

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Rolls-Royce North East Training Centre**

**13 July 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
- **learn**direct 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.

## Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

## Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

## 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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## **Rolls-Royce North East Training Centre**

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Rolls-Royce North East Training Centre (Rolls-Royce NETC) is a medium-sized training provider in Newcastle upon Tyne, offering apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in mechanical, fabrication, electrical and general engineering, and a Train to Gain programme to a diverse range of employers. The company was founded over 100 years ago as an apprentice training school within the Vickers Armstrong armaments factory, training only the company's apprentices. The main centre of operation is a self-contained engineering training workshop and classroom facility located within Michell Bearings, a subsidiary of Rolls-Royce. The training centre is managed by an operational manager who reports to senior management within Michell Bearings. The manager is supported by 17 assessor/trainers, business development and administrative staff.
2. The training centre holds contracts with Tyne and Wear Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to deliver apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships and the Train to Gain adult training programme. Rolls-Royce NETC recruits around 100 new apprentices each year, who are mainly unemployed. The organisation operates a job-finding apprenticeship service for its learners. Level 2 vocational training takes place in the training centre workshops and the technical certificates are delivered by Newcastle College. Level 3 vocational training takes place in sponsoring company sites.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 3**

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** Leadership and management are satisfactory, although arrangements for quality improvement and equality of opportunity are inadequate. Provision is satisfactory in engineering and manufacturing technologies.
4. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment report was clearly written against the Common Inspection Framework, and is sufficiently judgemental and critical. However, the self-assessment process is not sufficiently inclusive of the views of learners and employers to evaluate accurately the provider's strengths and weaknesses. The self-assessment report identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors, but does not identify significant weaknesses in the area of learning found by the inspection team. The grades in the self-assessment report are higher than the grades given by the inspection team, except for overall leadership and management.
5. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** Rolls-Royce NETC has developed a new quality improvement action plan from its development and quality improvement plan. This identifies priorities for how Rolls-Royce NETC can maintain and improve the quality of its provision. Learners' success rates on the apprenticeship programme are showing an upward trend.

## KEY CHALLENGES FOR ROLLS-ROYCE NORTH EAST TRAINING CENTRE:

- raise the equality and diversity profile across all areas of activity
- make the self-assessment process more inclusive of learners and employers
- improve the quality improvement system and processes
- include workplace experience and skills on apprenticeship programme
- improve the training and assessment processes for level 3 qualifications
- turn data into useful information and make it more widely available
- maintain high progression rates into jobs
- improve success rates

## GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

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

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Engineering</b>		<b>3</b>	
Apprenticeships for young people	264	3	
Train to Gain	78	3	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. Inspectors reported on and graded Rolls-Royce NETC's training provision in engineering. All the provision was inspected in the same week and judgements were also made about leadership and management, including equality of opportunity and quality improvement arrangements.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	16
Number of learners interviewed	32
Number of staff interviewed	14
Number of employers interviewed	10
Number of subcontractors interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of visits	13

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

7. **Achievement on Train to Gain programmes is good.** Of the 84 learners who have started the current Train to Gain contract, six have already achieved their level 2 national vocational qualification (NVQ) and most of the others are progressing well. Several learners have achieved good personal and professional development in their workplaces.

8. The success rate based on the apprenticeship programme is good and improving. In 2004-05, of the 69 apprentices who left the programme, two-thirds completed the full apprenticeship framework. Most progressed onto an advanced apprenticeship programme.

9. Most learners who complete the first year of training in the training centre achieve between three and five key skills qualifications at level 2. The remainder achieve key skills qualifications at level 1.

10. The learners produce a good standard of work in the training centre. Most are developing good industrial-standard skills in the workplace.

### The quality of provision

11. **Off-the-job training is good.** Training in the college and at the training centre is well structured and delivered in four-week blocks. Delivery in the training centre of the level 2 NVQ in performing engineering operations is tailored to suit the preferences of learners and the needs of employers. This flexible approach gives learners the opportunity to gain basic skills competence in a wide range of engineering disciplines.

