

Resources (North East) Limited

Independent learning provider

**Inspection dates**

3–6 November 2015

Overall effectiveness**Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Outcomes for learners

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Senior leaders have high aspirations for learners and apprentices. They have achieved high success rates for both groups.
- Excellent partnerships, particularly with employers, mean that provision meets employers' needs.
- The large majority of apprentices and learners go into employment or further learning.
- Staff at all levels have worked hard to improve provision, leading to a positive impact in all areas.
- Teaching, learning and assessment for learners and apprentices are good.
- Apprentices behave very well and demonstrate the skills and attitudes they need to be successful in their careers.

This is not yet an outstanding provider

- Managers have not had quick access to consistently good information about apprentices' progress, owing to disparate and insufficiently documented systems. As a result, managers cannot always make timely interventions to ensure that all apprentices make the progress they should. Apprentices do not always know how well they are doing.
- Tutors and assessors do not support learners and apprentices to develop their mathematical and English skills to the same high level as their vocational skills.
- Learners and apprentices do not yet apply fully their learning about equality and diversity and fundamental British values in their workplaces.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Resources (North East) Limited (RENE) is a privately owned company established in 1990. It provides employability training and apprenticeships in health and social care, manufacturing technologies, construction, information and communication technology (ICT), retail and commercial enterprise, sport, leisure and recreation, media and communication, and business administration. RENE has four centres in Tyne and Wear and contracts with four other providers to deliver learning and training. Learners and apprentices work in businesses across the North East. Publicly funded apprenticeships account for 90% of the provider's work.
- Unemployment rates in the local area are much higher than the national rate. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national rate. The large majority of RENE's learners and apprentices come from mainly White British communities where unemployment is high and achievement rates are low. The North East has few minority ethnic residents.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Implement a system for tracking and monitoring apprentices' progress so that managers, assessors and employers can intervene rapidly where necessary and support all apprentices to achieve as well, and as quickly, as they can.
- Develop staff capability in English and mathematics so that they are able to challenge learners and apprentices effectively to apply the highest standards in these subjects to their excellent vocational work.
- Develop resources for the promotion of equality, diversity and fundamental British values that enable learners and apprentices to challenge their thinking and practice at work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Senior leaders have a vision that focuses on high aspirations for all learners and apprentices, enabling them to develop strong skill sets and get employment and promotion in their chosen field. They have successfully implemented this vision throughout the organisation: success rates are high for apprentices and learners. The large majority of learners have previously been unsuccessful in learning or have multiple difficulties that affect their learning.
- Senior leaders work with employers well so that courses meet local employment needs. They have very effective employer partnerships and adapt training as necessary, for example by adding a retail unit to the security course to prepare learners well for work as loss prevention officers. Learners can take additional units to supplement their main programme, while apprentices can undertake work experience with another employer to broaden their knowledge and develop further skills. Employers see these apprentices and learners as well prepared for the workplace, and as an asset to their businesses.
- Managers have successfully addressed almost all of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and from the recent re-inspection monitoring visit. In some cases, improvements have led to strengths: for example, success rates within a fixed time frame and the quality of partnership working have both improved to good. Senior managers have taken the lead in improving teaching and learning. They have used feedback from observations to design staff training that tackles areas of weakness, and to share good practice. Managers are taking steps to ensure that staff appraisal covers all aspects of staff performance.
- Senior managers have a clear view of organisational strengths and weaknesses. They make better use of data to identify issues more quickly and to monitor the impact of their interventions. Leaders and managers use a wide range of support mechanisms to help staff improve teaching, learning and success rates. They employ sanctions where provision does not improve. Weak practice identified by inspectors in subcontracted provision in previous years has significantly improved. The performance of one subcontractor is weak. With strong support, improvements, such as more positive feedback from apprentices and employers about the quality of provision, are starting to show. Senior managers have worked hard with staff and employers to improve the self-assessment process. The resulting report effectively highlights key improvements over the year and areas for further development.
- Leaders and managers are aware of the importance of English and mathematical skills in their programmes. Those learners and apprentices who study functional skills qualifications achieve them. A previous problem of low achievement, caused by leaving these qualifications until the end of the programme, has now been resolved for newly enrolled learners by improved initial assessment and bringing examination opportunities forward. However, staff are not yet developing apprentices' and learners' mathematical and English skills to the same high professional level as those seen in the main qualifications.
- Senior managers have a clear overview of the progress of apprentices. However, assessors use a number of systems to monitor individual progress, such as reviews and individual learning plans. Staff do not always complete them well or link different systems together effectively. Apprentices and employers are not always clear about the progress apprentices make. Senior managers acknowledge this as an area for improvement. Managers have recently introduced new paperwork for reviewing apprentices' progress, and are implementing a new electronic system for coordinating documentation imminently. The new paperwork has already enabled staff to improve their feedback and support for apprentices and their employers.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - The chief executive officer and managing director provide strategic direction for the provision. They support and challenge each other, as well as managers and staff. They have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. They know what to do to address the weaknesses and build on the strengths.
 - They use labour market intelligence well and are involved in a number of local networks to ensure that they keep abreast of opportunities for their business, apprentices and learners.
 - They have a very well-thought-out vision for future expansion, using current partnerships to develop further areas where they can use their expertise to best effect, such as traineeships and 24+ loans.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Managers have developed and implemented robust policies and procedures for safeguarding. Appropriate checks are in place for staff, including those of subcontractors. Staff take part in regular

