

# Rathbone Training

Inspection report

---

Unique reference number: 54071

Name of lead inspector: Bob Busby HMI

Last day of inspection: 27 August 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 4th Floor  
Churchgate House  
56 Oxford Street  
Manchester  
M1 6EU

Telephone number: 0161 236 5358

## Information about the provider

1. Rathbone Training (Rathbone) is an educational charity and a company limited by guarantee. It has over 70 education and training centres across the UK and provides programmes of education and work-related training to young people aged 11-25. In recent years the charity has developed a range of programmes designed to reach those young people with particularly complex support needs and who are furthest from participating either in education and training or employment. Its main activity is to provide learning and training support to disadvantaged people, working mainly with the unemployed to improve their quality of life. Rathbone works mainly with young people who have not been successful in their secondary education, those excluded from mainstream education, those in the youth justice system, and those whose lifestyles are barriers to learning. Each year over 17,000 young people join Rathbone's training programmes, approximately half of whom leave school without achieving any formal qualifications.
2. Programmes are funded by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). The Skillbuild provision in Wales is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. On Entry to Employment (E2E) and foundation programmes there are 1,616 young people. Two-hundred and sixty-six adult learners are on Train to Gain courses, 4,163 young people are on youth engagement programmes and there are 1,309 young apprentices. 'Choices' has a contract for 500 young people for the academic year 2010/11.
3. Engineering and manufacturing technologies, business, administration and law programmes, and the pre-16 Choices and youth engagement provision were not directly inspected. However, evidence from these programmes contributed to the leadership and management judgements.
4. Overall responsibility for the organisation resides with the chief executive of Rathbone who is supported by a wider senior management team who have responsibility for policy, services, quality and curriculum, employer-based training, and foundation programmes. The Rathbone head office is in Manchester. Employee numbers are currently 840, with staff based throughout England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Staff numbers have decreased since the previous inspection. Training and assessment take place on-the job or in the national training centres. Some off-the-job training is subcontracted to local colleges of further education and other training providers.
5. Rathbone provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Aspire-I (E2E provision)
  - B2B (apprenticeships in administration)
  - IGEN (E2E provision)
  - Kirklees College (E2E provision)
  - Wakefield College (E2E provision)

6. The following organisations provide training on behalf of Rathbone:
- Bikes4All (E2E provision)
  - Fit Training (E2E provision and apprenticeships in active leisure and learning)
  - Gateshead Young Women's Outreach Project (E2E provision)
  - Heart of England (E2E provision)
  - JHP Training (E2E provision)
  - London Learning Consortium (apprenticeships in childcare, health and social care, youth work, ITQ, administration, customer service, advice and guidance, team leading, and management)
  - MPC North (E2E provision)
  - Nacro (E2E provision)
  - National Construction Academy (E2E provision)
  - NECC Limited (apprenticeships in childcare)
  - Neeta (E2E provision)
  - Phoenix Education and Training (E2E provision)
  - Places for People (E2E provision)
  - Real Time Training Group (apprenticeships in administration, and customer service)
  - Resources (E2E provision)
  - Soar Valley Music Centre (E2E provision)
  - Sportiv8 (E2E provision)
  - Stride (E2E provision)
  - Talent4Life (E2E provision)
  - TDR (E2E provision)
  - The Sage Music & Arts Centre (E2E provision)
  - TNG (E2E provision)
  - West Cumbria Achievement Zone (E2E provision)
  - Wing Production House (E2E provision)
  - YMCA Sports (E2E provision)
  - Zodiac (E2E provision)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: Entry to Employment	4,817 learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	483 learners 2,316 apprentices

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Areas	
Child development and well-being	3
Retailing and warehousing	3
Preparation for life and work	3

## Overall effectiveness

7. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Outcomes for learners and the quality of provision are also satisfactory, as are leadership and management. Rathbone has shown that it has satisfactory capacity to improve. The provision in child development and well-being, retailing and warehousing, and preparation for life and work is satisfactory. The provider is making satisfactory progress in improving overall success rates and timely success rates which are now approaching national rates, although there are still variations between subject areas and between geographical areas. Success rates in Wales are good. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but the arrangements to quality assure teaching and learning are insufficient. Observation records are generally insufficiently judgemental and grades do not always match the text. The provider's promotion of equality and diversity is good, as are arrangements for ensuring that learners are safe. Rathbone has made satisfactory progress with some of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Success rates have continued to improve and the use of management information has improved. However, the quality and

