to higher level is good for teaching assistants but for all other learners requires improvement. They develop understanding of English and mathematics at an appropriate rate, and gain key skills qualifications. However, they do not always develop these skills at a rate that enables them to progress to higher level courses or jobs.

- Managers scrutinise information to understand achievement gaps for learners and have taken some effective actions to address these, including reviewing recruitment processes for men on business administration programmes and analysing the differences in the experience of night- and day-shift workers in health and care. The gap between men's and women's achievements has narrowed from last year to the current year.
- Success rates for learners with learning difficulties declined slightly in 2011-2012 but still remain above the national averages. Managers are not yet using data in a systematic way to analyse such trends and their underlying issues.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment are good reflecting learners' high success in gaining qualifications, finding employment and developing good work skills. Staff are enthusiastic, have good vocational experience and are skilled in motivating learners. They have high and realistic expectations of learners, who are very motivated to succeed.
- The curriculum has been extended over the past three years and RWP Training Limited, together with its three sub-contractors, now deliver a good range of apprenticeship and workplace learning programmes across Cumbria and Lancashire, meeting the needs of a broad cohort of learners. The company is particularly effective in meeting needs of employers, skilfully matching trainees to appropriate vacancies. Assessors spend time with employers so that they have a thorough understanding of their businesses.
- Most classroom-based teaching and learning sessions are well-planned and trainers effectively use a wide range of methods to motivate learners to achieve. In the best sessions, trainers and assessors check learners' understanding well to ensure that learning is taking place. Trainers and assessors have well-developed occupational skills, are enthusiastic and valued by employers for the support given to meet their business needs.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well by trainers to motivate learners and it is integrated into most learning sessions. The development of a virtual learning environment (VLE) is still in an early stage of development and is used mainly to store resource materials. While most learners benefit from e-portfolios, staff and learners do not use e-learning sufficiently to aid independent learning and development.
- Assessment practice is good and all learners have regular access to assessment through frequent assessor visits that confirm and support progress against targets. An effectively administered web-based electronic monitoring system records all aspects of achievement and learners clearly understand the progress they are making. Staff and managers use the monitoring process well to keep track of learner progress and give extra support when learners fall behind.
- Initial assessment is effective, undertaken at interview, and the results are used to place learners on the most appropriate training programme. Initial assessment also includes identification of preferred learning style to inform ways of working to best meet the needs of the individual. Additional needs are identified at this stage and planned support put in place.
- The teaching of English, mathematics and functional skills requires improvement. In some cases, teaching staff integrate English, mathematics and ICT into sessions effectively. However, learning sessions do not always sufficiently target individual learners to enable them to practise the specific English and mathematics skills that they need to improve.
- Most tutors provide learners with constructive oral feedback, which clearly identifies ways in which learners can improve. Tutors do not always ensure that written feedback is sufficiently detailed and evaluative. Much of learners' work is of a good standard. However, trainers and assessors do not routinely correct spelling or grammatical errors.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Induction is thorough and learners receive good information about their rights, responsibilities and entitlements. Learners undertake an initial

interview, complete thorough assessments to establish suitability and are then placed with appropriate employers.

- Learners' progression to further training or higher education is carefully explained and clear routes mapped out. Many apprentices on the programme for teaching assistants are committed to becoming teachers and assessors and advisors successfully extend their knowledge and skills to enable them to progress. However, too few learners outside of the teaching assistant programme progress from intermediate courses to higher levels.
- Learners work together very effectively and show respect and understanding. However, trainers and assessors do not always promote equality and diversity sufficiently in sessions and many do not have the confidence to develop or expand discussions.

### Health and social care Apprenticeships Other work based learning

Good

- Teaching learning and assessment are good as reflected in the high success rates, the good standard of work and high levels of confidence. Learners are highly motivated and enjoy their learning. They develop a wide range of skills essential for the vocational area. Childcare learners use interactive whiteboards well with their children demonstrating good skills. Trainers encourage all learners to reflect very well on their workplace activities, for example, demonstrating excellent safe working practices.
- Trainers and assessors are well qualified and vocationally experienced, using this to plan learning sessions to meet individual need and very effectively promote learning. Trainers skilfully use questions to encourage reflection and develop deeper knowledge and understanding. Enthusiastic staff ensure learners are highly motivated to make good progress.
- Good support for learners enables those with personal or learning needs to complete their programme successfully. For example, pregnant learners are given support to take a planned break and return with additional support. Trainers and assessors use specialist resources well to support learners with dyslexia. Trainers support adult employed learners well to gain confidence and build on previous experiences.
- Resources are good but not all learners have access to the full range, including the option to use e-portfolios. Most trainers make good use of ICT, for instance, using voice recorders for professional discussions. However, the virtual learning environment is under developed. A number of health and care learners choose to complete paper-based evidence. This does not affect their progress. However, they do not fully develop independent learning skills.
- Employers comment on the increased confidence of learners and their ability to work in a range of environments. For example, former residents of specialist facilities for people with a range of complex personal issues become volunteers, gain their apprenticeship as they change their lives, becoming positive role models for others. All learners are able to recognise and appropriately challenge poor practice.
- Information, advice and guidance are good and staff ensure learners are placed on the most appropriate programme or sign posted to more suitable provision. Advice and guidance relevant to the health and care sector during the programme by assessors is good.
- Initial assessment for English and mathematics is good. In Lancashire, the relatively new functional skills specialists have completed diagnostic tests and planned very detailed individual support. However, not all geographic areas have a functional skills specialist in place and teaching and learning in this area requires improvement. Trainers do not routinely correct spelling and grammar.
- Assessment is timely, fair and accurate. All learners value the accurate and detailed oral feedback on their work. However, insufficiently detailed written feedback does not enable learners to always reflect on their progress and know how to improve.

