

Inspection Summary Report - May 2025

- ✚ The recently revised vision of the organisation is realised effectively through systematic strategic planning and collaboration between local and national teams for the benefit of the apprentices.
- ✚ The strategic planning and operational delivery are supported by robust self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes, with clearly identified areas for development and corresponding action planning for improvement.
- ✚ The curriculum is broad, balanced, and holistic providing apprentices with a coherent and structured learning experience that meets their needs and the needs of employers. The curriculum targets an extensive range of topics with good quality resources to support the personal development of the apprentices. Employers are involved in curriculum co-design to support the organisation in providing the most suitable tailored workplace learning, which enhances the relevance and applicability of the training provided.
- ✚ Comprehensive tracking and monitoring systems are well established, with regular reviews conducted to assess and report on the apprentices' progress in their professional and technical qualifications, the essential skills, and their occupational and wider skills development.
- ✚ Almost all of the sessions observed were well-planned, made effective use of Technology Enhanced Learning, contextualised learning within meaningful work-place scenarios, encouraged independent learning and critical thinking, and fostered supportive, mutually respectful relationships between the learners and the trainers.
- ✚ The health, well-being and safety of apprentices and staff is of paramount importance to the organisation. The apprentices have access to a wide range of good-quality digital resources on contemporary topics, and the trainers create safe and supportive learning environments.
- ✚ Apprentices produce work to good or very good standards when developing the relevant skills, knowledge and understanding related to their vocational areas. Their oracy skills are well-developed.
- ✚ The trainers have extensive industrial experience, and there is a well-planned, cohesive, and flexible programme of professional learning for staff, tailored to meet individual development needs. Staff undertake “back to the floor” placements to maintain industry relevance and currency.
- ✚ Over the three-year period from 2020/21 to 2022/23, the majority (60%) of the apprentices completed their training programme and achieved all elements of the apprenticeship framework. Retention rates were 60% at Level 2 and 61% at Level 3 while achievement rates for both Level 2 and Level 3 were 100%. The progression to Level 3 apprenticeship is too low at 13%.
- ✚ The outcomes for the essential skills in the reporting period 2021-2024 are high. All of the apprentices who completed the qualification achieved the targeted level in the required essential skills of Communication, Application of Number, and ICT.
- ✚ The provision of the essential skills has been impacted by challenges in recruiting and retaining appropriately qualified staff. Currently, there is no provision for ICT. Almost all of the apprentices who started the programme in 2023/24 have yet to complete essential skills literacy and/or numeracy. The organisation needs to monitor closely the capacity to deliver the essential skills to ensure the timely completion of the qualification and ultimately, of the full apprenticeship framework.

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- There is well-established, highly effective collaboration with employers ranging from SMEs to multinational corporations, leading to training that is responsive to meeting the needs of a wide variety of economically important job roles within the service sector.

Areas for action:

- to improve the retention rates for the overall programme and the progression rates from the Level 2 apprenticeship to higher level education and training programmes; and
- to address as a priority the current gaps in the delivery of the essential skills to ensure timely completion of the qualification, particularly for ICT.

Going forward

- Inspiro Learning Limited is realising well its vision to "Provide life-changing skills to learners in an accessible, impactful and safe environment". A broad, balanced, and holistic curriculum is delivered, which includes an extensive range of topics with good quality resources to support the personal development of the apprentices in the hospitality and retail sectors. The continued engagement with Inspiro's GB-based national infrastructure allows the Northern Ireland team to access well-developed learning programmes, high-quality learning materials, and strategic guidance, ensuring a coherent and robust delivery model that reflects both national standards and regional priorities. The trainers in Northern Ireland are well-supported by the GB based curriculum team who provide learning programmes with effective resources in each sector, designed and developed through highly effective collaboration with employers based on industry needs. The contextualised learning and mutually respectful relationships between the learners and trainers are supporting the achievement of high standards of work by the apprentices.
- The inspection has identified an aspect of highly effective practice from which others may learn, namely:
 - the highly effective collaboration with employers, resulting in tailored training that improves apprentice success, and meets evolving industry needs.
- ETI, through engagement with the District Inspector, will continue to monitor Inspiro's progress as it takes forward the areas for action outlined in this report.