

Rathbone Training

Community learning and skills

Inspection dates

16–19 May 2017

Overall effectiveness		Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	Apprenticeships Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	
Outcomes for learners	Good	
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Apprentices make good progress on their apprenticeships, with more than seven out of 10 completing their programme within the planned timeframes.
- Leaders and managers have nurtured highly effective relationships with many small- and medium-sized local enterprises, local enterprise partnerships, and large organisations nationally to provide education and training to meet sector skill priorities.
- Leaders and managers have been successful in maintaining good standards of education and training since the previous inspection.
- Apprentices develop good vocational and employability skills and make a very effective contribution to their employers' businesses.
- Leaders and managers ensure that all tutors prioritise English and mathematics throughout all apprenticeship programmes, resulting in a high proportion of apprentices passing at the first attempt at a higher level than required.
- Apprentices benefit from high levels of support, especially adult apprentices and those who have special educational needs.
- Leaders and managers do not collect sufficient information on the destinations of apprentices in order to evaluate how effectively apprenticeships meet employer and sector skill shortages.
- A small minority of apprentices do not receive sufficient challenge to enhance their technical knowledge and broaden their occupational skills.
- Apprentices do not develop their understanding of the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism beyond a basic level.
- Managers' action plans do not consistently identify specific actions to ensure swift and rapid improvement.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Since a merger in January 2012 between Rathbone Training and NCG, Rathbone Training now operates as a wholly owned subsidiary. Rathbone Training is registered through NCG in the North East of England, although its head office is in Manchester. Rathbone has 24 training centres across England, Scotland and Wales. It retains its charitable status and provides apprenticeship training, study programmes and work-related training to young people aged over the age of 16 years. The company has developed a range of programmes designed to reach young people with particularly complex support needs and who are farthest from participating in education, training or employment. Rathbone contracts directly with the Education and Skills Funding Agency for the delivery of its apprenticeship programme. It delivers a study programme for young learners on behalf of NCG, which was not in scope for this inspection.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should ensure that they collect information on a much higher proportion of apprentices' destinations, and use this information to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes in meeting the specific requirements of employers and regional skill priorities, and to plan improvements.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that tutors use apprentices' starting points, prior learning and previous experiences to build upon existing knowledge and to challenge apprentices to improve their skills further and produce work of a high standard.
- Tutors should improve apprentices' understanding of how the potential dangers of radicalisation and extremism can affect their personal and working lives.
- Leaders and managers should monitor the progress of actions in improvement plans more closely to bring about more rapid improvements.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and managers set high aspirations for apprentices and staff through their overarching purpose of 'unlocking potential through learning'. They have been successful in nurturing an ethos of continuous improvement since the previous inspection. Managers and staff have tackled successfully many of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection and have maintained the standard of education and training.
- Senior leaders and managers have developed well-conceived strategic plans that provide a strong framework for further curriculum development. They use their excellent relationships with employers, local enterprise partnerships and voluntary organisations to develop a responsive apprenticeship curriculum that meets local and regional skill priorities.
- Managers set challenging actions for staff and apprentices. These have resulted in sustained improvements in the standard of education and training at Rathbone. As a result of increased scrutiny of the performance of staff and apprentices, a much higher proportion of apprentices make good progress and achieve their apprenticeship within their planned timeframes, and develop new skills that make an effective contribution to their employers' businesses.
- Managers have produced a self-assessment report that is accurate and highly critical. It identifies clearly the strengths of the provision, while also recognising the precise aspects that require further improvement. However, the associated improvement plan is not always used to bring about consistently swift improvement. Improvement targets are not specific enough to allow clear monitoring of the progress that managers make in improving the provision further.
- Teaching, learning and assessment continue to improve, resulting in a much higher proportion of apprentices completing their apprenticeships within their planned time. The management of tutors' performance is good. Managers make effective use of a broad range of performance management processes, including perceptive observation of teaching and learning, to set high expectations and improve the quality of education and training that apprentices receive. Tutors receive a wide range of effective training to enhance their skills, develop their expertise and improve their teaching practice.
- Managers have strengthened quality assurance arrangements, ensuring that managers access and use more accurate data on the performance of different aspects of the business, allowing managers to hold underperforming staff and subcontractors to account. Consequently, the performance of the provider has seen sustained improvements over recent years. Partners speak positively about the support and guidance that they receive from Rathbone's managers and the discernible impact that this support has had on improving their own practice.
- Managers successfully promote a positive culture of equality at Rathbone. Managers and staff nurture very effective relationships with a wide range of charities and community organisations to promote community cohesion in the regions that they serve.
- Leaders and staff ensure that they meet fully the principles and requirements of the apprenticeship framework. Leaders and managers have a clear strategic priority to

improve apprentices' English and mathematics skills. The majority of apprentices who need to take English and mathematics do so at a higher level than their prior attainment, and most of these pass at the first attempt.

