

Rathbone Training Reinspection

Adult Learning Inspectorate Inspection Report 9 February 2007

Reinspection date

6 June 2008

Inspection number

318264

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Background information

Inspection judgements

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

Description of the provider

1. Rathbone Training is an educational charity and a company limited by guarantee. It has 69 sites and projects across Scotland, England and Wales, contracting with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Scottish Enterprise, and DCELLS to provide work-based learning for young people. Cumbria is the lead LSC. Rathbone Training also holds subcontracts for Workstep and a range of programmes for unemployed people. Rathbone Training works mainly with people who have not been successful in their secondary education, those excluded from mainstream education, those in the youth justice system, and with those whose lifestyles are a barrier to learning.
2. Rathbone Training has a head office in Manchester with 51 training centres in England and 10 in South Wales. In 2006/07 in England, 2,131 young people participated in apprenticeship programmes and 4,255 participated in Entry to Employment programmes. Most learners in vocational areas are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 1 or 2 and most have additional social and/or learning needs. In 2006/07 in Wales, 1,989 learners followed Skillbuild programmes providing key skills and NVQs at level 1. Training and assessment takes place on-the-job or in training centres. Some off-the-job training is subcontracted to local colleges of further education and other training providers.
3. The organisation is led by a chief executive supported by a team of directors. The management structure aligns with government office regions in England. Currently there are 754 employees. Staff numbers have decreased since the previous inspection. Since March 2005, the organisation has prioritised working with young people. The organisation has significantly increased its work supporting disengaged young people via a variety of European Social Fund (ESF) and co-financed projects. Partnerships exist with the Youth Justice Board, the secure youth estate and youth offending teams.
4. Only the business administration provision was reinspected. Ofsted and Estyn carried out the reinspection together. Provision in Scotland was not included in the inspection or the reinspection.

Grades

grade1= outstanding, grade 2= good, grade 3= satisfactory, grade 4= inadequate

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		3

Health, public services and care			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Social care</i>			
Apprenticeships for young people	63	3	
Train to Gain	65	3	
<i>Early years</i>			
Apprenticeships for young people	403	2	
Other government-funded provision	111	2	

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Engineering</i>			
Apprenticeships for young people	55	3	
<i>Motor vehicle</i>			
Apprenticeships for young people	29	2	

Construction, planning and the built environment			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Construction crafts</i>			
Apprenticeships for young people	162	3	
Other government-funded provision	61	3	

Retail and commercial enterprise			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Retailing and wholesaling</i>			
Apprenticeships for young people	364	2	
Other government-funded provision	55	3	

Preparation for life and work		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>		3
Other government-funded provision	280	2
Entry to employment	1,223	3

Business administration and law		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Administration</i>		4
Apprenticeships for young people	92	4

Grades awarded at reinspection

Business, administration and law		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Administration</i>		3
Apprenticeships for young people	43	3
Other government funded provision	23	2

About the reinspection

5. At the inspection all aspects of Rathbone Training's provision were found to be satisfactory or good, with the exception of business administration which was inadequate. At reinspection provision in business administration is satisfactory. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	20
Number of staff interviewed	27
Number of employers interviewed	10
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	5
Number of visits to the provider	2

Areas of learning

Business administration and law

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Administration</i>		3
Apprenticeships for young people	43	3
Other government funded provision	23	2

- The business administration programme has 66 learners. Of these eight are advanced apprentices and 35 are apprentices following programmes at four centres in England. The number of apprentices and centres in England offering business administration has reduced considerably since the previous inspection. In Wales, 23 learners are following Skillbuild programmes at level 1 in six centres. Provision in Wales was not included at the previous inspection.
- Learners are mainly recruited through referral from Connexions or Careers Wales, by word of mouth, or direct application. They work in a range of areas including distribution, finance, primary and secondary schools and the charity and voluntary sector. Learners are able to join the programme at any time of the year.
- Of the business administration learners 72% are women, 5% are from minority ethnic groups and 15% have a declared disability. Currently 42% of learners are receiving numeracy and/or literacy support.

Administration

Strengths

- Good and improving Skillbuild pass rates
- Good development of learners' personal and employability skills
- Very good teaching and learning on Skillbuild programmes
- Good individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- Low apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship success rates
- Insufficient development of Welsh learners' existing bi-lingual competence
- Inadequate monitoring of quality processes on apprenticeship programmes

Achievement and standards

- Skillbuild pass rates in Wales are good and improving. Current pass rates are 70%, having increased from 63% in 2006/07. Most learners are making very good progress.
- Learners on all programmes develop good personal and employability skills. Many make significant gains in confidence and self-esteem. Learners acquire effective workplace behaviour and attitude, including positive thinking and co-operating with others. Skill

development improves their progress to sustainable employment, particularly for Skillbuild learners. Acquisition of administrative and computing skills, such as telephone techniques, use of office equipment, filing, faxing and photocopying is good, especially for apprentices whose job roles expand and increase in responsibility in line with learning. Learners are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning. The celebration of learners' successes are excellent and well publicised through media reports of presentations at the Welsh Assembly and the Houses of Parliament.

11. Apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship success rates are low, as identified by the previous inspection and through national self-assessment. Current apprentices are making satisfactory or better progress. Some more recently recruited apprentices have achieved early. Centres which had the lowest success rates at inspection no longer offer programmes. Apprenticeship success rates for 2007/08 have improved on last year, but are still low at 46%. Advanced apprentice overall success rates increased from 25% in 2004/05 to 43% in 2006/07. Development and maintenance of Welsh learners' existing bi-lingual competence is insufficient, there being no opportunities for learners to use and extend their Welsh during the programme.