12. Some employers arrange for learners to return to the training centre to gain additional skills if required. Resources in the training centre are good.

13. Attendance and discipline are effectively managed and learners demonstrate a positive attitude to work. The relationship between learners and instructors is good. There is good support for learners, particularly with their key skills.

14. **Rolls-Royce is very successful at finding learners employers, with which to follow their apprenticeship. It markets learners well and gives them good support, advice and guidance to help them gain employment.** There is careful matching of learners to employers in terms of geography, skills and attitude.

15. **Employers demonstrate a strong commitment to training.** Employers work with Rolls-Royce NETC to select learners who will succeed in their company. They work closely with the assessors to agree which units learners will work towards. Some employers have well-structured training programmes and move learners around different departments and machines to develop a wide range of skills.

16. Learners complete the employment rights and responsibilities programme while they are working in the training centre and before they are employed. The guidance states that employment rights and responsibilities should be completed in learners' workplaces. Learners do not review this aspect of the framework once they are in the workplace.

17. **Planning of some key aspects of the apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships is poor.** The advanced apprenticeship programme is based on a fixed period of time and is not designed to meet the individual needs of learners.

18. **Insufficient monitoring is carried out of how and when learners develop skills in the workplace.** Learners do not routinely collect evidence to show how they are developing their skills and competences.

19. **The quality of reviews is poor.** The questioning of learners during reviews is passive and often not challenging enough.

20. **Assessment practice is weak, particularly for level 3 qualifications.** Portfolio evidence is often undated and not attributable to the learner. There is little evidence that learners are questioned during the assessment process.

### **Leadership and management**

21. **The arrangements between the training centre and Newcastle College are good.** A member of staff of Newcastle College has spent several weeks at Rolls-Royce NETC's training centre to take part in professional development and the centre team leader from the training centre has been able to sit in classes organised for learners at Newcastle College.

22. **Relationships between employers and Rolls-Royce NETC are good.** Employers and learners benefit from frequent exchange of information throughout the year that allows Rolls-Royce NETC to offer suitable candidates for apprenticeships. Employers receive frequent visits from assessors who effectively support learners in work placements.

23. **The training centre is a well-managed resource** and is flexible to the changing demands of local engineering companies. Learners benefit from an effective programme



that is designed to offer good access to and use of resources. The training centre is managed as an effective working environment where learners are closely monitored and exposed to realistic working conditions.

**24. Rolls-Royce NETC's strategies to recruit the right number and type of apprentice have been particularly successful in obtaining employment for all learners who have completed their programmes.** Learners speak highly of the programme and of the confidence they have in Rolls-Royce NETC finding suitable employment.

**25. Rolls-Royce NETC places insufficient focus on staff training and development.** There is no planned internal programme of training which is linked to appraisal outcomes or weaknesses identified during self-assessment. Some of the provider's responses to staffing issues have been slow.

**26. Regular informal communications takes place between staff but these are not formally recorded. Data is not shared with staff, learners or employers and is not used systematically at staff meetings.**

**27. Rolls-Royce NETC has not sufficiently focused on equality and diversity.** Learners do not receive any training sessions on equality and diversity. Learners' understanding of equality is not effectively reinforced. Equality and diversity training for staff is inadequate.

**28. Provision is not directly promoted to under-represented groups, and no one at Rolls-Royce NETC has direct responsibility for the monitoring of equality of opportunity.** The provider does not sufficiently analyse or use data on equality of opportunity.

**29. Rolls-Royce NETC has not yet carried out an access audit to check compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.** Access to training rooms and workshops in the training centre is satisfactory.

