

INSPECTION REPORT

RWP Training and Development

19 June 2001



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and in New Deal options. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's *learnirect* provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Inadequate provision

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

- one third or more of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas and New Deal options are judged less than satisfactory, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

RWP Training and Development is a private training provider based in Cumbria. It has five core activities. These are government-funded work-based training for young people, business consultancy, management training including the training of trainers, health and safety training and information technology training. The organisation has a contract with Cumbria Learning and Skills Council to provide training in business administration, engineering, customer services and retail, information and computer technology, and construction. It subcontracts some off-the-job training in engineering and construction, including some key skills training in construction.

Overall judgement

The quality of work-based training in business administration is good, but it is unsatisfactory in engineering. The leadership and management of RWP Training and Development are satisfactory. The overall quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it.

Work-based learning for young people

Work-based training in business administration is good. There are 55 business administration trainees, of whom 17 are advanced modern apprentices, 36 are foundation modern apprentices, and two are on other work-based training programmes. The initial assessment process is thorough and particularly effective. Trainees receive good support. Work-based training in engineering is unsatisfactory. There is poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Assessment practice is poor. Engineering trainees make slow progress towards achievement of their NVQs. On both programmes, the proportion of apprentices who complete their frameworks is low. Some training is subcontracted to other providers.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of RWP Training and Development are satisfactory. Service level agreements with subcontractors are closely monitored. Resources are good. Staff receive good help and support from management. Their working arrangements are flexible to meet their needs. Some staff, however, are not clear about all their roles and responsibilities. Promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities are inadequate. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between business administration and engineering staff. The self-assessment report, though detailed, is more descriptive than evaluative.

GRADES

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Business administration, management & professional	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	4

KEY STRENGTHS

- good resources
- good and increasing retention rates
- good arrangements for the initial assessment and placement of trainees
- responsiveness of management to the needs of trainees, staff and employers
- effective strategic management

KEY WEAKNESSES

- low achievement rates
- Insufficient promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities
- no quality assurance of training

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- clearer job roles for staff
- more use of data in decision-making by managers

THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

1. Cumbria is the second largest county in England, but has the second lowest population of any English county. RWP Training and Development (RWP) recruits most of its trainees from Carlisle and Eden. Carlisle is the administrative and service centre for most of Cumbria and its retail catchment area extends into Scotland. It has a diverse but stable economy. Eden has a small population, and one major town of Penrith. The unemployment rate in Carlisle is low at 3.8 per cent, compared with the average for Cumbria, as a whole, of 4 per cent. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 51 per cent, compared with the national average of 49.2%. In the same year, 57 per cent of 16 year olds in Cumbria stayed on in full-time education and 22 per cent opted to enter work-based training.
2. In Cumbria, 40 per cent of total employment outside the public sector is in companies employing fewer than 20 people. Thirty-five per cent is in companies employing more than 500 people. There are six major manufacturing companies based in and around Carlisle and they employ a high proportion of unskilled workers. Agriculture in all its forms is of key importance to the local community and its economy. The recent outbreaks of foot and mouth disease have had an adverse impact on employment and the local economy. RWP was unable to meet its contract for retail and customer service learners as a result of the down turn in tourism. Other major employers include those in the occupational areas of retail and distribution, health and social care and hotel and catering.
3. In Carlisle and Eden, there has been a steady decline in the number of persons aged 16 to 24. Overall, the number of men in employment has also fallen and this is expected to fall further. Expansion in the service industries has been accompanied by the employment of more women in the area. The proportion of the population from minority ethnic groups in Carlisle and Penrith is 0.6 per cent, compared with the average of 6.2 per cent in the country as a whole.

THE INSPECTION

4. A team of five inspectors spent a total of 20 days at RWP during June 2001. They visited all three of the company's sites, including a new site which is not operational as yet. They interviewed 48 trainees, and 24 employers and workplace mentors. They visited three subcontractors and interviewed their staff. Inspectors carried out 23 interviews with employees of RWP, including both partners. They observed five training and assessment sessions. Inspectors examined a range of documents including trainees' portfolios of evidence, trainees' records, the company's plans, policies and procedures, promotional literature, awarding bodies' reports, subcontractors' agreements and the Cumbria Learning and Skills Council (LSC) contract. Inspectors studied the company's self-assessment report and the action plan which resulted from it.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Total	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	5