effectiveness of progress reviews remain variable. Action planning, following self-assessment, remains an area for improvement in a few subject areas. The quality of accommodation and resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory. Partnership working is particularly strong throughout the organisation.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall. Success rates and timely success rates have steadily improved over three years but still remain below national rates. The improving trend has continued in 2009/10. There is significant variation in performance across subject areas and across geographical regions. Success rates on E2E programmes in England are satisfactory. Success rates and timely success rates on Train to Gain programmes have declined and they remain well below the national rates.
- Outcomes on the Skillbuild provision in Wales are good. The proportion of learners who progressed into further training, education or employment in 2008/09 improved consistently to 62% and improved further in 2009/10. Success rates for Skillbuild learners on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 1 programmes vary significantly between programmes but show improvement in most cases.
- Achievement gaps between men and women narrowed in 2009/10. On apprenticeship frameworks the achievement gap has narrowed from almost 23% in 2007/09 to 10% in 2009/10. On Train to Gain programmes men achieve better than women and also achieve in a more timely manner. Success rates for men on Train to Gain programmes are close to national rates in 2009/10.
- Success rates for most Asian groups are consistently above the national averages for similar groups and above the average for the provider. In 2009/10 success rates for learners who have declared a learning difficulty and/or disability, and/or health issue are comparable to success rates for learners who have not declared any such issues. Rathbone satisfactorily monitors the success rates of different groups of learners and is aware that Black or Black British learners achieve at a lower rate and in a less timely manner than learners from any other ethnic group.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although the quality varies across the provision. In the better classes, teaching is stimulating and learning is exciting. In the weaker classes learning is insufficiently individualised and does not fully meet the needs of all learners. There are insufficient opportunities for work placements for E2E learners.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory overall. It varies throughout the provision. Target setting in reviews is often vague and it is difficult to measure progress against the targets. Internal verification is broadly satisfactory but it does not always identify the use of too narrow a range of assessment methods.
- Observations of teaching and learning are insufficiently rigorous. The effective moderation practice started in 2009 has not been maintained and the provider is unclear about the standard of teaching and learning. Many observation

records do not adequately match judgements to grades and do not focus sufficiently on learning outcomes.

- Provision satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of learners. Rathbone supports young people's educational and training needs well, particularly those young people with multiple barriers and complex needs who are often socially and economically disadvantaged. Targeted provision successfully re-engages these young people with training programmes.
- Pastoral support for learners is particularly good. Highly effective individual support helps to keep learners focused and motivated, retaining them in learning, while helping many of them to overcome significant barriers to learning and progression. Learning support is variable and access to specialist staff is insufficient. Rathbone recognises this.
- Strategic management is good. Rathbone has a clear vision and strategy which are shared by staff at all levels in the organisation and which contribute to local priorities. Staff have a very strong commitment to meeting the needs of disadvantaged young people. Communication is good. Teams work well together but opportunities to share good practice across regions are less well developed, except in Wales. Staff development opportunities are good. However, the reduction in staff turnover remains a priority.
- Partnership work is extensive and provides great benefits to learners. Rathbone promotes and demonstrates social inclusion particularly well and has a significant role in the local communities in which it operates. It makes a strong contribution to local 14-19 strategic plans. The use of employers' views in developing provision and improving its quality is an area for further development.
- Safeguarding is prioritised throughout Rathbone and is good. Learners feel safe and value the arrangements for ensuring their well-being. Equality and diversity are good. Learners' achievement is celebrated very well and publicity material captures the inclusivity of the organisation and the diversity of its learners. Learners know who to go to if they require support or wish to raise an issue.
- The monitoring of the performance of different groups of learners is undertaken satisfactorily at a senior level but it is not sufficiently developed at centre and subject levels. While targets are not sufficiently established for different groups of learners, the achievement gaps have reduced in recent years.
- The self-assessment process is inclusive and involves staff at all levels. However, there is insufficient involvement of employers and the process of moderation is not sufficiently challenging. The quality development plan does not set precise enough targets and the actions to achieve improvements are not sufficiently clear.

### What does Rathbone Training need to do to improve further?

- Analyse and use data more effectively, particularly at centre level, to identify the performance of different groups of learners in different geographical areas

to ensure that the achievement gap of different groups of learners continues to narrow and all learners achieve their potential.