**30. Rolls-Royce NETC has incomplete quality improvement arrangements** and the self-assessment process is incomplete. The company has a quality assurance system which documents some relevant procedures but does not cover the key training processes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- very good arrangements with the main subcontractor college
- very good relationships with employers
- well-managed training centre
- highly effective employment strategies

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient focus on staff training and development
- poor use and sharing of information
- insufficient attention to equality and diversity
- incomplete quality improvement arrangements

## **Engineering and manufacturing technologies**

### ***Engineering***

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement by Train to Gain learners
- good and flexible off-the-job training
- very good support to help learners gain employment
- strong commitment to training by employers

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor planning of some aspects of the programme
- insufficient monitoring of skills development in the workplace
- weak reviews in the workplace
- weak assessment practice in the workplace

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT ROLLS-ROYCE NORTH EAST TRAINING CENTRE:**

- the good resources in the training centre
- the well-organised training
- the useful catch-up sessions for documents
- doing lots of practical work in the training centre
- the good instructors and good support from assessors
- 'I learnt a lot of new things'
- 'I got a good basic understanding of engineering in the training centre'
- 'they found me a job'
- the training centre - 'it prepares you for work'
- doing a good range of real jobs to develop more skills
- meeting new people in the training centre
- running machines – something different every day
- learning a trade
- the frequent visits

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK ROLLS-ROYCE NORTH EAST TRAINING CENTRE COULD IMPROVE:**

- the induction - it's too long
- the size of the lockers
- the amount of electrical work
- the CNC machine - it could be bigger and better
- the amount of help given on the fitting unit
- the resources for electrical work
- the start times in the training centre - they are too early
- the amount of time at work available to train and learn
- the overtime on Saturdays - it shouldn't be mandatory
- the chance to get more experience with different materials
- the amount of training in the workplace

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

#### Strengths

- very good arrangements with the main subcontractor college
- very good relationships with employers
- well-managed training centre
- highly effective employment strategies

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient focus on staff training and development
- poor use and sharing of information
- insufficient attention to equality and diversity
- incomplete quality improvement arrangements

31. The arrangement between the training centre and the main subcontractor, Newcastle College, is good. Rolls-Royce NETC has a formal and comprehensive service level agreement in place. A very close working relationship has developed between the two organisations which benefits learners. The organisations have developed an effective month-on, month-off training arrangement where all learners spend some time in the training centre and some at the college. The arrangements for literacy and numeracy support are satisfactory. All learners are required to take aptitude and basic skills tests. They are effectively guided and supported during the selection and induction process by good exchanges of information between the centres about aptitudes, abilities and additional support requirements. Learners who require additional support are placed on appropriate literacy or numeracy courses within Newcastle College. The organisations are frequently in touch by e-mail and telephone to provide relevant and useful information about learners' progress and to provide early interventions on emerging issues. Formalised meetings between the two organisations are minuted and have actions, but learners also benefit from informal arrangements that allow staff from either organisation easy access to each premises. For example, a member of the college's staff has spent several weeks at Rolls-Royce NETC's training centre to undergo professional development, and the team leader from Rolls-Royce NETC's training centre has sat in on classes organised for learners at Newcastle College. The quality of advice and guidance that learners receive from Newcastle College and Rolls-Royce NETC is good. However, the information that is passed to learners from Connexions is not always up to date.

32. Relationships between employers and Rolls-Royce NETC are good and have become more comprehensive since the award of a training contract in 2004. For example, the provider has drafted an employers' guidance handbook and developed an employers' feedback log. Staff make frequent visits to update and inform new and existing employers of the apprenticeship training programmes. Employers are invited into the training centre to discuss their individual requirements and to learn about the apprenticeship programme and how it is run. Employers and learners benefit from the frequent exchange of information throughout the year that allows Rolls-Royce NETC to offer suitable candidates

for apprenticeships. Learners speak highly of this process and benefit from the early identification of employment opportunities that are well matched to their training programmes. Employers receive frequent visits from assessors who effectively support learners in work placements. Employers speak highly of this support and of Rolls-Royce NETC's ability to provide additional training designed to meet the needs of individual learners and employers. This relationship has been extended into Michell Bearings, the parent factory, where learners have been able to gain valuable practical and relevant work experiences to take back to their own work placements. Rolls-Royce NETC is aware of the need to engage employers more fully in their programmes and this is reflected in the provider's management action-planning.

