

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Rocket Training Limited Reinspection**

**21 November 2006**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## 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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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.

## Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Rocket Training Limited (RTL) was founded in 1981 as the Brothers of Charity Youth Training workshop in Liverpool, to provide work-based learning. In 1992, the name of the organisation became Rocket Training Limited. In 1994, the provider became a limited company wholly owned by its director. RTL offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in engineering and manufacturing technologies, business administration and law, and retail and commercial enterprise. RTL subcontracts some elements of the engineering and manufacturing technologies provision to Knowsley Community College (KCC).

2. Work-based learning is funded through a contract with Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council. In 2004, Liverpool was ranked as the most deprived area in England. According the Department of Work and Pensions, the unemployment rate in the area for 2005 was 6 per cent, compared with a national rate of 4.7 per cent.

### GRADES

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate*

Grades awarded at previous inspection

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		3

<b>Engineering and manufacturing technologies</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Motor vehicle</b>		<b>4</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	49	4	

<b>Retail and commercial enterprise</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<b>Retailing and wholesaling</b>		<b>3</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	56	3	
NVQ training for young people	1	3	

## ROCKET TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

<b>Preparation for life and work</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Employability training</b>		<b>2</b>
Entry to Employment	91	2

<b>Business administration and law</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Administration</b>		<b>3</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	44	3
NVQ training for young people	1	3

Grades awarded at reinspection

<b>Engineering and manufacturing technologies</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Motor vehicle</b>		
Apprenticeships for young people	28	3

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

3. This report concerns the reinspection of RTL's provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies. Two inspectors carried out three monitoring visits during 2006, which covered generic and specific areas of provision. Overall effectiveness remains satisfactory.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Motor vehicle</b> Apprenticeships for young people	28	3

4. Of the 36 learners in engineering, 28 are involved in a range of motor vehicle apprenticeship frameworks, and were the subject of this inspection. One learner is an advanced vehicle maintenance and repair apprentice, 21 learners are working as apprentices on the vehicle maintenance and repair programme, and one learner is an apprentice on a vehicle body and paint programme. The remaining five learners are apprentices on a fast-fit programme. Eight learners are working on the level 2 national vocational qualification (NVQ) in performing manufacturing operations programme. Most of the training for the motor vehicle engineering programme is subcontracted to KCC, but one learner is subcontracted to Liverpool Community College. RTL carries out progress reviews for all learners. Performing manufacturing operations is a wholly work-based learning programme, and the key skills element is delivered by RTL. Learners receive a work-based review every 12 weeks.

#### **Motor vehicle**

##### *Strengths*

- thorough initial assessment and identification of additional learning needs
- good working relationships with employers
- good support for learners

##### *Weaknesses*

- slow progress towards framework completion

#### **Achievement and standards**

5. The standard of learners' portfolios of evidence remains satisfactory. They are well constructed, and clearly presented evidence is comprehensively cross-referenced to the NVQ units.

6. Learners' make slow progress in completing their apprenticeship frameworks. Twenty-four per cent of the current learners are making slower progress towards achieving their NVQs than would be expected, given their time in training. However, actions have been taken by KCC to increase the availability of assessors. There has been a significant increase recently in the frequency of assessment in the workplace. Fewer learners are now making slow progress. Fifty per cent of the current learners are making slow progress in completing their technical certificates. In changing the subcontract provision to KCC, it transpired that learners' previous achievements were not transferable and they were required to re-start their programmes. These learners report that they are very satisfied

with KCC, and feel well supported and in a better position to achieve their qualifications. The overall apprenticeship success rates have improved significantly from 9 per cent to 22 per cent, but this is still below the national average.

### **The quality of provision**

7. The initial assessment process continues to be very thorough. All potential learners receive an initial assessment and feedback, which are recorded in their individual learning plans. RTL uses the results to identify learning support needs and the need for diagnostic testing. The provider gives applicants good information at the selection stage, enabling them to make an informed decision about their apprenticeship programme. The process to approve and review the suitability of work placements for each learner is clear and thorough.

8. A good working relationship remains between employers and RTL. Employers receive frequent and effective communications from the assessors. RTL gives employers a clear briefing about the requirements of the apprenticeship framework and their role in it. Employers provide good opportunities for training and assessment. An action plan, which lists the skills requirements for the NVQ, is shared with employers. Most employers now have enough information about the content and assessment of the NVQ and the technical certificate, and are able to integrate it with the on-the-job training. Employers are fully involved in progress reviews, by providing an input to the process and agreeing the training and assessment requirements for the next period with the learner and the assessor.

9. Learners receive good support from RTL and their employers. Where RTL identifies learning needs, these are met through learning support visits to the workplace. The development of learner's key skills is also supported well through these workplace visits. Learners receive good support and assistance as they begin their work placement or employment. They also receive good support for their literacy, numeracy and language needs. Learners with identified learning support needs have a learning support review every four to eight weeks. The frequency of these reviews is determined by the level of need. Many employers schedule jobs to enable learners to collect the NVQ evidence. Often, this schedule is linked to the learners' progress reviews. Learners are helped with travel to and from college. They receive either a free bus pass, or a free minibus service. Learners' pastoral needs are also dealt with effectively. RTL has devised and piloted a pre-apprenticeship programme to enable new learners to make informed choices before joining the full apprenticeship programme. This new programme includes work experience, key skills tuition and an introduction to technical certificates.

10. Work-based assessment is now planned regularly to meet NVQ requirements. Learners have access to an assessment-on-demand service, which enables them to contact a work-based assessor if they find a specific opportunity to work on NVQ evidence. The documents used to plan and record work-based assessments are comprehensive. The internal verification process in the college is thorough, and comprises the regular sampling of portfolios and useful feedback to assessors.

11. RTL carries out progress reviews for all learners. Dates are scheduled in advance and recorded in the individual learning plans. The learners' review process is comprehensive, and uses a wide range of information. Reviews emphasise health and safety, and equality of opportunity effectively. Any identified training needs form part of the learning plan and

are checked at the next progress review. The review documents are comprehensive and record the process clearly. The standard of information about learners' progress which is provided by the main subcontractor is particularly good. Targets are set at progress reviews and are usually specific to the units or elements of the NVQ, and contain appropriate timescales.

### **Leadership and management**

12. A strategic decision has been made by RTL to use only one subcontractor. There is only one learner at Liverpool Community College who is due to complete the programme shortly, and all the remaining learners are at KCC. This reduction in the number of subcontractors is appreciated by learners who feel that the current subcontracting college is better equipped to serve their needs. Communications with this subcontractor have improved significantly. Monthly meetings take place between RTL's motor vehicle co-ordinator and KCC's motor vehicle co-ordinator and the two tutor/assessors. Quarterly contract meetings are held between the RTL operations manager and KCC's deputy director of work-based learning, and termly monitoring meetings take place between motor vehicle co-ordinators. The meetings are well recorded. Action points are identified and resolved. Reviews are used more effectively to cover all aspects of learners' frameworks, and include input from RTL and KCC. An overall monitoring system now exists, following consultation between RTL and KCC.

13. Internal quality improvement systems are satisfactory. They continue to be developed effectively using the key stages in the learners' journey as points of reference with which to measure and monitor the quality of learning. A range of internal observation processes is being used to support staff. RTL has full access to KCC's quality improvement systems and reports, in order to ensure that they receive a high-quality service.

14. None of the current learners are women or from minority ethnic backgrounds. The previous inspection highlighted the need for more strategies to recruit from under-represented groups, and this situation still exists.