training and updating. Learners and apprentices have helpful workbooks to ensure that they understand how to keep themselves and others safe.

- Learners and apprentices feel safe, know whom to contact if they have a concern, and use appropriate health and safety procedures in the workplace. Managers have responded well to the 'Prevent' duty, with a policy and staff training already in place and a range of materials for the use of learners and apprentices developed and disseminated.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Well-qualified and experienced tutors and assessors plan and teach well. Apprentices and adult learners are highly engaged, motivated and challenged, because tutors and assessors tailor teaching and learning to their individual needs and requirements. As a result, apprentices and adult learners develop technical and industry-relevant skills through well-planned on-the-job training. Medical practice staff, for example, gain the required qualifications to meet Care Quality Commission standards, and business administration and ICT apprentices are able to meet the specific requirements of their employers by developing comprehensive databases and bespoke timesheets.
- Apprentices and adult learners make good progress and are prepared well for the world of work. This enables them to progress to higher levels of study and to employment. Adult learners gain additional qualifications in closed-circuit television (CCTV) operations. This enables them to gain employment in a variety of settings including local shopping centres and hotels.
- Assessors are excellent role models. Consequently, learners behave well, listen attentively and respect each other's opinions. Their social skills are well developed and business administration apprentices, for example, demonstrate excellent customer service skills.
- Apprentices benefit from a robust initial assessment of their skills by staff, which identifies their learning needs. Tutors and assessors then use this information to develop tailored individual learning plans. Apprentices' use of these plans leads to good progress, and ensures that they gain the knowledge and skills they need for their specific job roles. Adult learners carry out a detailed self-assessment where they identify any areas for development to work on through their course. This helps them to prepare effectively for employment.
- While the large majority of assessors set clear, individualised targets through regular reviews, a minority do not. This means that a small minority of apprentices are not fully clear about their current levels of progress.
- Most staff provide constructive feedback for apprentices on their work, thus supporting apprentices to improve their skills and complete their qualifications on time. However, this practice is not yet uniformly good and, in a very small minority of cases, feedback is too generalised and does not help the learners to identify their next steps.
- Employers engage fully from the onset of apprenticeship programmes. By working very closely with employers, recruitment staff know exactly what employers want from their apprentices. Apprentices undergo very effective induction, followed by interviews and screening designed to test suitability for particular employers. This process then leads to a good match between apprentice and employer: satisfaction rates are high, few apprentices leave employment and the rate of progression to sustained employment or promotion at work is very high.
- Apprentices and adult learners show good understanding of the general principles of equality and diversity. However, they cannot yet relate these to their specific job roles or vocational context well enough.
- Tutors and assessors integrate mathematics and English in most lessons and assessments. Learners and apprentices develop useful skills, which do not yet match the high level of their technical skills. In addition, for both apprentices and adult learners, assessors and tutors do not routinely correct spelling and grammar mistakes in written work. As a result, they do not always show learners and apprentices the importance of accurate writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

- Apprentices behave well and attend work punctually with very low absence rates. They demonstrate the skills and attitudes they need to succeed at work, gaining the respect of their colleagues. The attendance rate at classroom and off-the-job training sessions is very high.
- Because tutors and assessors care deeply, their learners and apprentices show enthusiasm for learning

and take great pride in their skills. Their courses and apprenticeships give them access to additional qualifications, enhanced skills or extended work experience with other businesses. Consequently, their employers value them highly.

- Apprentices follow appropriate regulations and work safely. They benefit from high-quality training in health and safety. Tutors and managers have produced good-quality learning resources on safeguarding, radicalisation and extremism, and healthy living, including sexual health. Apprentices who use machinery and learners preparing for work in the security industry recognise the importance of drug testing to stay safe at work. They know how to stay safe online.
- Through effective information, advice and guidance, learners and apprentices know about their options for future education or training. They talk confidently about their career plans and how their training now and in the future will help them to gain work or promotion at work.
- Apprentices and learners produce written and practical work that meets, and often exceeds, industry standards. Their written work and their application of mathematical skills do not always meet the high standards of their vocational work.
- Although most apprentices and learners know about their rights and responsibilities as employees, they are not as confident in describing how democratic values, the legal system and respect for other cultures affect their daily lives and work.