33. The training centre is a well-managed resource and is flexible to the changing demands of local engineering companies. It provides an effective working environment for different types of engineering apprenticeship. The centre has recently been re-equipped with new engineering machinery and can be adapted to suit mechanical, maintenance and electrical training requirements. Workshop use is well planned but maintains sufficient flexibility to cater for different rates of learning and also allows learners to gain higher skills when required. Learners benefit from an effective programme that is designed to offer good access to and use of resources. The training centre is managed as an effective working environment where learners are closely monitored and exposed to realistic working conditions.

34. Rolls-Royce NETC's strategies to recruit the right number and type of apprentice have been particularly successful in obtaining employment for all learners who have completed their programmes. The in-field assessment team, who visit learners in the workplace, and the business development manager provide senior managers with up-to-date and reliable information about the requirements of local engineering companies. This is used to determine the number of learners and the types of programmes that are offered at the training centre. These strategies are reviewed on a regular basis. In 2003-04, all 85 learners who were unemployed and who completed the programme were found employment with local engineering companies. All 73 learners gained employment in 2004-05. Eighty-three apprenticeships have so far been found for the 2005-06 intake, with a further 10 placements to be found before September 2006. Learners who have lost their jobs have also been successfully supported by Rolls-Royce NETC. For example, two learners who were made redundant were supported through their apprenticeship at the training centre and both have now been found suitable apprenticeships with other engineering companies. Learners speak highly of the programme and of the confidence they have in Rolls-Royce NETC finding suitable employment.

35. There is no planned internal programme of training which is linked to appraisal outcomes or weaknesses identified during self-assessment. Records of continuous professional development show that while some staff have received regular training, particularly in taking certificates in education and verification units, others have not attended any internal or external training events. Staff do not formally share with colleagues the outcomes of training events they have attended. They are not sufficiently involved in identifying their own training needs through the company's appraisal process, which has been suspended for over 18 months. The outcomes of internal verification are not reviewed during appraisals, or used to identify specific development needs. Targets are not set for individual members of staff at appraisal. Some responses to staffing issues have been slow. A trainer/assessor who left the company three months before the

inspection still has not been replaced. This is affecting learners. The training centre is currently awaiting the introduction of a comprehensive human resources system from Rolls-Royce.

36. The use and sharing of information is poor. Regular informal communication takes place between staff but this is not formally recorded. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Meetings are not always minuted and actions are not routinely followed up or checked for completion. Management meetings are not held on a regular basis and quality improvement is not a regular agenda item at staff or management meetings. Where regular meetings do take place, such as the in-field assessment team meetings and standardisation meetings with Newcastle College, these do have agendas, are minuted and have actions. Management information systems hold comprehensive data about learners' progress, reviews and assessments. This data is not shared with staff, learners or employers and is not used systematically at staff meetings. Learners and employers are not aware of the existence of much of this data and are not clear how useful this could be to support learners' progress. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between the in-field team and the training centre staff.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 4**

37. Rolls-Royce NETC has not sufficiently focused on equality and diversity. It has policies covering equality of opportunity, bullying and harassment, discipline and grievances as well as a complaints and appeals procedure. Many of the policies are dated but do not refer to current legislation. The equal opportunities policy is too brief and does not adequately set out Rolls-Royce NETC's commitment to the prevention of discrimination and the responsibilities of staff and learners. There is no systematic monitoring of recruitment and selection. Learners have a basic understanding of their rights and responsibilities and there is regular monitoring for bullying and harassment at each review visit.

38. Rolls-Royce NETC has a strong approach to bullying and harassment. Learners receive copies of the anti-bullying and harassment policy at induction and reported incidents have been dealt with promptly and appropriately. Learners understand these issues and know how to deal with difficulties. Complaints are swiftly investigated and resolved to the satisfaction of learners. Rolls-Royce NETC maintains an incident log of all complaints and quickly take effective action. Management deals effectively and sensitively with any concerns raised by learners. Learners speak highly of the support they receive from their assessors and are confident that they can talk to them about their difficulties.