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	37	4

5. There are 37 engineering trainees. Thirty-one are on advanced modern apprenticeships, five are on foundation modern apprenticeships and one is on the NVQ training programme. Three trainees have been identified as needing additional learning support. Trainees are recruited by the local career service. RWP began providing engineering training programmes in January 2000, with the transfer of 36 learners from another training provider. RWP has an assessor, a programme manager and an internal verifier. The assessor has a higher national diploma in mechanical engineering and is working towards obtaining assessor qualifications. The other two do not have any engineering qualifications, but have assessor and internal verifier qualifications. One is also an external verifier and is qualified to carry out accreditation of prior learning. The assessor visits trainees in the workplace every two to three weeks to monitor their progress, assess them and set them targets to attain before the next visit. The assessor or the programme manager visits trainees every 10 weeks to carry out a formal review of their progress. All trainees have a mentor in the workplace. The internal verifier makes random visits to the workplace to observe the assessor and discuss issues related to the quality of training, with the trainee, mentor and employer. All trainees are employed. The trainees' occupations include fabrication and welding, electronics manufacture and commercial door manufacture. Off-the-job training is subcontracted and is monitored approximately once every four weeks by any one of the three staff or the chief executive. The self-assessment report listed nine strengths, four of which were considered to be no more than normal practice. Inspectors agreed with two of the strengths and with the weaknesses. They found weaknesses not identified in the self-assessment report.

The following tables show the retention and achievement rates available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started							2		6	100
Still in training							0	0	5	83

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started							30		19	100
Still in training							15	50	16	84
AMA framework completed							13	43	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed							23	77	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed							14	47	0	0

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started							6		1	100
Still in training							0	0	1	100
Individual learning plan completed							1	17	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed							1	17	0	0

STRENGTHS

- good retention rates on advanced modern apprenticeship programmes
- success of many trainees in gaining additional qualifications
- good support for trainees outside working hours

WEAKNESSES

- poor assessment practice
- slow progress of trainees towards achievement of NVQs
- lack of understanding of the NVQ framework on the part of mentors
- poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more information for employers on the NVQ process and trainees' progress

6. Retention rates for the advanced modern apprentices are good. In 1999-2000, 93 per cent of trainees had either achieved the framework or are still in training. In 2000-01, 84 per cent are still in training. All foundation modern apprentices are employed and have a contract of employment. Since RWP started to provide engineering training in January 2000, 43 per cent of trainees have completed their programmes successfully.

RWP TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

To be accepted on an engineering programme, applicants must have three GCSEs at grade C or above. Applicants are interviewed by a placement officer and they receive an initial assessment of their basic skills and key skills. All successful applicants produce a curriculum vitae and use is made of this to find trainees jobs to which they are well matched. Employers interview the applicants, and if accepted, a training programme for them is negotiated. RWP give trainees a one-week induction in September, which covers an introduction to the framework, the NVQ standards, health and safety training and promotion of equal opportunities. Trainees who do not start in September receive the same one-day induction in the workplace and attend a further health and safety training workshop in RWP's training centre.

7. Many apprentices work to obtain additional qualifications which are outside the requirements of their framework, and the costs associated with these are borne by RWP. Twenty-seven trainees achieved a basic health and safety certificate during induction. Four trainees have achieved a qualification in mechanical engineering and three other trainees are working to obtain this qualification. At the start of their training, the trainees decide, in conjunction with RWP staff, which additional qualifications they will work towards.

8. Trainees receive good support outside working hours. They can arrange an appointment during evenings or weekends for a one-to-one session with the assessor. The assessor gives the trainees help with portfolio-building, theory sessions or pastoral support. Trainees are given a list of various helpline telephone numbers, a telephone card and the mobile telephone numbers of staff. In addition, trainees who have a computer are encouraged to contact staff by e-mail.

9. Assessment practice is poor. The range of assessment methods is narrow. In many instances, assessment consists merely of a written summary of tasks, with few observations from the assessor. There are delays of several weeks from the time the assessor observes a task until the written record of that observation appears in the portfolio. Little evidence in portfolios is cross-referenced to the NVQ standards. Trainees do not gather evidence of their acquisition of key skills through their everyday work. They make slow progress. Trainees progress reviews are not effective as a means of helping trainees identify ways of progressing more swiftly towards achievement of their qualification and key skills certification. Trainees have had three different assessors in the past nine months and few work-based assessors. Accreditation of prior learning and achievement is used to credit some key skill elements and units, but this has not had any impact on trainees' progress.