- Employers and trainers work together very effectively. This strong partnership leads to comprehensive reviews of learner progress with good action plans for improvement. Learners gain knowledge and skills and are able to apply this successfully to their professional practice.
- Learners demonstrate a good understanding of equality and diversity as they relate to their client groups. Learners show high professional standards in their care of clients, treating each with respect and dignity. However, trainers and assessors miss opportunities to extend learner knowledge and implications for practice throughout the programme and during reviews.

### **Hairdressing Apprenticeships Other work based learning**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in the good outcomes for learners. RWP Training Limited and salon mentors effectively work as a team in supporting and positively promoting learners' personal and occupational development. Well planned occupational training, good support, robust assessment planning and monitoring are beneficial factors in assisting a high proportion of learners to successfully finish their programme well ahead of target.
- As learners join the programme, tutors appraise and then regularly up-date records that report on their personal training preferences, motivation and practical skills well. These profiles, together with reviews completed after every practical session, help tutors plan individualised learning well.
- Learning is supported by a comprehensive range of resources that tutors use effectively. Demonstrations are supported by clear guidance that helps learners understand and replicate salon services and techniques. The good use of questions, visual-aids and technology encourages learners to link theoretical principles with salon services. For example, when considering cutting angles learners confidently put forward adaptations and changes to projected angles that would influence the weight and balance of the finished style.
- Practical assignments are imaginative, incorporating current trends and topical events. One learner designed a total look with hair extensions and make-up to depict the Olympic symbols. Technology, although used effectively in formal learning, is under-used as a supplementary tool to aid independent learning and learner development. The company is currently extending and developing the virtual learning environment to better support independent learning activities.
- Learners develop good occupational skills through the consistent support of skilled salon mentors. All mentors receive a formal schedule of off-the-job training and most use this information well to plan further, complementary on-the-job training that prepares learners effectively for assessment.
- Mentors are an integral part of the regular review of learner's development and actively contribute to the discussion. However, the resulting targets too often focus on assessment activities rather than the training and personal development needs of learners.
- Assessors plan assessments extremely well, they robustly monitor learners' progress and make frequent salon assessments visits, which all have a positive aspect on learner success. An effectively administered web-based electronic monitoring system records all aspects of achievement. Individual learning plans have clear and regularly updated assessment targets. Assessors provide mentors with useful records that stipulate the type of clients and services required for the next assessment visit.
- All learners receive verbal feedback on assessment outcomes. However, assessors do not all consistently provide learners with a detailed written breakdown of what was particularly well executed and where improvements could be made. Trainers provide concise and evaluative written feedback on all assignment work.
- Historically, learners' English and mathematics development focuses on improving skills to comply with the framework requirement and no further. Staff have implemented revised arrangements that more thoroughly diagnose learners' starting points in order to individualise



learning and develop the literacy and numeracy levels of all learners more thoroughly. However, this new structure is still developing.

- Most learning plans have clear links to functional skills, equality, diversity and safeguarding. However, the inclusion and expansion of these topics is not always detailed enough or completed confidently.

### **Training to provide learning support**

#### **Apprenticeships**

#### **Other work based learning**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good for teaching assistants, matching their very high success in gaining qualifications, their work that is of a good standard and their portfolios that are professionally organised. Learners interact well with children, their parents and colleagues in schools. They are highly enthusiastic and participate very well in sessions.
- Off-the-job training sessions are well planned by trainers to successfully engage learners in developing knowledge about teaching and learning strategies, classroom and behaviour management, to support their development as teaching assistants.
- Learners receive good quality on-the-job training. They work alongside experienced teaching staff in schools where they apply programme knowledge in practical settings well. Learners benefit from regular school-based training such as first aid, guided reading and teaching children to read through phonics. However, there is insufficient coordination between on-and-off-the-job training to support the continuity and development of learners' skills in the workplace to higher levels.
- Care, guidance and support are good with highly accessible, helpful and approachable assessors. Staff provide high levels of academic and personal support for learners and this motivates them to progress. Assessors have good experience and an in-depth knowledge of the sector. They use their expertise well to guide and support learners with practical and written tasks. School mentors work closely with learners to help them succeed.
- Assessment practice is good. Assessors use a wide variety of assessment methods to confirm and check learners' progress. This helps learners to understand how well they are progressing within a range of contexts. They provide learners with useful verbal feedback for completed tasks and at progress reviews, detailing what action they need to take to improve. However, learners do not always receive written feedback with formal targets to reflect upon and achieve, between assessor visits.
- Learning resources are appropriate. Training rooms are of a professional standard and learners have access to reasonable vocational texts and supporting materials. Assessors make insufficient use of ICT resources such as cameras and voice recorders to support the assessment process.
- Initial assessment is very effective in identifying the suitability of learners onto the programme. Learners undertake an initial assessment, diagnostic tests and an in-depth interview to ensure their compatibility for the teaching assistant role. The provider works successfully with prospective employers to accurately match each learner with an appropriate school.
- However, the teaching of functional skills requires improvement. Assessors place too little importance on the continual development of learners' functional skills competencies and do not actively embed these within programme delivery. Some learners' work contains grammatical and spelling errors, which remain uncorrected.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Assessors regularly reinforce information for learners relating to progression to higher-level programmes and employment into framework delivery. This motivates learners to progress successfully to higher-level courses and to aspire to teaching assistant roles with additional responsibility.
- Learners have an appropriate understanding of equality and diversity within their workplace environments. Learners receive information about equality and diversity during their programme