39. Learners do not receive any training sessions on equality and diversity. At induction, learners are provided with basic reference material on equality and diversity. However, Rolls-Royce NETC does not check if the learners understand the content or if they have subsequently read the document.

40. Rolls-Royce NETC does not effectively reinforce learners' understanding or raise their awareness of equality and diversity. Learners are not provided with any specific training sessions on equality and diversity. Their understanding of equality and diversity is not explored. Learners have a basic understanding about their rights and responsibilities but very little appreciation of diversity or the issues posed by living in a multicultural society. Rolls-Royce NETC does not sufficiently check for the existence of equal opportunities

policies in the workplace and does not have initiatives to raise employers' awareness of equality of opportunity.

41. Equality and diversity training for staff is inadequate. Staff development has not included any recent training to raise awareness on equality and diversity or to provide information on new legislation. Equality of opportunity is not sufficiently discussed at meetings.

42. Rolls-Royce NETC has no effective strategy to promote inclusion. It carries out no direct promotion of provision to under-represented groups and no-one has direct responsibility for the monitoring of equality of opportunity. Newspaper advertising contains direct references to the company being committed to equality of opportunity but this is not echoed in marketing materials. Marketing materials use non-stereotypical images to promote inclusion but are only produced in one format. They are not available in large print or in other languages.

43. Rolls-Royce NETC collects data on ethnicity, gender and age but does not sufficiently analyse or use the data. Data on learners' postcodes is used to match learners with prospective employers but is not used to identify trends. Rolls-Royce NETC has identified low rates of participation by women in its engineering programmes but has not yet started to rectify the imbalance. It does not target recruitment activities in areas where there are higher proportions of people from minority ethnic groups, nor does it specifically target female learners. Currently only four of the 342 learners are women, which is below the national average. There are no learners from minority ethnic groups and no learners with registered disabilities.

44. The training centre is located entirely on ground-floor premises adjacent to the Michell Bearings factory premises. Access to training rooms and workshops within the training centre is satisfactory for learners who have restricted mobility but there are no disabled toilet facilities and the canteen is located on the first floor. Rolls-Royce NETC has not yet carried out an access audit to check compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and there is currently no effective action plan to make all buildings compliant with the legislation or improve access. Access to employers' premises is not always easy for learners who have restricted mobility. The employers who offer work placements do not show offensive material in the workplace and most employers have clean, welcoming work environments, with appropriate attention paid to health and safety.

## Quality improvement

## Contributory grade 4

45. Rolls-Royce NETC has incomplete quality improvement arrangements. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. The company uses ISO9001, an international quality assurance standard, which documents some relevant procedures but does not cover the key training processes. There are no comprehensive quality assurance procedures that ensure that all learners benefit from a consistent learning experience and there is no clear understanding of how quality is monitored to improve provision. The training centre is in the process of writing working instructions but, at the time of inspection, these were incomplete. There is no systematic internal audit of learners' files to ensure that they are completed correctly and are accurate.

46. Rolls-Royce NETC is aware of the use of feedback to improve provision and has recently introduced a questionnaire to obtain employers' views. The return rate from



employers has been poor. The provider is committed to working with employers to ensure the quality of their programmes and is reviewing its employer feedback strategy to improve the quality of its provision. It has designed a new employer questionnaire. Learners' views are sought through the review process but there is no system for recording learners' views and no systematic analysis of their feedback. There is no evaluation of training sessions by learners or tutors.

47. Training within the training centre is observed and tutors receive feedback on performance to improve practice, but the document used to capture this information is being re-designed to improve the process. Staff do receive structured feedback about the standards of training they deliver but action plans are not agreed with them to bring about improvements. There is no evidence of training being observed in the workplace.

48. The arrangements for internal verification are generally satisfactory. Internal verification is planned on a sample basis. However, some verification practice for qualifications assessed in the workplace is poor. Inspectors found no record of the verification process in learners' portfolios and internal verification has not picked up poor practice in assessment.