10. Some mentors and employers lack understanding of the NVQ process and the NVQ standards. They are not fully aware of the range of assessment methods which may be used and are unfamiliar with the process of cross-referencing evidence in portfolios. Some employers have asked to be kept more up to date about trainees' progress in off-the-job training. RWP has taken specific action to help employers understand the NVQ process. For example, training sessions for mentors are run in the evenings. A guide to the NVQ process has been produced for employers. This covers the NVQ standards,

provides a summary of each NVQ unit, explains what key skills are, contains a form for monitoring trainees' progress in key skills, and includes a course handbook produced by the subcontractor. These measures, however, have not yet had any discernible impact. Employers have good training resources. The hand tools trainees use during the subcontracted training, however, are poor.

11. There is poor co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. RWP does not have an overall plan to ensure there are links between on- and off-the-job training. Trainees attend a local college for one day each week for their off-the-job training. The training discontinues during the college holiday periods and is only started again in September. One trainee who joined the programme in October 2000, has waited nearly a year to start off-the-job training. Seven trainees are on an inappropriate, off-the-job-training course which is not sufficiently demanding for them and does not meet their training needs.

12. There is no written plan for sampling assessments for the purpose of internal verification. It is intended that all trainees will have the assessment of at least six of their activities internally verified. In practice, however, trainees' portfolios are sampled at random and some are not verified at all. There is no record of any internal verification in the trainees' portfolios or personal files.

Good Practice

This is an example of good practice in the use of resources. The subcontractor identifies textbooks the trainees will need for their off-the-job training. RWP purchases these but arranges for the trainees to return them at the end of their programme so that other trainees may use them.

Business administration, management & professional**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	55	2

13. RWP offers training in administration and accounting at NVQ levels 1 and 2 and currently has 55 business administration trainees. Seventeen of these are advanced modern apprentices, 36 are foundation modern apprentices and two trainees are on work-based training programmes. Trainees are recruited to RWP by the careers service, through newspaper advertising, personal recommendation or are referred by employers. All prospective trainees are given an initial assessment test and an interview. RWP matches trainees to employers and work placements. There is a one-day group induction for learners. Sixty per cent of the foundation modern apprentices are employed and all advanced modern apprentices are employed. Apprentices are employed in a variety of administrative jobs in small local, and large national firms and government offices. These include schools, county council offices, solicitors and large building companies. All trainees have named mentors in the workplace. Assessors carry out workplace assessments every two weeks. Trainees receive progress reviews every 10 weeks and their mentors and supervisors are involved in these. Four staff are involved in administration training. All are qualified assessors, two are qualified internal verifiers and one is qualified to accredit prior learning. There is only one internal verifier. Two assessors are part-time and the rest are full-time employees. The training and assessment for accounting are subcontracted. Nine strengths were identified in the self-assessment report. Of these, inspectors agreed with three, did not agree with one, considered one to be an example of good practice rather than a strength, and four to be no more than normal practice.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started							9		44	100
Still in training							4	44	32	73
FMA framework completed							2	22	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed							3	33	3	7

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started			18		7		12		15	100
Still in training			1	6	1	14	3	25	12	80
AMA framework completed			6	33	1	14	5	42	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			2	11	4	57	4	33	2	13
NVQ level 3 completed			6	33	3	43	7	58	2	13

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training										
	1996-97		1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started									6	100
Still in training									2	33
Individual learning plan completed									3	50
Left without completing individual learning plan									1	17
NVQ level 2 completed									2	33
NVQ level 3 completed									1	17

STRENGTHS

- highly effective initial assessment process
- good support for trainees
- good retention rates

WEAKNESSES

- failure of many apprentices to carry out their training plan fully

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- inclusion of training for additional qualifications within training plans
- wider range of internal verification methods
- more scope for confidential discussion during progress reviews

14. The initial assessment process is highly effective. Since its introduction, retention rates have improved. For apprentices, initial assessment is in four separate parts comprising a basic skills test, an interview, a key skills test and an occupational skills

RWP TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

assessment. Through their performance in the basic skills test, some trainees are identified as needing additional learning support. If RWP cannot offer these trainees the help they need, they are referred to a training provider who can. The results from initial assessment are promptly given to trainees and potential employers. They are also taken into account when preparing individual training plans. When employers contract with RWP, the modern apprenticeship process is explained to them in detail. RWP staff carry out health and safety checks of their workplace. There is effective accreditation of trainees' prior learning and this is taken into account in individual training plans. Following accreditation of their prior learning and experience, some trainees are exempted from key skills tests and work for some NVQ units. Trainees receive thorough assessment in the workplace. The results of this are taken into account when planning ways of relating off-the-job training to training in the workplace. Trainees receive a one day induction. This covers an introduction to NVQs, health and safety, and equal opportunities.