The quality of provision

12. Teaching and learning on Skillbuild programmes are very good. Lesson planning is well structured and purposeful. Good use is made of differentiated activities and collaborative exercises to encourage less able learners to participate in discussions. Good individual support helps all learners to be involved in training sessions. Particularly effective use is made of workbooks to involve learners. A wide range of assessment methods are used including professional discussions and electronic assessment recording. Tutors have high expectations of their learners.
13. Teaching, learning and assessment on apprenticeship programmes are satisfactory. Off-the-job training has recently improved following the earlier introduction of technical certificates and key skills. All learners now attend weekly sessions. Appropriate use is made of the awarding body's scheme of work and session plans but they are not always adapted to plan for different learners' needs. On-the-job training is satisfactory. However, on-the-job training arrangements are not systematically checked or recorded. Arrangements to co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training to ensure the programme is consistent are not clear.
14. Assessment is satisfactory and meets awarding body standards. Judgements are fair, valid and appropriately recorded but there is not enough written feedback by assessors to learners.
15. Progress reviews are satisfactory and appropriately monitor progress towards qualification achievement. Monitoring of attendance, punctuality and appearance is satisfactory. Review of wider aspects of personal effectiveness such as time management is insufficient. In the best reviews employers effectively co-ordinate NVQ and workplace activities and optimise opportunities for evidence collection. In other reviews employers are passive. Monitoring of health and safety in reviews is insufficient.

16. Target-setting is satisfactory, showing much improvement since the inspection when it was a weakness. Individual targets are negotiated and monitored in individual learning plans, progress reviews and assessment plans.
17. Learners receive a satisfactory induction which helps them settle into their programme. It includes an appropriate range of information about their course, and their rights and responsibilities in relation to health and safety and equality and diversity. Learners' understanding of workplace induction is appropriately monitored.
18. Initial assessment is good on Skillbuild programmes and includes a skills scan to match learners with employers. Personal effectiveness is identified. Very clear targets are set to improve areas such as attendance, time keeping and personal presentation.
19. Initial apprenticeship assessment is satisfactory and has improved since the inspection. Learners complete initial assessments in literacy and numeracy with further diagnostics where appropriate. A wider initial assessment has recently been introduced which reviews learners' personal skills and attributes. Learning style questionnaires are completed but are not yet used to effectively develop session planning. A summary of all initial assessment is used well to evaluate the appropriateness of learning programmes. Although the type of programme is assessed effectively, evaluation on the suitability of programme level is inadequate. For example, there is no evidence of any discussion about the level of programme for several learners who have very good General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs).
20. The range of provision satisfactorily meets learners' and employers' needs. Learners are sign posted to other providers if Rathbone Training's programmes are not suitable. Links with employers and placement providers are good. Employer involvement in learners' programmes is satisfactory.
21. Learners receive good individual support as identified by the previous inspection and self-assessment. Learners are given very effective individual help with personal development. Good use is made of an introductory work-placement process to give learners a gradual introduction to office work. Timely and effective practical help is given for learners to gain jobs. Learners who are due to attend job interviews or placements can be bought suitable clothing. Effective referral to external specialist agencies is carried out. Effective support continues to be given when learners have left the programme. Where relevant, staff work closely with learners' parents or guardians to resolve problems. Learners have adequate access to appropriate information, advice and guidance. Links with Connexions are used effectively. Staff have a very good understanding of the barriers learners face. Effective support arrangements for literacy and numeracy are in place. A specialist appropriately monitors targets and achievement of skills for life.

Leadership and management

22. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Business administration provision now has a clear strategic direction. Staffing on Skillbuild programmes is stable and contributes to the good provision. Staffing levels and turnover on apprenticeships continue to be a problem as they have been at the previous two inspections. Team working to maintain the programme through staff changes is good. Staff development is good, but is not always

timely. For example, staff in Wales only recently received equality and diversity training. Training advisers are appropriately qualified and experienced.

23. Staff understanding of management information systems is developing well. Staff understand and use data and new management reports such as the traffic light system to effectively monitor learner progress and target support. Staff are not sufficiently aware of the overall Skillbuild targets, or how they can use Estyn's tables to monitor performance.
24. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Promotion of apprenticeships to Muslim learners is good. New training is improving learners' and staff awareness of equality and diversity. Monitoring of this in reviews, which was a weakness at the inspection, is now satisfactory. However, some staff ask closed questions and lack the confidence to probe learners' responses.
25. Quality improvement is satisfactory overall. Self-assessment of Skillbuild provision is accurate and the quality development plan is detailed. Observation of teaching and learning on Skillbuild programmes is accurate and results in very detailed and useful action plans for each staff member. Internal verification overall is satisfactory. Skillbuild internal verifiers give particularly clear action points which improve the quality of learners' and assessors' work. The business administration development group and the quality improvement group meet frequently to share good practice and address weaknesses. Staff seek and act upon feedback and advice from other organisations. Changes have been implemented which are beginning to improve apprenticeship retention and success rates. However, the action to bring about improvement on apprenticeships has been slow.
26. Monitoring of quality processes on apprenticeship programmes is inadequate. Quality monitoring of observations of teaching and learning, reviews of learners' progress, local self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans lacks precision. As recognised by self-assessment the observation of teaching and learning system does not have sufficient emphasis on learning or provide enough support for observers and trainers. A new system is being developed. Some local

self-assessment reports have an over-optimistic view of their success rates and take no account of national averages. National and local self-assessment reports do not comment on teaching, learning or assessment. Some local self-assessment reports do not provide text to support identified strengths. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment grade for apprenticeships, but awarded a higher grade for Skillbuild programmes.