49. The self-assessment process is incomplete. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment process is still being developed and does not sufficiently involve employers and learners. The inspection team found the self-assessment report to be clearly written against the Common Inspection Framework, and sufficiently judgemental and critical. Inspectors' judgements matched many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the leadership and management section of the report, and in the area of learning most of the strengths were also identified. The self-assessment report does not recognise some important weaknesses identified in the area of learning, however. With the exception of the grade given for leadership and management overall, the grades given by the inspection team were lower than those given by Rolls-Royce NETC.



## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Engineering</b>		<b>3</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	264	3
Train to Gain	78	3

50. Rolls-Royce NETC has 243 young people on advanced apprenticeships and 21 on apprenticeships in engineering. Most of the young people starting frameworks are unemployed and most are referred by Connexions. Applicants are interviewed and assessed for literacy and numeracy skills and aptitude. They are given information, advice and guidance on the training options available to them. In the first year, apprentices and advanced apprentices attend Rolls-Royce NETC's training centre for training in practical engineering skills, and Newcastle College to complete a certificate course in engineering. The training is in four-week blocks and is arranged so that learners spend alternate blocks in the training centre followed by the college. In the training centre, learners develop fundamental skills in machining, fabrication, welding and electrical engineering in accordance with the requirements of the level 2 NVQ in performing engineering operations. Key skills qualification training to level 2 is completed while learners are in the training centre. During the first year, employment is found for the learners so they can progress onto a programme of work-based learning with their employer and continue the technical certificate for the advanced apprenticeship at college on a day-release basis. Employers are local engineering companies of various sizes that are engaged in manufacturing and maintenance occupations, including toolmaking, precision engineering and component manufacture. Once in the workplace, learners start training towards a level 3 NVQ with various qualification aims. One-hundred and fifty-one are on mechanical engineering, 59 are on fabrication and welding, 15 are on technical services, 10 are on maintenance and eight are on installing and commissioning.

51. There are 78 adults on a Train to Gain contract employed in 12 different companies. Three are working towards a level 3 NVQ in fabrication and welding. The remainder are working towards a level 2 NVQ. Forty-three learners are in performing manufacturing operations, 24 in mechanical engineering and the remainder are in fabrication and welding, engineering maintenance or materials processing.

52. The training centre has an operations manager, a centre team leader/internal verifier, four instructor/assessors, an in-field team leader/internal verifier, five in-field assessors, a business development manager, an LSC contracts co-ordinator and an administration assistant. On-the-job assessment is carried out in the workplace by the team of in-field assessors, who also carry out progress reviews every 10 to 12 weeks.

## ***Engineering***

### *Strengths*

- good achievement by Train to Gain learners
- good and flexible off-the-job training
- very good support to help learners gain employment
- strong commitment to training by employers

### *Weaknesses*

- poor planning of some aspects of the programme
- insufficient monitoring of skills development in the workplace
- weak reviews in the workplace
- weak assessment practice in the workplace

## **Achievement and standards**

53. Rolls-Royce NETC completed an Employer Training Pilot (ETP) contract in 2004-05 as a subcontractor to another provider. Of the 32 learners, 94 per cent successfully completed a level 2 NVQ. On the current Train to Gain contract, six of the 84 learners starting programmes have already achieved their level 2 NVQ and most of the others are progressing well. Several learners have achieved good personal and professional development in their workplaces. Most learners are experienced semi-skilled operators with no formal qualifications. The programme has allowed them to become more confident and some learners have taken on additional responsibilities. One learner has made improvements to their area of work, based on an increased awareness of health and safety issues and how their job affects other people.