- Implement an effective system of observations to improve teaching and learning by identifying and fully sharing good practice and by identifying and correcting poorer practice for the benefit of learners.
- Improve the learners' experience by ensuring that teaching methods and resources cater for the needs of all learners, so that the more able learners can progress quickly and the less able learners can fully consolidate their learning.
- Increase the availability of work experience and work placements so that all learners can have on-the-job experience and be better prepared for employment.
- Improve assessment practice by ensuring that a suitable range of assessment methods are used and by setting measurable targets for learners, so that learners are assessed on their practical competence as well as on their theoretical knowledge.
- Ensure specialist support is readily available for learners with additional literacy and/or numeracy support needs and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Implement the Skills for Life strategy so that all learners benefit fully and develop their wider employability skills.
- Continue with good staff development and performance management to improve the professionalisation of the workforce and to reduce staff turnover.
- Improve the arrangements for the collection and use of the views of all stakeholders in developing the provision and informing the self-assessment process.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- all aspects of being in work or in a work placement
- acquiring new skills and developing confidence to find a job
- being treated as adults and with respect
- the development of a positive response by staff to their suggestions
- the location of Rathbone centres
- feeling safe at Rathbone
- friendly, helpful and supportive tutors who are always there for them
- the way tutors individually explain things very clearly and simply.

What learners would like to see improved:

- a wider range of practical workshops and activities
- more external visits and work placement opportunities
- fewer questions and more assessment through observations



- quicker return of submitted work
- the provision of training sessions at work
- more off-the-job workshops and training
- more information to aid understanding of NVQs
- quieter places for feedback in the workplace to aid concentration.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- good partnership working which considers the needs of the business
- the calibre of young people that are well prepared for placements and employment
- the flexible approach to learners' attendance at training centres
- good communication
- the way Rathbone staff work with young people who have never been given a chance before
- the frequent and flexible visits from tutors to support learners
- Rathbone's caring and supportive approach, particularly to learners with additional learning needs.

What employers would like to see improved:

- more challenging deadlines for the completion of work
- links between theory and practice
- consolidation of learning before learners move from level 2 to level 3
- more help for learners with assignments.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

8. Rathbone has made consistent improvements to learners' achievement rates but overall, they still lag behind national averages. There is not yet a sound track record of sustained improvement across all programmes and significant variations exist between the different types of provision, occupational areas and geographical areas. Actions are clearly documented in delivery plans but targets are not always specific and some are too ambitious. Rathbone has an appropriate management structure and sufficient staff and resources to implement its plans for improvement.
9. Quality assurance arrangements and the use of management information have improved since the last inspection. Staff and learners' views contribute effectively to the self-assessment process. There is a particularly effective youth council. However, the involvement of employers in informing self-assessment is insufficient. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate but it does not clearly identify all the key areas for improvement. The outcomes of the recently introduced centre reviews are starting to be effectively used to inform the 2010 self-assessment.

### Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

10. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall. Success rates and timely success rates have steadily improved over three years but remain below national rates. The improving trend has continued in 2009/10. There is significant variation in performance across subject areas and across geographical regions.
11. Outcomes on the Skillbuild provision in Wales are good. The proportion of learners who progress into further training, education or employment has consistently improved. Success rates for Skillbuild learners on NVQ level 1 programmes vary significantly between programmes but show improvement in most cases. Outcomes on E2E programmes in England are satisfactory.
12. Success rates and timely success rates on Train to Gain programmes have declined since the last inspection and, although they improved in 2009/10, they remain below national rates.
13. On apprenticeship frameworks women succeeded significantly better than men in 2008/09 and also more succeeded in a timely manner. The achievement gap has narrowed from almost 23% in 2007/09 to 10% in 2009/10. On Train to Gain programmes men achieve better than women and also achieve in a more timely manner. Success rates for men on Train to Gain programmes are close to national rates in 2009/10.
14. Learners from Asian or Asian British backgrounds achieve at a higher rate and more achieve in a timely manner than learners from any other ethnic group.

Rathbone is aware that Black or Black British learners achieve at a lower rate and in a less timely manner than learners from any other ethnic group.

15. In 2009/10 there is little difference in performance between those learners who have declared a learning difficulty and/or disability and those who have not. On Train to Gain programmes learners who declared a learning difficulty and/or disability succeeded better than those who did not in 2008/09. In 2009/10 the achievement rate for learners who have declared a learning difficulty and/or disability improved and are close to national rates.
16. Rathbone uses a satisfactory range of initiatives to improve learners' awareness of health and well-being issues. All learners have the opportunity to disclose their health and social support needs as they join Rathbone and this information is used to inform and design their individualised support plan. Learners on the E2E and Skillbuild programmes have good access to a wide range of promotional literature and specialist agencies to help them make more informed choices around well-being. Learners openly discuss various topics with staff and these are well integrated into learning sessions.
17. Learners' contributions to their communities are satisfactory overall. However, in some areas and centres, particularly in Cumbria where learners engaged in projects repairing and rebuilding walls following recent floods, they are good. Within each centre, opportunities are sought to engage young people in projects that benefit local communities.