15. Trainees are well supported. They meet with assessors every two weeks and they benefit from being able to obtain assessment more frequently or at times which fit in with their working patterns and workloads. Trainees can contact assessors outside office hours for help in building their portfolios. Most trainees and employers value the support they receive from RWP. Portfolios are well organised and the evidence in them has been obtained in the workplace and is detailed. Assessment planning is thorough and involves the trainee, employer and assessor. As the self-assessment report acknowledges, trainees know and understand their training plans well and they take the initiative in seeing that they are carried out. Internal verification meets the awarding body requirements, but verifiers do not use the full range of verification methods. A wide range of resources are available to trainees. Employers provide good training. Some trainees undertake a rotation of jobs in different departments in order to gain a breadth of experience and develop all the competences they need in order to obtain their NVQ. Employers offer training leading to additional qualifications in information technology with the aim of increasing the trainees' employability. Details of these qualifications, however, are not included in individual training plans. Trainees also receive help and support from workplace supervisors who have been trained as mentors and are well informed about the NVQ process and key skills. Reviews of trainees' progress are carried out satisfactorily, but in some instances, there is no scope for the trainee and the assessor, or the employer and the assessor, to have a confidential discussion in private.

16. Retention rates have improved and are still improving. The advanced modern apprentices has increased substantially from 14 per cent in 1998-99 to 80 per cent in 2000-01. The retention rate for foundation modern apprentices has improved from 45 per cent to 73 per cent. The NVQ training programme only began this contract year and so far, the retention rate on it is good, at 83 per cent. On average, trainees achieve their qualifications within 16 months. The proportions of foundation modern apprentices and advanced modern apprentices who achieve all the targets in their training plans are 22 per cent and 42 per cent, respectively. Fifty per cent of the trainees on other work-based training programmes achieve the targets specified in their plans.

RWP helps trainees no longer eligible for government-funded training, to achieve their targets.

Good Practice

This is an example of good practice in key skills training. RWP enables apprentices to take external tests in key skills. The pass rate in these so far has been 100 per cent. The trainees' success in passing these tests serves as an important form of external validation of the trainees' competence in key skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

17. RWP Training and Development is managed by two partners. One partner is responsible for the strategic direction of the business and the other for day-to-day operational activities. The company employs nine staff and contracts three self-employed part-time staff to run training workshops and carry out assessment as required. On business administration programmes, four members of staff who are qualified assessors carry out assessment. Their assessments are internally verified by two members of staff who are qualified internal verifiers. On engineering programmes, assessment is carried out by a member of staff who is working to become a qualified assessor. Another member of staff, who is a qualified internal verifier, carries out internal verification. RWP Training and Development subcontracts off-the-job training and key skills for construction trainees, to three subcontractors. The partners meet with staff annually to discuss strategic and operational objectives. RWP was accredited with the Investors in People Standard in January 2000. RWP has an equal opportunities policy, a quality assurance manual and written staff recruitment and induction procedures. Staff are given a handbook containing terms and conditions, together with a full set of the organisation's policies and procedures. Self-assessment has been carried out each year since 1997. The self-assessment report was produced in September 2000 and updated in February 2001.

STRENGTHS

- effective strategic management
- good resources
- close monitoring of subcontractors
- responsiveness of management to the needs of trainees and employers
- effective help and support for staff
- effective system for matching trainees to employers

WEAKNESSES

- systematic monitoring of the quality of learning
- insufficient evaluative observation of training
- inadequate monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities
- insufficient promotion of equal opportunities

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more use of data in decision-making by management
- more co-ordination of internal verification
- clearer specification of responsibilities in job roles
- increase electronic access for trainees
- clearer recording of complaints

18. The partners at RWP have clear aims for the organisation. All staff are involved in the preparation of the strategic plan. They are kept well informed of progress in implementing the plan. In accordance with the strategic plan, RWP invests heavily in resources to improve the quality of training. New premises are being extensively refurbished and equipped with up-to-date computers and training resources.