54. Achievement rates for key skills qualifications are good. Most learners who complete the first year in the training centre achieve between three and five key skills qualifications at level 2, with the rest achieving key skills qualifications at level 1. Rolls-Royce NETC has had a contract with the LSC for the past two years, although it has trained and assessed apprentices and advanced apprentices as a subcontractor for several years. It has also taken over advanced apprentices from other providers in the past few years. There is insufficient reliable data to make judgements on the success rates for advanced apprentices since the contract started in 2004. There are indications that there is an improving trend in the number of advanced apprentices who successfully complete all aspects of their framework who were subcontracted from other contracts. The success rates based on the proportion of learners leaving the apprenticeship programme is good and improving. In 2004-05, out of the 69 apprentices who left the programme, two-thirds completed the full apprenticeship framework. Most progressed onto an advanced apprenticeship programme. The success rates for apprenticeships appear to be improving for 2005-06.

55. The learners produce a good standard of work in the training centre. Most are developing good industrial-standard skills in the workplace.

### **The quality of provision**

56. Off-the-job training is good. Rolls-Royce NETC has a very good relationship with Newcastle college, which provides technical certificate training to learners on Rolls-Royce NETC's behalf. Training in the college and at the training centre is well structured and delivered in four-week blocks. Delivery in the training centre of the level 2 NVQ in performing engineering operations is tailored to suit the preferences of learners and the needs of employers. This flexible approach gives learners the opportunity to gain basic skills competence in a wide range of engineering disciplines. Many learners successfully complete NVQ units additional to those needed to complete the framework. Some employers arrange for learners to return to the training centre to gain additional skills if required. Resources are good. The training centre workshop is a clean, well-organised working environment with good attention paid to health and safety. Several new lathes and milling machines have recently been installed. There is a computer aided design suite with 10 stations equipped with industry-standard software including three-dimensional modelling. Training is well planned and effectively monitored against internally developed benchmarks using regular reviews and assessments. It is delivered by enthusiastic, knowledgeable and suitably qualified staff. Attendance and discipline are effectively managed and learners demonstrate a positive attitude to work. The relationship between learners and instructors is good. There is good support for learners, particularly with their key skills qualifications. Evidence gathered for the wider key skills qualifications is integrated with the NVQ training. Achievement of NVQs and key skills qualifications to level 2 is good and timely. However, not all learners are fully aware of the framework requirements or their progress towards completion.

57. Rolls-Royce NETC is very successful at finding apprenticeships for learners. Most learners start the programme unemployed, but all those who successfully complete the first year progress into suitable apprenticeships. The provider markets learners well and gives them support, information, advice and guidance to help them gain employment. Examples of this include the help given in preparing curriculum vitae and the support that learners get to prepare for job interviews. There is careful matching of learners to employers in terms of geography, skills and attitude. The employer base is broad and covers a wide range of engineering disciplines within companies of varying sizes. The companies generally have good facilities and good, safe working environments. All are vetted annually for conformity to health and safety standards by a member of Rolls-Royce NETC's staff. However, this vetting process does not extend to equality of opportunity. Learners have their first review after four weeks in the workplace to check that they have settled in.

58. Employers demonstrate a strong commitment to training. Employers work with Rolls-Royce NETC to select learners who will succeed in their company. They work closely with the assessors to agree which units learners will work towards. Some employers have well-structured training programmes and move learners around different departments and machines to help them develop a wide range of skills. These employers generally maintain detailed training records and charts of their employee's skills. Many employers encourage and support learners to gain qualifications which are over and above the requirements of the framework. Some learners are able to access additional courses in areas such as coded welding, lift-truck driving, abrasive wheels, and crane operators' licences. Twelve employers of advanced apprentices also offer NVQ training

to adult employees through the ETP scheme. The workplace trainer at one employer has recently achieved his assessor award and is assessing the learners with support from Rolls-Royce NETC. One employer is interested in offering employees the opportunity to do an NVQ at level 2 or 3.

59. Learners complete an initial assessment screening when they apply to Rolls-Royce NETC. Further diagnostic testing is carried out at Newcastle College where learners receive satisfactory support with literacy and numeracy skills. Instructors in the training centre also provide learners with support for their key skills qualification. There is no initial assessment for adult learners on the Train to Gain contract.