The governance of the provider

- Governors provide effective support for senior leaders and know the provider well. Board members use their expertise well to hold senior leaders and managers to account in relation to business-planning targets and key aspects of the provider's work. They support leaders effectively to tackle the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection and have a good knowledge of current challenges at the provider and in the sector as a whole.
- Senior leaders and trustees do not have a clear view of what progress apprentices make during their apprenticeship in relation to their starting points, which limits their ability to hold senior managers to account to improve apprentices' achievements further. However, middle managers have a good understanding of the progress that learners make.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Learners feel safe and know how to raise any concerns. Safeguarding policies and practice are appropriate and are reviewed regularly. Managers ensure that staff follow safe recruitment procedures, including pre-employment checks and risk assessments.
- Designated managers for safeguarding are appropriately trained and qualified. All staff benefit from safeguarding training to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to allow them to carry out their roles appropriately. Managers reinforce training frequently through team meetings, webinars, communication updates, and at regular subcontractor review meetings. They follow clear guidance on conduct, including professional behaviour and online communications, and there are clear processes to report safeguarding concerns, including those that arise as a result of suspected abuse, radicalisation or extremism, which staff and learners follow.
- Senior leaders and managers meet their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty fully. Managers work collaboratively with national 'Prevent' leads and have a particular focus on supporting and raising awareness of mental health in communities. Effective mechanisms are in place for monitoring apprentices' safe use of the internet. Managers support and monitor subcontracted partners effectively to ensure that they are fully compliant and understand all their responsibilities. However, although learners receive training, they do not have sufficient knowledge of how the dangers of radicalisation and extremism can affect their everyday and working lives.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Tutors and managers plan the different elements of the apprenticeship programme effectively to meet the requirements of the framework. They work closely with a wide range of well-chosen local and national employers to place apprentices in highly appropriate, well-resourced workplaces. Tutors and managers customise the apprenticeship to meet individual progression and sector requirements of the apprentice

and their employer.

- Tutors support candidates well when they apply to an employer for an apprenticeship. They identify job vacancies, arrange interviews, and support the candidate to prepare appropriately. Supportive employers and work colleagues provide effective on-the-job training in well-chosen job roles to develop apprentices' skills, which tutors then enhance in well-planned off-the-job training.
- Tutors are well qualified and have relevant experience. They use their vocational experience well to deepen apprentices' knowledge and understanding, and motivate and inspire them to do well. For example, tutors working in information technology (IT) ensured that apprentices understood the impact of the recent cyberattack on the National Health Service. Apprentices learned how vulnerabilities in IT security protocols, such as out-of-date operating system software, open and unencrypted access points, and IT users opening emails containing malware, contribute to network systems being at risk of cyberattack.
- Most tutors visit their apprentices regularly to review the achievement of their vocational and functional skills. They record carefully what the apprentice has achieved and set new actions for the next visit, focused on completing units of the framework and personal development. In most cases, tutors provide learners with frequent and constructive oral and written feedback, and help them to clarify their understanding of new tasks and the progress that they are making towards their qualifications. However, in a few cases tutors do not visit apprentices frequently enough to assess their skills and competence, resulting in a small proportion of apprentices making slow progress.
- Support for apprentices who have special educational needs identified in assessments at the start of their programme is good. Tutors work with employers to advise them on how to make reasonable adjustments for their new apprentices. Managers are piloting a new programme in conjunction with a university research department. This aims to help vulnerable young people to build their resilience and understand how to make the most of their positive qualities.
- Tutors give good individual support which helps adult apprentices to overcome their barriers to learning as they return to studying, often after many years away from formal learning. Tutors maintain good communication with apprentices between visits by email, and they use the electronic portfolio to mark assignments and share apprentices' progress with employers, who value this engagement. However, not enough employers routinely contribute to progress reviews to support apprentices' rapid progress.
- Tutors promote the importance of health and safety well, such as the wearing of correct personal protective equipment and using tools and specialist equipment in a safe manner. In manufacturing and service industries, tutors are assiduous in ensuring that apprentices understand the relevant health and safety requirements. In early years and health and social care, the emphasis is rightly on safeguarding and protecting vulnerable people.
- Tutors strongly encourage and support apprentices to improve their English and mathematical skills, resulting in a good proportion of apprentices passing their functional skills tests at a higher level than required by the qualification. However, staff do not consider sufficiently whether apprentices would benefit from taking notes during technical, detailed training sessions to aid revision or help them to check their written English skills. Too few tutors encourage those who are capable to challenge themselves to