## The quality of provision

Grade 3

18. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching and learning is variable throughout the provision. It is good in Wales. Most assessors have good knowledge and experience and are suitably qualified. Most have a good understanding of the needs of vulnerable learners. In the better classes tutors deal well with the individual needs of their learners. They use a good and increasing range of teaching methods to support learning and are extending the range of available qualifications, such as the Welsh Baccalaureate. Some of the E2E provision is exciting and engaging. Very good use is being made of external agencies and suitable projects to stimulate relevant and focused learning. In the weaker classes tutors pay insufficient attention to the individual needs of learners. They do not sufficiently challenge the more able learners or give weaker learners the skills and strategies they need to succeed.
19. In some subject areas, teaching methods are limited. Learners have insufficient opportunities to benefit from relevant external expertise and to explore their subject in a creative way. Tutors plan learning satisfactorily overall, and well in Wales. Those tutors who have completed initial teaching qualifications have improved their planning by producing more effective schemes of work and lesson plans. Initial assessment is effective. It includes a realistic diagnostic assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy levels which is used successfully to plan support. The provider satisfactorily arranges specialist external support

for Skills for Life to supplement the support that is provided by volunteers and paid staff. However, Rathbone acknowledges that it is currently under-resourced to deliver Skills for Life as efficiently as it needs to and that it has not integrated Skills for Life fully into all programmes.

20. Reviews vary in quality although they are satisfactory overall. Some reviews lack detail, are vague, and are too descriptive. Some place insufficient emphasis on essential elements such as health and safety, and equality and diversity. In these reviews, targets set for learners are weak. Sometimes feedback to learners is insufficiently developmental, concentrating on encouragement without identifying relevant areas for improvement. The provider lacks an effective strategy to share good practice in reviews.
21. Feedback from internal verifiers is not always robust. While assessment is satisfactory overall, it is unsatisfactory in childcare. Rathbone uses technology satisfactorily to support assessment. However, its use varies across the provision. The provider has comprehensive plans to improve this and these have been partially implemented through the successful piloting of e-portfolios.
22. Rathbone now conducts regular observations of teaching and learning. It has moderated the records of observations and has found that they are generally insufficiently judgemental and that grades do not match the text. It has not, however, conducted a further moderation to assess the impact of actions taken and does not have an accurate overview of the quality of teaching and learning.
23. Equality and diversity are satisfactorily promoted through teaching, learning and assessment. They are included in lesson planning, schemes of work, and records of observations of teaching and learning.
24. Provision successfully meets the needs and interests of learners. Rathbone is highly effective in local community and national networks. Rathbone supports young people's education and training needs well, particularly those with multiple barriers and complex needs who are often socially and economically disadvantaged. Targeted provision successfully re-engages these young people with provision that meets their individual needs.
25. Opportunities and progression routes for young people are good. Learners are able to progress from pre-16 re-engagement activities on to programme-led or employed apprenticeships. A wide range of vocational options are available for E2E/Skillbuild learners in some centres. Effective supported referrals to other providers ensure learners can progress in their chosen route where Rathbone does not offer provision. Effective learner consultation informs the curriculum and its content. Employers' needs are fully considered and learners are well prepared for progression into employment. However, there are insufficient work placement opportunities for E2E learners.

26. Partnership working is highly effective. Rathbone promotes and demonstrates social inclusion particularly well and has a significant role in the local communities in which it operates its 70 centres. Its contribution to the local 14-19 strategic plans and networks is highly valued and successful. Partnership working with employers is productive. However, a more formalised employer engagement strategy is planned.
27. Pastoral support for learners is particularly good. Highly effective individual support helps to keep learners focused and motivated, retaining them in learning while helping many of them to overcome significant barriers to learning and progression. Careers advice and guidance are effective in enabling young people to make more informed choices about their future prospects. Tutors recognise their limitations in providing support for learners with more significant learning support needs. Overall, support is variable and access to specialist staff is insufficient. Rathbone recognises that although external specialist agencies are used they are insufficiently reliable and accessible.

## Leadership and management

Grade 3

28. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The chief executive, trustees and senior team, have developed a clear vision and strategy for the organisation which is underpinned by 11 strategic objectives for the period 2009/12. The culture of the organisation has been effectively developed so that the vision and values are shared by staff at all levels in the organisation. Staff have a very strong commitment to meeting the needs of young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The mission clearly supports both national and local priorities. Rathbone's managers are satisfactorily involved in developing national and local policies to meet the education and training needs of disadvantaged young people. The corporate plan is being effectively implemented. Actions are clearly documented in regional and local delivery plans and they are satisfactorily monitored by the trustees. However, targets within the plans are not always specific and some are too ambitious to be met within the planned timescale. The reorganisation of the management and delivery of work-based learning, as a separate division, has led to improvements in apprenticeship success rates in 2009/10.
29. Communication is good. A range of innovative measures have been implemented to keep the national workforce informed about the organisation's key priorities and developments. These include a schedule of regular staff meetings, networks, bulletins, and information on the intranet supplemented by management conferences and a 'one conversation' video conference meeting involving all staff. These innovations have been successfully led by the chief executive. The development of the new foundation learning curriculum has involved staff throughout the organisation through a series of effective networks. Teams work well together in local centres and share good practice effectively. However, opportunities to share good practice across regions are less well developed, except in Wales.