60. Planning of some key aspects of the apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeships is poor. Learners complete the employment rights and responsibilities programme while they are working in the training centre and before they are employed. The guidance states that the employment rights and responsibilities should be completed in the learners' workplaces. Learners do not review this aspect of the framework once they are in the workplace. A few apprentices have completed a full framework without spending any time in a workplace. They have not demonstrated competency on jobs or tasks which are performed to industrial standards in a workplace environment. However, since 2004, most apprentices completing their programmes have progressed into employment and gain relevant work experience.

61. The advanced apprenticeship programme is based on a fixed period of time. This practice started when Rolls-Royce NETC was a subcontracted training provider. Expected end-dates are the same for all learners, regardless of ability and the rate at which they develop skills. The process of delivering the level 3 NVQ has been based on the time that learners have been on the programme rather than their level of competency. Learners are not issued with the standards for the level 3 NVQ until the start of their third year. They are unaware of the requirements for building a portfolio of evidence until over half-way through the advanced apprenticeship. Rolls-Royce NETC is aware that it needs to modify the delivery of its programme and is committed to working with its employers to make changes.

62. Insufficient monitoring takes place of how and when learners develop skills in the workplace. Some workplaces do not provide planned or structured inductions and training. Learners do not routinely collect evidence to show how they are developing their skills and competences. A few learners have been issued with log books but there are inconsistencies in the way that these are implemented and used. There is no guidance on the number of entries expected or the standard to which the log books should be completed. There are no processes for ensuring entries are checked and validated by supervisors and/or assessors. There is no formal means by which assessors can monitor the learners' development of competence or skills. Assessors are not able to give the learners sufficient feedback on what skills and knowledge they need to develop for the NVQ. Learners do not have a clear understanding of what stage they are at in the programme or what is required for them to progress to completion.

63. Learners' reviews are carried out in the workplace every 12 weeks. The quality of these reviews is poor. The review process may on occasions be extensive, but it does not challenge the learners to meet their potential. The questioning of learners during reviews is passive and often not challenging enough. The targets set are generally unchallenging

and provide the learners with little detail of what they are expected to do between visits. Comments such as 'continue to develop skills towards NVQ at level 3' are typical. There is insufficient and inconsistent involvement of employers in the review process. Some employers are not involved in reviews and only add their comments and sign the review once it is concluded. The coverage of equality of opportunity and health and safety at reviews is generally superficial and does not serve to broaden the learners' awareness or understanding.

64. Assessment practice, particularly for level 3 qualifications, is weak. Assessment is routinely carried out towards the end of the programme and is often based on a minimum number of assessments by observation. Plans for assessment are made a long time in advance and do not reflect the level of competency or type and range of jobs a learner may carry out. Portfolio evidence is often undated and not attributable to the learner. The extent and suitability of feedback to the learner is inconsistent and provides little benefit to the learner as it comes at the end of the programme. There is little evidence that learners are questioned during the assessment process. Learners have insufficient responsibility for the gathering and presentation of evidence in portfolios. Assessors routinely compile and cross-reference portfolios. There is often no evidence that background knowledge is checked for accuracy soon after it is compiled. Some photographic evidence does not effectively support the observation records produced by the assessor and there are examples of learners displaying poor health and safety practice.

### **Leadership and management**

65. The training centre and the first year of the advanced apprenticeship programme are managed well.

66. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. They are enthusiastic and provide a good level of support to the learners. Staff have insufficient opportunities to share good practice and ensure consistency in their approaches to training and assessment. There is no formal appraisal system to encourage and develop staff.

67. Internal verification is satisfactory. There is a comprehensive computer-based planning, recording and monitoring system for internal verification in the training centre. Internal verification of assessments carried out in the workplace is planned and recorded on a similar computer-based system by the in-field team leader. However, there is some poor practice when verifying portfolios which have been assessed in the workplace. There is no evidence in the portfolios to show what has been verified. The internal verification has not identified the weak assessment practice seen by inspectors.