achieve higher-level occupational skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Apprentices take pride in representing their employers, and are proud of the standards of work that they produce. The large majority of apprentices make at least their expected progress and in some occupations they make better than expected progress. Apprentices produce work of a good standard, such as in meeting the regulatory requirements when producing food in a care home or displaying professional attitudes in a front-desk role. Motor vehicle apprentices are able to interpret a wide range of technical data relevant to their jobs. They make good progress towards MOT testing and undertake additional training on hybrid vehicles to enhance the contribution that they make to their employers' businesses.
- Apprentices acquire highly relevant vocational skills, speak confidently about how they use their new skills at work and take on meaningful roles. For example, IT apprentices confidently set up and configure networks, trouble-shoot networking systems and can discuss the risks associated with cybercrime. Apprentices studying for the supporting teaching and learning in schools qualification work alongside teachers and have become vital members of the teaching team.
- Many apprentices develop their English and mathematical skills above the level required by their framework. They speak proudly about their increasing level of confidence in using specific industry terminology. They can see the importance of developing mathematical skills in handling petty cash and calculating proportions of materials needed for jobs in a motor vehicle workshop. They recognise the importance of using appropriate English when communicating by email internally to colleagues and externally to clients or customers.
- The majority of apprentices are clear about their progression opportunities and the pathways available to them. As a result of their placements, several are ambitious and want eventually to run their own businesses.
- Apprentices are knowledgeable about their responsibilities as employees in the workplace and the importance of treating people fairly. Many are able to give a good explanation of the importance and relevance of giving to others through, for example, charities such as Help for Heroes, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, The Royal British Legion, and a local hospice. Despite this, apprentices do not have a sufficient understanding of what it means to be a citizen in modern Britain, including the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect for other faiths, and celebrating diversity throughout the community.
- Apprentices are well-motivated, enjoy their learning and attend work and training, assessment and review sessions well. They can cross-refer their learning to their qualification requirements and develop a range of independent study skills. A very small proportion of apprentices arrive at training sessions unprepared, having not read key documents or brought the relevant resources, which limits the effectiveness of the learning that their tutors have planned.
- Apprentices do not have a sufficient understanding of the potential dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism. While many have a basic understanding of these risks,

they do not explore them sufficiently throughout their apprenticeship or contextualise what this means to them in their personal lives and in their communities.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Apprentices complete their programmes of study successfully. They acquire a wide range of new occupational and employability skills that enable them to be productive in the workplace and make a positive contribution to their employers' businesses, as well as preparing them for a successful career within their chosen sector.
- Apprentices' achievement in 2015/16 was good, with more than seven out of 10 of all apprentices completing their programme within the planned timeframe. In the current year, apprentices are making good progress. They develop new and highly relevant skills that they use competently in the workplace. For example, marine maintenance apprentices gain industry-recognised certification that confirms their competency to carry out welding to a range of technical standards.
- The development of apprentices' English and mathematics skills is good. More than three quarters of all apprentices who are required to complete English and mathematics as part of the apprenticeship do so at a higher level, with more than three quarters of these apprentices passing their tests at the first attempt. Consequently, apprentices develop confidence in using these newly acquired skills in the workplace and in their personal lives.
- Apprentices develop a wide range of skills in addition to the qualifications required within the apprenticeship framework. These further enhance their knowledge and make them more employable in the future. For example, advanced apprentices in surveying gain associate membership of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Intermediate apprentices in activity leadership attend residential training to develop their management skills in preparation for progressing to their advanced apprenticeship and taking more senior responsibilities in the exercise and fitness sector.
- Less than one third of all apprentices who complete their intermediate-level apprenticeship progress to an advanced-level apprenticeship. This proportion is low.
- Managers do not collect a sufficient breadth of data on what apprentices do once they have completed their apprenticeship. As a result, they do not have a clear understanding of the effectiveness of the apprenticeships in meeting specific skills priorities in the regions that the organisation serves. However, the information collected about apprentices does indicate that around three quarters of apprentices remain in sustainable employment, with most of the remaining apprentices moving into further education.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54071
Type of provider	Community learning and skills
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2,648
Managing Director	Mr Ian Webber
Telephone number	0161 233 8300
Website	http://www.rathboneuk.org

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	172	406	257	590	28	120		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	BNG Training Chartered Surveyors Training Trust Health and Fitness Education Ltd Castle View Recruitment Ltd Fit Training International Ltd Kainuu Ltd, trading as Nowskills The Development Manager Ltd Port Training							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the performance director, as nominee. 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 learners 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.

Inspection team

Paul Cocker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nick Gadfield	Her Majesty's Inspector
Victor Reid	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christopher Young	Ofsted Inspector
Allan Shaw	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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