

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of provider: Rolls-Royce plc (Derby)

Date of visit: 5 June 2007

Context

This monitoring visit follows the inspection in March 2006, at which Rolls-Royce plc (Derby) was graded as satisfactory for leadership and management and for its arrangements for quality improvement. Equality of opportunity and training in engineering and manufacturing technologies were judged to be good. At the previous inspection, Rolls-Royce held a contract with Derbyshire Learning and Skills Council. In addition to training its own apprentices, the company operates an Engineering Skills Community Training (ESCT) programme to provide training for small and medium-sized companies in the East Midlands area. Currently 55 apprentices from 28 companies are enrolled on the scheme. Young Apprenticeships, a government-sponsored programme, involves 30 young people aged from 14 to 16 completing a two-year engineering vocational qualification that includes a two-week placement at the company. Rolls-Royce was awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence status in lean manufacturing in December 2000. Currently Rolls-Royce is in a period of major reorganisation of its apprenticeship programme. Plans are well advanced to increase significantly the intake of learners and to provide a centralised system of management for the apprentice training programme at the company's eight sites based in the United Kingdom.

Achievement and standards

At the previous inspection, learners made slow progress towards framework achievement. What improvements have been made to enable both Rolls-Royce and ESCT learners to make timely achievement?	Reasonable progress
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Rolls-Royce has made reasonable progress towards improving learners' progress in its engineering advanced apprenticeship programme. The company has made significant progress in increasing the number of its own advanced apprentices who complete their qualification on or before their planned end date. Of the 1999-2000 starters, only 31% completed their framework on time. Of the 2003-04 starters, 64% completed on time and the remaining 36% completed within five months of their planned end date. However, for ESCT learners who started their programme in 2003-04 only 33% completed their qualification on or before their planned end date. The remaining 67% completed within five months of their planned end date. Managers have recognised the slow progress of the ESCT advanced apprentices and have

improved the recruitment process of learners to the programme. Retention and achievement rates remain good for Rolls-Royce advanced apprentices. For the 21 starters in 2002-03, the retention and achievement rate is 100%. ESCT learners achieve at a lower rate than the Rolls-Royce apprentices. Of the 39 ESCT learners who started in 2002-03, the retention and achievement rate is 77%.

The quality of the provision

Are challenging and achievable targets set and performance monitored during the review process?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, progress reviews were judged to be weak. Reasonable progress has been made in improving the review process. A new learner progress review form was introduced in early 2007. Learners find that the eight-weekly review process is useful in helping them understand their progress to date. The challenging targets set for the next review provide learners with guidance and allow them to prioritise their work. Targets for key skills qualifications are set when necessary and learners comment that the reviewers are helpful in explaining terminology and suggesting key skills evidence sources. Learners' college reports are discussed and any issues or concerns are dealt with. Time is also spent discussing workplace health and safety and equality of opportunity. Reviewers are able to check the learners' knowledge and understanding and to identify any support that learners require. The completed learner progress review forms are audited for quality and consistency and the findings will be fed back to the reviewers for improvement purposes. A sample of reviews examined at the monitoring visit showed that there is inconsistency in the way the forms are completed. As yet, no staff training has been provided to standardise the completion of the new forms.

At the previous inspection, some aspects of internal verification were judged to be weak. Is internal verification carried out regularly and are formal meetings between assessors and verifiers taking place to develop the assessment and verification process?	Insufficient progress
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This weakness was identified in two previous inspections. Since the previous inspection insufficient progress has been made to address this weakness. Internal verification of learners' work is still being left until all the units have been completed. Formal meetings between assessors and internal verifiers have still not taken place. Recently a member of staff from the Bristol Rolls-Royce site has been identified to develop and plan the introduction of a national strategy and to manage the company's internal verification process. An action plan with targets and completion dates has been drawn up. An audit of existing internal verification practices is being carried out to identify best practices.

Leadership and management

How effective are the self-assessment and development processes in bringing about improvement to the provision?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, the inspection team had little confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process and found the report to be insufficiently rigorous. Rolls-Royce is making reasonable progress in bringing about improvement to the process and to the identification of areas for improvement. The process is inclusive, with all members of the training team meeting to review the evidence against the five key questions. A draft report based on their findings is produced and circulated to all Rolls-Royce and community learners, managers and staff, who are invited to comment on the report. The latest self-assessment report deals realistically with the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection report. It is critical and clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses. However, the development plan does not always focus on the immediate and appropriate actions required to bring about improvement of the identified weaknesses.

At the previous inspection, quality assurance systems were incomplete. How effectively has this issue been dealt with?	Insufficient progress
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Formal and systematic quality assurance systems remain incomplete. There is still insufficient formal monitoring of some key processes such as teaching, training, learning and assessment practices. However, this has been recognised by managers and staff have completed training on project management. The quality improvement system known as the flight deck has been modified and additions are planned to develop the system further. Staff are now given responsibility for identified areas for improvement. Some aspects of quality improvement activities have recently been implemented, including monitoring and evaluation of progress reviews. Learners at risk are discussed at monthly quality review meetings but progress remains slow and staff are at the early stages of quality improvement management.

What steps have been taken to reinforce equality of opportunity in learners' programmes?	Significant progress
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Since the previous inspection, Rolls-Royce has made significant progress in introducing a number of measures to provide knowledge and understanding of equality of opportunity to learners. It has redesigned the learners' progress review form to place more emphasis on equality of opportunity. As well as the reviewer questioning the learner about their welfare and the treatment they receive in the workplace, there is now a discussion to check their understanding and build on their knowledge of equality and diversity. The discussion is pre-empted by an information briefing paper that is sent out to both the learner and reviewer. The level of understanding is checked by the reviewer and opportunities to discuss any issues are encouraged. The company has identified an equality and diversity information booklet and plans are well advanced to provide all learners with an individual copy.

The booklets contain workbook exercises that learners will complete. The results will be assessed at their progress reviews and used as a source for further discussion to raise the awareness of all involved. Learners now have diversity training planned into their programme, at intervals of about every two months, through a series of seven modules covering a range of topics from cultural awareness to sexual orientation. These are taught courses delivered by specialist tutors. Learners regard the modules as interesting and worthwhile. Since the previous inspection a computer-based equality and diversity training programme has been introduced for all staff, who complete an online assessment to test their knowledge and understanding. If the score achieved from the assessment is insufficient then the staff member is retested until they achieve the required level of understanding. A diversity notice board is situated in the first-year training workshop and it contains policies, procedures, information and guidance for learners. The information is up to date and is used well.