

# The Reynolds Group Ltd

## Focused monitoring visit report

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## FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

### Context and focus of visit

The Reynolds Group Ltd (Reynolds) consists of four companies. One of these, Reynolds Training, provides work-based learning. Reynolds has two managing directors, one of whom is the principal of Reynolds Training. Since April 2001, Reynolds has held a contract for work-based learning with London East Learning and Skills Council (LSC). It delivers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in performing arts and sport, leisure and recreation. All learners have access to further associated qualifications and those completing the programme at level 3 have access to the foundation degree in musical theatre as well as the full honours degree. Currently, there are 68 learners; 25 apprentices and 43 advanced apprentices. A management team of eight supports the principal with tutors and additional visiting specialists.

Reynolds was previously inspected in April 2006. Leadership and management, quality improvement and apprenticeships for young people in arts, media and publishing were outstanding with good arrangements for equality of opportunity. This report focuses on the seven themes explored during the visit. These include the two mandatory themes of outcomes for learners and self-assessment and improvement planning.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has been made in improving the effectiveness of the self-assessment process to bring about improvements?	Significant progress
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This area was outstanding at the previous inspection and significant progress has been made since then. The self-assessment process continues to be inclusive and uses learners' feedback effectively, including that from the new learner representatives. Feedback from the Framework for Excellence surveys and data now provides additional vital evidence on performance. Recent developments arising from self-assessment include the restructuring of the curriculum to include seven weeks of technical input and three weeks of project and performance development. This enables learners to put into practice their skills and work with specialist tutors. Reynolds has used the feedback from learners to revise the induction week; the first year learners thoroughly enjoyed their recent induction. The new interactive online portfolio for monitoring progress ensures that information on learners' performance, achievements and evidence across the whole range of new qualifications is collated effectively. The portfolio is easily accessible for learners, tutors, assessors, awarding bodies and employers. It also meets Reynolds' environmental commitment to reduce the use of paper. The electronic project manager software used by the provider monitors the quality improvement plan very effectively and identifies when progress reports are due.

### Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made in improving the overall and timely success rates and outcomes for learners? Significant progress

This area was outstanding at the previous inspection. Apart from 2007/08, the trend for the overall success rates for both apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships is good at 72.5% in 2005/06, 82.6% in 2006/07 and 87.1% in 2008/09. The trend for timely success rates is also good. Both rates are well above the national average for apprenticeships. The pass rates for the wide range of additional qualifications are mainly at 100%, with none dropping below 98%. Reynolds has maintained the outstanding standard of learners' work from the previous inspection and extended it to additional areas. Learners, most with limited singing experience prior to starting their course, perform a wide range of demanding repertoire confidently. The choir, which is additional to the requirements of the learners' programmes of study, inspires other learners to join. The standard of performance and quality of sound are outstanding.

### Quality of provision

What progress has been made in improving the content and use of session plans? Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, session plans contained insufficient detail of techniques and stages of learning over time. Exemplars were used insufficiently to promote good practice and session plans generally were not evaluated well. Session plans are now reviewed and evaluated adequately and link very well to schemes of work. Scrutiny of session plan implementation is satisfactorily included in observations of teaching and learning. Generally, session plans have improved compared to those previously used and they now provide a clear indication of the content of a particular session and the timing of each activity. Internal monitoring procedures for improving the quality of session plans are satisfactory. However, forms do not provide space for reflection about the session. The new section for teachers to indicate teaching activities to meet specific individual needs requires more specific detail, for example about how teaching will make an impact on mixed-ability learning. The plans focus mostly on the technical learning aspects of performing arts but lack reference to the range of intellectual and cultural activities and discussion which take place in sessions.

### Leadership and management

What progress has been made to improve the health and safety procedures? Significant progress

At the previous inspection, Reynolds' implementation of health and safety was satisfactory. Learners are now fully aware of, and keep, the new company rules stipulating the correct dance attire and prohibiting the wearing of jewellery in classes. Teachers are clear about company health and safety rules and reinforce them in classes. Corridors and dance spaces are free from clutter and Reynolds

provides boxes in practical lessons for accessories such as jewellery. The learners' handbook provides extremely clear health and safety guidance and dress code for learners in classes. Almost all classes observed had implemented health and safety procedures fully. A recent external audit by the LSC rated health and safety at Reynolds as excellent. Reynolds completes regular internal health and safety audits. The procedures for safeguarding meet current government requirements.

What progress has been made in formalising the course review procedures to ensure they support quality improvement? Significant progress

Staff and learners' views are used more effectively now. For example, as a result of feedback from learners, Reynolds now provides a wider range of curriculum activities in the performing arts, including musical theatre. After careful consideration and feedback from staff, Reynolds has planned and implemented the inclusion of a professional year for learners to help them make the transition into the industry in their final year of study. Learners contribute feedback about their experiences at Reynolds by completing questionnaires and by providing online feedback, a facility which has been introduced recently. Reynolds has also implemented the addition of learner representatives this year to play a fuller part in monitoring the quality of provision. Newsletters include useful feedback to learners about actions taken as a result of their suggestions and comments.

What progress has been made in improving staff and learners' understanding of equality and diversity? Reasonable progress

Equality of opportunity was good at the previous inspection but many staff and learners had an insufficient awareness and understanding of equality and diversity. There were some poor training sessions for learners. The new induction week creatively introduces diversity by using different activities. Learners enjoy these and are able to discuss the need to respect differences between individuals. There is a better understanding and promotion of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. Equality of opportunity is part of the qualifications in year one and is discussed as it arises in year two and in the professional year. Tutors identify issues and areas to discuss in sessions and projects but do not yet include them as objectives in the session plans. They are therefore not included in the evaluation of sessions or the course reviews. Reinforcement of equality of opportunity at learners' reviews is limited to a brief discussion and very little recording. The equality of opportunity actions in the quality improvement plan address the identified areas for development. However, some specific targets are missing such as those for the recruitment of males.

What progress has been made in response to the temporary end of creative apprenticeships nationally? Significant progress

Management has skilfully redesigned the curriculum in partnership with national awarding bodies. Advanced apprenticeships in sport, leisure and recreation which

include a national technical certificate in arts, media and publishing are now offered. They also offer an additional apprenticeship in gym instruction at levels 2 and 3 and professional dance qualifications. Reynolds now works in partnership with Trinity College of Music to provide qualifications from level 4 to Bachelor of Arts (BA). The Reynolds' programme provides a good balance for learners to achieve skills and background knowledge to enable them to progress into higher education or employment, in either of the two subject areas. Learners are extremely aware of the benefits of taking a range of inter-related qualifications and enjoy the challenge of undertaking multi-disciplinary work.

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