30. Partnership work is extensive and provides great benefits to learners. Links with schools, employers, local community groups, voluntary organisations and external agencies are extensive. While Rathbone works with over 3,000 employers to provide training and work placement opportunities, the use of employers' views in developing provision and their impact on quality improvement are areas for further development.
31. Trustees have a valuable range of expertise and provide effective support and challenge to senior managers. The board closely monitors financial performance and occupancy rates at centres across the organisation, and board members receive regular management reports to keep them well informed. While trustees have a clear understanding of how Rathbone will deliver its strategic priorities, they give insufficient attention to monitoring learners' outcomes.
32. Safeguarding is prioritised throughout Rathbone and is good. Learners feel safe and value the arrangements to ensuring their well-being. A national lead on safeguarding is ably supported by regional designated officers. Rathbone has suitable policies and procedures in place to safeguard learners and these are reviewed annually. All staff have received appropriate training on safeguarding. Key staff responsible for recruitment have undergone further training in safer recruitment. Learners and staff have a satisfactory understanding of safeguarding. The provider meets all its legislative requirements. A central register of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for all staff is maintained and these are renewed every three years. A considerable priority is given to ensuring safe workplaces and that learners understand safe working practices.
33. Equality and diversity are good. Rathbone meets its legislative requirements. An appropriate policy and action plan are in place and are monitored closely by the national equality group and the trustees. Implementation of the plan is supported by regional equality champions and effective staff training. The recent management training programme for centre managers includes modules on equality and diversity. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners' achievement is celebrated very effectively. A wide range of publicity material, including that on the intranet, captures the inclusivity of the organisation and the diversity of its learners. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is reinforced well at induction and through their reviews. A standardised list of questions, supported by realistic and relevant scenarios, has been produced for assessors to enable them to implement a more consistent approach. The diversity of learners is well respected. They know who to go to if they require support or wish to raise an issue. Detailed checks are made on subcontracted provision and work placements to ensure compliance with appropriate legislation and that employers have a good understanding of the diversity of learners and treat them fairly at work.
34. The monitoring of the performance of different groups of learners is undertaken satisfactorily at senior level but it is not sufficiently developed at centre and subject levels. While targets are not sufficiently established for different groups of learners, the gap in achievement has reduced in recent years. The performance of minority ethnic groups overall is above average for the

organisation as a whole. However, the achievement of black learners, although a small percentage of the cohort, is below that of other groups and has been for several years. Learners with additional support needs and disabilities now achieve as well as their peers. There remain too many inconsistencies in the performance of learners across geographical areas.

35. Learners' views are sought in a wide variety of ways at all levels in the organisation, with a particularly effective youth council. Learners can identify aspects of the provision where they have influenced improvements, for example, timetable changes and involvement in staff appointments. While there are surveys and forums at course level, there are missed opportunities to use learners' views in the self-assessment process. There is no learner representative on the board of trustees although plans are at an early stage to consider this possibility.
36. Quality assurance arrangements have improved since the last inspection. The access to, and use of management information data have improved. A range of centrally-produced regular reports on key performance indicators enable prompt intervention by managers. The self-assessment process is inclusive, in so far as it involves staff at all levels. However, the process of moderation is not sufficiently challenging. While aspects of the provision have been over-graded, there is a good understanding of what needs to improve. The quality development plan does not set precise enough targets and the actions to achieve improvements are not sufficiently clear. The self-assessment report does not clearly identify all the key areas for improvement. Over the last few months an independent and comprehensive review of the performance of each centre has been undertaken which has appropriately placed greater emphasis on learners' achievement and the quality of delivery. The outcomes of these reviews are being satisfactorily used to inform the 2010 self-assessment.
37. Leadership and management at sector subject and centre levels are satisfactory. Teams work well together and staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Performance management is effective. Managers provide effective support and intervention when areas of underperformance are identified. Staff are appraised annually by their line managers and objectives are closely monitored. Staff development opportunities are good. Trainers and assessors have relevant skills and most have, or are working towards, a relevant teaching qualification. However, the reduction in staff turnover remains a priority.
38. Rathbone provides satisfactory value for money. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory as are success rates. A sustainability strategy is in the early stages of development. An energy management system is reducing Rathbone's carbon footprint and ways of working more efficiently are in place. A detailed property strategy ensures learners have access to resources that are fit for purpose. Financial management is good. A fundraising group has been successful in broadening income sources to deliver innovative project work.