19. Training given by subcontractors is closely monitored. Detailed service level agreements state clearly the respective responsibilities of the subcontractor and RWP's staff and are reviewed each year. Relationships between RWP and the subcontractor who provides training and assessment in construction, are extremely productive. Trainees' views about their programme are obtained. The training and assessment provided by subcontractors are monitored closely. Regular meetings are held with subcontractors. The organisation enters into substantial correspondence with subcontractors on issues related to the monitoring of their provision. The planning and management of training are satisfactory.

20. The self-assessment report failed to acknowledge that staff receive effective help and support and that managers are responsive to their needs. For example, one member of staff is given time off work regularly in order to receive medical treatment. Work schedules are arranged flexibly to help staff with young children. All members of staff are involved in professional development activities. For example, they receive training to update them on assessment methods and can work towards trainer qualifications or becoming qualified as an assessor of key skills. Meetings, such as those between staff, and between placement officers and managers, are minuted. Some decisions taken through informal contact between managers, however, are not recorded. A computerised management information system provides staff with sufficient data to enable them to monitor trainees' progress. Some data are taken into account by staff when making decisions or identifying issues. For example, staff have identified that the majority of trainees who are early leavers are those who are employed when they start training and they are looking at ways of improving these trainees' retention rate. There is an effective system for matching trainees to job vacancies employers have. Care is taken to ensure that trainees and employers are suitable for one another. Some trainees live in rural areas and staff make every effort to find them appropriate jobs or work placements near their home.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 4

21. RWP has an equal opportunities policy but arrangements for reviewing its effectiveness are unclear. Trainees and staff receive training related to equal opportunities during and after their induction and this involves quizzes and the use of case studies and videos. Advertisements for staff carry an equal opportunities statement. Inspectors considered the strengths cited in the self-assessment report to be no more than normal practice.

22. There are only two male trainees in business administration. There are no female trainees in engineering or construction. The engineering programme manager is a woman. There are no trainees with disabilities. RWP currently operates from two sites, one of which is accessible to people with mobility problems. The new site will also be accessible for people with mobility problems. Data are collected on trainees, but not of applicants who do not join training programmes. There is a complaints procedure. Complaints are dealt with but they are not always recorded. Employers follow RWP's policy on equal opportunities. The promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace is not monitored closely. In some workplaces, there is some material on display of an overtly sexist nature. There are some initiatives to promote engineering to women, but none to promote business administration to men. Trainees' addresses are withheld from curriculum vitae sent to prospective employers, to prevent discrimination against trainees with certain postcodes.

23. Trainees are well supported. RWP provides all trainees with a telephone card to enable them to contact staff. Trainees are encouraged to contact staff using electronic equipment but few have access to this.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

24. RWP training and development has a quality assurance manual, which specifies quality assurance procedures covering most aspects of the company's activities and administrative processes. The manual, however, makes little reference to the quality of training and or how training is monitored and evaluated. It is unclear where overall responsibility for quality assurance lies. The quality assurance procedures do not include the observation of training sessions, trainees' induction and trainees' progress reviews. There is little observation of assessment in the internal verification process. Staff and managers are responsive to the needs of trainees and employers. The views of trainees, employers and staff are collected through using questionnaires and interviews. These are acted upon and have led to improvements in portfolio-building sessions for engineering trainees and information packs for employers. There is no process by which various data, such as that on recruitment, achievement and retention rates, feedback from trainees and employers are systematically brought together and analysed. Such data are used sufficiently in the self-assessment process. There is a detailed internal verification procedure. Verifiers, however, do not comply with this fully. There is no senior internal verifier. Internal verifiers do not meet to share good practice. The self-assessment report is detailed but most strengths identified in it were no more than normal practice. Inspectors found significant weaknesses which were not identified in the self-assessment report. All grades awarded by inspectors were lower than those given in the self-assessment report.

Good Practice
<p><i>RWP has piloted an effective scheme for training mentors. Mentors answer a questionnaire about the extent of their knowledge of the training process. Their responses are taken into account when devising training for them on key skills and the NVQ process, and introductory training related to assessor qualifications.</i></p> <p><i>One member of staff is responsible for checking trainees' files, progress review paperwork and personal records before the assessor visits the trainees in the workplace. The member of staff then informs the assessor of any outstanding actions the assessor, trainee or mentor needs to carry out. After the assessors visit, the member of staff checks that the necessary actions have been taken.</i></p>