induction and through some provider-based sessions. However, assessors do not routinely promote discussion and debate to deepen learners' knowledge and challenge perceptions within wider contexts.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

**Good**

- The overall quality of leadership and management is good, matching the high outcomes for learners. RWP Training Limited is a company with high aspirations for its staff and learners, demonstrated by a strong personal commitment by leadership and management to improve standards and maintain their high success rates. Staff are highly valued by management and there is a good culture of internal promotions. Staff show high levels of commitment to their learners.
- RWP Training Limited manages subcontractors very well ensuring they achieve the same high outcomes and standards. Managers carefully select sub-contractors to complement their provision and also on the basis of their quality and approach to training. Managers integrated a former sub-contractor into the company particularly well. Communication with, support and training for, sub-contractors are good despite the considerable distance between them.
- There is a particularly strong focus by leadership and management to use up-to-date technology and this has enabled managers to make good use of operational data. Staff use portable computers with built-in security, safe back up and access to files no matter where they are based. Managers ensure assessors support learners to achieve in a timely manner. However, there has been some late internal verification because there is sometimes a delay in putting learners' work onto this system. Not all staff are confident in using ILT.
- Managers set challenging performance targets for staff which relate to a range of quality criteria. Performance has improved very well. Quality assurance processes reflect all learning processes. However, staff are not always fully familiar with them and newer processes do not sufficiently complement existing ones.
- The process for observing teaching and learning is leading to improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. Feedback from learners is used well to support this. Managers very effectively identify good practice in teaching and learning and share these in moderation meetings.
- Observations result in clear performance improvement plans which managers use in a supportive and motivating way for staff. Good use is made of peer observations to help trainers reflect on their own practice. However, the observation process places too much emphasis on teaching rather than learning.
- Self-assessment is evidence and data driven and broadly identifies key strengths and areas for improvement. Information from sub-contractors is used well to incorporate issues across their provision in the process. However, the self-assessment process does not separate the different sector specific areas and quality improvement planning is general and does not always identify enough detail in the vocational areas.
- The company has insufficient long-term strategic plans to develop and promote cross-company themes such as equality and diversity and functional skills. These aspects of the provision have no clear lead manager and do not have formalised plans and targets to ensure equality and diversity and the development of functional skills are fully developed.
- Partnership working is very good with managers knowing their area and employers well and using feedback particularly well to improve. They match learners to employers exceptionally well, which has been the basis for good working relationships with employers. Partnerships ensure there is a good range of training opportunities for local young people. There are close links with a charity based youth group and schools, helping them to make informed choices as well as offering tasters to young people.
- Managers promote a culture of inclusion and learners have every opportunity to succeed and progress. However, overall arrangements for equality and diversity are in need of improvement.

Males are under-represented in the people-based services training programmes although there have been some actions to try and increase their participation. Policies and procedures are under-developed and staff have had too little recent training. A small proportion of staff lack the confidence or knowledge to promote equality and diversity in their teaching and assessment.

- Safeguarding arrangements are good, meet statutory requirements, and ensure the protection of learners. Staff are well-trained. Any incidents or concerns are reported and followed through particularly well ensuring that learners receive good support. The learners' induction promotes safeguarding well in a way that is relevant to their own needs, including the safe use of the internet.



## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

RWP Training Limited			
<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b>  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>	Apprenticeships	Other work-based learning
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Health and social care</b>	2
<b>Early years and play work</b>	2
<b>Hairdressing</b>	2
<b>Training to provide learning support</b>	2



## Additional socio-economic information

RWP Training Limited operates from its headquarters in Carlisle with a second office in East Lancashire. It offers provision predominantly in the North West of the country, but extends to the Scottish border and to Yorkshire and Humberside. Unemployment rates fluctuate around the area serviced by the provider; however, pockets of high unemployment and great deprivation can be found, particularly around Barrow and West Cumbria. In 2011-12 just over half of all learners were recruited onto health, public services and care programmes provided by sub-contractors.

## Information about this inspection

<b>Lead inspector</b>	June Cramman HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the head of operations as nominee, carried out the 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 learners' 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 learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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