## Subject areas

### Child development and well-being

Grade 3

#### Context

39. There are 388 learners currently on childcare programmes. Of these, 65 are advanced apprentices and 323 are apprentices. All learners are interviewed and an acceptable CRB result is required before starting a childcare programme. Initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy levels is completed and support needs are identified. Prior skills, knowledge and experience are discussed and taken into account when planning learning and support. Young people are visited in the workplace every four weeks for on-the-job coaching and assessment. Off-the-job training is delivered in Rathbone centres either on a weekly or fortnightly basis.

#### Key findings

- Overall success rates and timely success rates for apprenticeships in 2008/09 were satisfactory at 64.6% and 60.8% respectively. These are just below the national average, with a rising trend over three years. Indicative data for the current year show further improvements.
- Overall success rates on advanced apprenticeship programmes in 2008/09 were satisfactory at 63.8%. However, at 35.9% timely success rates were unsatisfactory. Current figures for 2009/10 suggest that overall success rates for advanced apprentices have fallen and are unsatisfactory.
- Learners feel safe within the learning environment and within their work placements. Most are aware of what to do to maintain their own safety and protect themselves from bullying and harassment.
- In some cases teaching and learning are poorly planned. Many sessions lack innovation or creativity and are often teacher-led. A wide range of resources are available but these are not always used effectively. Some handouts are poor. Not all learners have access to information and communication technology (ICT). It is not routinely used to enhance teaching and learning. Only a small number of learners have the opportunity to use e-portfolios.
- Learners benefit from good and regular support for key skills. They engage well with this learning which raises their self-esteem. Tutors incorporate key skills effectively into wider learning wherever possible. Tutors offer good support and guidance to learners who successfully complete numeracy and literacy at level 1 so they can progress to level 2 to develop their employability and career prospects further.
- Assessment practice is weak. Planning is insufficiently individualised and learners are disadvantaged. Assessors rely too heavily on written evidence and do not adequately link theory with practice. Too much emphasis is placed on written questions rather than on the demonstration of competence within work settings. Learners show little understanding of the NVQ processes. Observation



records are insufficiently evaluative. Written and oral feedback are insufficiently developmental.

- Many reviews are insufficiently challenging. The quality of reviews varies. Employers are not always fully involved in reviews and they have little opportunity to plan effective on- and off-the-job training and skill development with their learners.
- Target setting overall is weak. Targets are vague and insufficiently individualised. They do not sufficiently challenge or develop the learners and do not focus enough on what needs to be done to gain the competencies to achieve the relevant NVQ.
- Employers have a very positive relationship with individual assessors which enables them to support learners effectively. However, Rathbone's arrangements to communicate with employers if assessors are absent are not fully developed.
- Pastoral support for learners is good. Assessors and tutors support their learners very well. Rathbone works effectively with internal and external teams and agencies to benefit learners. However, some learners do not have sufficient understanding of what skills and experience they need to progress to level 3 or to decide whether this qualification is suitable for them.
- The childcare team has clear roles and responsibilities. It participates in useful team and regional meetings to share best practice. Staff appraisal is effective in setting clear targets for staff. They have access to a wide range of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities, including initial teacher education, and are fully supported to access them. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced.
- Rathbone effectively supports childcare learners facing safeguarding issues. It also satisfactorily supports learners who have to deal with safeguarding issues themselves while on placement in childcare settings. Learners engage enthusiastically with each other and with their local community.
- Staff demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity. They ask learners relevant questions at each review to support and develop their understanding of equality and diversity in the workplace.

What does Rathbone Training need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve success rates so that all learners successfully complete their qualifications in a timely manner.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all learners experience innovative, creative, learner-centred and high quality provision.
- Improve assessment practice so that learners' competencies are accurately assessed and correctly recorded.
- Improve the quality and consistency of progress reviews and ensure that all employers are fully involved in the review process to enable them to plan effective on- and off-the-job training and development.

- Improve the quality of target-setting and progress monitoring for learners to help them to progress and recognise their achievement.