Outcomes for learners

are good

- Success rates for learners and apprentices on all programmes are high. For most areas of learning, rates have risen consistently over the last three years, particularly in building and construction. In ICT, success rates fell slightly over the same period but remain well above the national rate. Almost all learners and apprentices make good progress in their studies: they gain skills quickly and use them effectively.
- Most apprentices achieve their qualification on time. Their portfolios show how skilful they are at work, often exceeding expectations. Almost all adult learners get the qualifications they need to gain work in security services. As a result, the majority of learners looking for work get jobs quickly. Most apprentices get sustained employment, and those already in full-time work gain promotion or additional responsibilities. The proportion of learners and apprentices who go into employment, advanced training, or further and higher education is very high.
- Differences in achievement are negligible between most groups of learners and apprentices. Apprentices over the age of 19 achieve at a slightly higher rate than their younger peers. Managers have introduced an improved induction programme, which includes initial assessments targeted to identify suitability for particular apprenticeships, and highly appropriate advice and guidance designed to ensure that more of the younger apprentices stay the course and get their qualifications. It is too early to judge the impact of this intervention.

Types of provision

Apprenticeships

are good

- RENE has over 200 apprentices in eight main subject areas, specialising in ICT, health and social care, business administration, construction trades, sports leadership, fashion and textiles, media and communication and manufacturing technologies. Almost half of the apprentices are working towards an advanced or higher level apprenticeship.
- Apprentices, tutors, assessors and employers work together well to identify good learning opportunities in the workplace. Most apprentices also benefit from good classroom learning. As a result, they develop and improve their job-related skills, often to high levels. For instance, one ICT apprentice used a very cheap hardware device to develop a computer firewall to ensure that his employer's data were secure, and a fashion apprentice developed textile-engineering skills at a sufficient level to design and produce backpacks. However, occasionally, some classroom training is insufficiently challenging for advanced level apprentices.
- Apprentices are attentive, respectful and work diligently to professional standards. They display professional attitudes to peers, tutors and work colleagues. All apprentices interviewed said they enjoyed the respect the quality of their work earned them from colleagues. Their self-esteem and work-related interpersonal skills have improved. Many talked confidently of how to build good customer relations, and how they need to treat internal and external customers differently. Apprentices progress well into relevant employment.

- Assessment is good and helps apprentices know how to improve. Assessors give supportive feedback, both spoken and written. As a result, apprentices were very clear about how they could improve their work. Most assessment is appropriately rigorous and meets or exceeds framework requirements, although on occasion assessments are inefficient or poorly recorded.
- Apprentices develop their English, mathematical and IT functional skills appropriately through work activity and direct training. For example, they practise mathematical skills within their vocational learning by applying them in complex work-related scenarios. Tutors and assessors encourage apprentices to develop skills beyond those required by the qualification. However, many assessors do not correct spelling and grammar mistakes routinely, and thus do not promote professional standards of writing. Some advanced apprentices' written work is not at an appropriate professional level for their job roles.
- Staff do not maintain progress review records consistently well. Individual learning plans are not always up to date, and some omit information about apprentices' extra support needs. Tutors do not always set learning targets, or record them well enough. A large minority of apprentices were insufficiently aware of their targets and too reliant on their tutors' opinion of how well they were progressing. Too often, their employers did not know enough about how they could help their apprentices make better progress.
- All apprentices said they feel safe, and most are aware of dangers such as radicalisation and grooming. They could talk confidently about how they could recognise symptoms of these, and know how and where to report concerns. During reviews, assessors and apprentices do not sufficiently link their discussions about equality and diversity or health and safety issues to workplace experiences. Few apprentices were able to explain how what they had learned about equality of opportunity related to their job roles.
- Managers have successfully improved the performance of most subcontractors. Although some inconsistencies remain, success rates and apprentices' post-course destinations within subcontracted provision have significantly improved.

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	604
Principal/CEO	Tom Doyle
Website address	www.resourcesnortheast.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	85	25	44	50	0		2	
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14–16	0							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monumental Training ■ TDB Training Specialists Limited ■ 1st2Achieve ■ Pin Point 							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Chris Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Heather Barnett	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joyce Guthrie	Ofsted Inspector
David Longworth	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Gray	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee, and carried out the inspection at short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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