## Retailing and warehousing

## Grade 3

### Context

40. Currently 269 learners are working towards retailing and 44 towards warehousing qualifications. Of these, 199 learners are on retailing apprenticeships and 43 learners are on advanced retailing apprenticeships. Thirty-seven learners are following warehousing apprenticeships. All advanced apprentices and 132 apprentices are in employment. The remaining apprentices work in placements as they complete their awards. There are 27 learners on Train to Gain retailing programmes and seven on Train to Gain programmes in warehousing and distribution.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall. In 2008/09, overall success rates on retailing programmes were satisfactory at 52%. Although they have shown steady improvements in the past three years, they remain 12 percentage points below the national average. This improving trend has continued in 2009/10. Timely success rates in 2008/09 were low at 49.6%.
- In 2008/09, success rates on warehousing apprenticeships were good. Of the nine learners in 2008/09, seven were successful. Success rates on retailing and wholesaling Train to Gain programmes are low. At 63.4%, overall success rates were significantly below the national average in 2008/09. Figures for 2009/10 show a slight improvement. At 51.9%, timely success rates were almost 17 percentage points below the national average.
- Many learners develop very effective personal and occupational skills. Employers value the significant improvements in learners' self-confidence, timekeeping and motivation which, in some instances, have led to permanent employment. During 2009/10, 39% of retail apprentices on placements progressed into permanent employment. Learners enjoy their work roles and training and they value the opportunity given to them to start a career in the sector.
- Learners feel safe and demonstrate safe working practices. Tutors check learners' welfare regularly but do not make the best use of reviews to record discussions or to reinforce information about safeguarding. Employers have insufficient awareness of their obligations to learners in relation to equality and diversity, and safeguarding. Learners have satisfactory access to information to help improve their health and economic well-being.
- Work-related training and coaching are good. Tutors have very good sector knowledge and provide very relevant practical examples. Tutors provide good contextualised literacy and numeracy support. Training centres are good and well-equipped for delivering key skills and technical certificate sessions. However, the printed materials used when delivering retail training are often poor.

- Assessment is satisfactory. Tutors employ a range of assessment methods and make good use of questions. Insufficient use is made of technology in the assessment process. Tutors plan assessment sessions in the workplace satisfactorily although fail to identify learners' support needs. Learners' portfolios are well organised and contain a satisfactory standard of work. However, some tutors fail to correct spelling mistakes.
- Learners' progress reviews are satisfactory. Tutors review all aspects of learner performance. Discussions are productive and generally involve learners and employers. A few targets agreed with learners lack detail and do not provide clear guidance. Some tutors fail to revisit earlier targets sufficiently or to check support needs. In some cases, review records are difficult to read.
- Programmes successfully meet learners' and employers' needs. Tutors demonstrate an excellent understanding of their learners and effectively plan programmes that combine learning and support. Tutors adopt a very flexible approach to programme delivery, planning visits that avoid busy trading periods and accommodate learners' shift patterns. However, the time allocated for some learners to complete their programmes is insufficiently individualised.
- Partnership working with employers and other organisations is very productive. Tutors and employers collaborate well to provide learning opportunities and to ensure learners receive effective support. Partners are confident that Rathbone is supportive and responsive to their needs while working to benefit learners. Partners value the extent to which Rathbone is prepared to work with, and support, disadvantaged learners.
- Tutors provide particularly effective and timely support to learners. Their visits help to ensure that learners remain motivated and focused. Learners value the practical support offered by tutors, for example when they are seeking employment. A pastoral support tutor provides specialist information, advice and guidance in areas such as money management. Links to external support agencies are good.
- Use of management information to track and manage learners' progress is satisfactory. Performance management of staff effectively ensures a close focus on timely success rates. Staff have a very good understanding of their role in identifying and implementing support strategies for learners to improve their success. Some staff, however, over-emphasise the introduction of e-learning to increase success rates.
- Teamwork is effective. Roles and responsibilities are clear. Staff have collaborated successfully to introduce the new retail qualifications. However, arrangements for good practice to be shared regionally or nationally are under-developed. Staff make good use of opportunities for continued professional development.
- The sector self-assessment report is accurate and appropriately self-critical. Staff understand where areas for improvement lie. Learner and employer feedback is routinely gathered. However, centre staff are unsure how the feedback is used to improve the quality of the programmes or to develop the self-assessment report.

### What does Rathbone Training need to do to improve further?

- Increase timely success rates to ensure all learners complete their programmes within the predicted period.
- Implement the planned programme of new technology as soon as possible to enhance and accelerate the assessment process and to improve the standard of training materials.
- Tutors should pay greater attention to the correction of spelling and grammatical errors to improve further the quality of learners' written work.
- Improve the detail and clarity of targets agreed with learners so that learners and their employers have sufficient guidance about learners' learning needs. Also revisit earlier targets to ensure they are fulfilled.
- Increase the information available to employers to ensure that they are fully aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding learners and promoting equality and diversity. Make sure that tutors also routinely remind employers of their safeguarding, and equality and diversity responsibilities.

## Preparation for life and work

## Grade 3

### Context

41. There are 2,095 learners on programme. In England 1,425 learners are working towards qualifications on the E2E programme. Of these, 841 are males and 584 are females. Learning takes place in 29 centres. In Wales 670 learners are working towards qualifications on the Skillbuild programme. Of these, 286 are males and 384 are females. Learning takes place in 11 centres. All learners are initially assessed and have an individual learning plan. Learners attend an induction course, which can last up to six weeks, and they receive individual advice and guidance. Reviews are conducted at least once a month.

### Key findings

- The achievement rates of qualifications and of learners' key objectives are satisfactory overall and improving. In Wales the achievement rates of Workskills at level 1 are high. The achievement rates of qualifications in literacy and numeracy are low in England and high in Wales.
- Learners develop good personal, communication and vocational skills. They demonstrate good gains in confidence and good improvements in their employability skills. Learners are very able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being. Learners say they feel very safe at Rathbone. The overall standard of learners' work is satisfactory but in Wales it is good.
- Learners' progression rates into further education, training or employment are satisfactory. Rates of progression vary between centres, with some high and some low progression rates. In Wales they are high and improving. In Cumbria learners have made a very good contribution to the community by helping to rebuild and repair flood damage sites.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the better sessions tutors use a good range of interesting and enjoyable activities, and equality and diversity are promoted well. In the weaker sessions there is insufficient planning of learning to meet learners' specific individual needs. However, in Wales learners' needs are met very effectively. Most teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced. Staff development is good.
- Learners have a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. Most centres have a satisfactory range of vocational programmes. Larger centres have good resources and some provide realistic working and training environments. Rathbone has significantly increased the range of foundation learning opportunities and in Wales has introduced the Welsh Baccalaureate. However, there are too few opportunities for assessment through the Welsh language.
- The provision of work placements is insufficient in England but good in Wales. In many centres there are not enough links with employers. Where work placements are established, staff support the arrangements well. However, in a few cases there is insufficient monitoring of attendance.

- Partnerships to benefit learners are very good. Centre managers play a key role in local strategic partnerships and are very effective in local network groups. Arrangements with subcontractors are particularly good and effective collaborative working provides good access to progression routes. Highly effective partnerships with Connexions, Careers Wales and schools provide access to relevant information for learners.
- Support, advice and guidance are satisfactory overall. Learners receive good personal and individual support. Staff work closely with learners to help them overcome their barriers to learning. Learners benefit from Rathbone's effective links with support agencies. Literacy and numeracy support is inconsistent with some good support in Wales and in some centres in England but in others it is insufficient.
- Senior managers provide clear leadership to raise standards and set overarching targets for success and progression. However, targets are not set effectively for individual centres. In Wales, targets are not used well to improve quality. Operational management of centres, regional activities and subcontracting arrangements are good. Accommodation is satisfactory overall.
- Arrangements to promote the safeguarding of learners are satisfactory. Safeguarding has a high priority within the organisation. Staff have received satisfactory awareness training and suitable policies and procedures are in place. Health and safety arrangements are thorough and learners and staff receive relevant training.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners and staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues, demonstrated in visual displays and reviews. Rathbone uses its national, regional and local equality and diversity plans effectively to widen participation. However, there is insufficient analysis of data and action planning to close achievement gaps between different groups of learners.
- Engagement with learners to support and promote improvement is effective. A good range of methods are in place to identify learners' views. Staff response to learners' suggestions for improvements is good. Engagement with subcontractors and other stakeholders is good. There are too few formal arrangements to seek the views of employers.

#### What does Rathbone Training need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the planning and implementation of teaching and learning to meet the specific needs of individual learners.
- Increase the range and number of employers that offer suitable work placements or tasters so that all learners can have on-the-job experience.
- Improve the monitoring of learners' attendance and punctuality in work placements to ensure learners attend when required to do so.
- Offer more assessment opportunities through the Welsh language to meet the needs of Welsh-speaking learners.

- Improve the consistency of literacy and numeracy support so that all learners have outstanding opportunities to improve their literacy and numeracy competencies and achieve relevant qualifications.



## Information about the inspection

42. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), two HMI from Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate For Education and Training in Wales, and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's director for curriculum and young people's learning, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
43. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Rathbone Training**

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	2786	2037	749
Part-time learners	826	0	826
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3		
Outcomes for learners	3	3	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3		
How well do learners progress?	3		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3		
How safe do learners feel?	3		
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	3		
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	3		
Quality of provision	3	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3		
Leadership and management	3	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3		
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	3		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3		

\*where applicable to the type of provision

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this report in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010