



*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

**Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a Follow-up Inspection

following an

Inspection of the ApprenticeshipsNI provision

in

Engineering Training Services

October 2014

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF ENGINEERING TRAINING SERVICES

The original inspection in April 2013 identified strengths in the organisation's provision including the: very good links and effective partnerships established with a wide range of employers in the priority skill area of engineering; very good opportunities in the workplace for the apprentices to develop their occupational skills to a very good standard; good quality of the pastoral care; good quality of the careers education, information, advice and guidance; and the very good retention and outstanding achievement rates.

The inspection identified the need for further improvement in the following key areas:

- to review and develop the curriculum to ensure there are appropriate levels of challenge, matched to the range of abilities of the apprentices in engineering and telecommunications;
- the quantity and quality of the practical training equipment for a majority of the engineering apprentices;
- to provide professional development to support improvement in the quality of the teaching, training and learning, including the effective use of information and learning technology;
- the development of a cohesive apprentice planning, tracking and monitoring system to record clearly and precisely their progress and achievements, and to plan for future training, including the essential skills;
- the quality of the planning for the timely provision of the essential skills to support the apprentices' learning and development within their professional and technical area;
- the appropriate deployment of the assessors for assessing the apprentices' achievement of occupational competences; and
- the development of more rigorous self-evaluation and quality improvement planning across all the professional and technical areas and the essentials skills, including the use of key data to inform judgements.

The quality improvement plan submitted by Engineering Training Services following the inspection lacked sufficient detail on how some of the key areas for improvement identified in the original inspection were to be addressed. Subsequently, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) scrutinised a revised quality improvement plan submitted by Engineering Training Services, and evaluated it to be of adequate quality. The first interim follow-up visit was carried out by the ETI in December 2013.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- the significant changes in leadership and management, including the very recent appointment of the third training manager since the original inspection;
- the ongoing turnover in the staffing complement during the period since the original inspection, resulting in significant disruptions to the apprentices' directed training;

- the renewal of its contract, in August 2013, with the Department for Employment and Learning to deliver the ApprenticeshipsNI Programme, including an extension to deliver level 3 apprenticeships;
- the termination of its sub-contract arrangements to deliver the off-the-job training to engineering apprentices with Springvale Learning and Development, and the introduction of a revised directed training model that relies exclusively on the practical skills training being delivered and assessed in the apprentices' workplaces; and
- the very recent leasing of a training room in Belfast for the delivery of the technical certificate training and assessment to a significant minority of the apprentices, for whom suitable or viable off-the-job training arrangements are not available to them in their workplaces.

The following is the most important improvement that has taken place since the original inspection:

- the recognition by senior management of the need for significant and urgent improvements across the provision, as evidenced in the very recent redeployment of an experienced member of staff to manage the provision.

The areas which require further improvement:

- the unsatisfactory progress made by the organisation's leaders and managers in addressing adequately the areas for improvement identified in the original inspection report;
- the inadequate planning and resourcing of the apprentices' training provision to meet the range of abilities of the apprentices and the training needs of their employers;
- the unsatisfactory quality assurance systems, at all levels, to bring about sustained improvement;
- the lack of consistent, appropriate processes and practices for assessing the apprentices' occupational competences; and
- the inadequate improvement in the planning, delivery and monitoring of the quality of the provision for the professional and technical area of engineering and the essential skills.

Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of training provided by Engineering Training Services is now inadequate. The organisation has demonstrated little evidence of improvement and significant areas for improvement in the leadership and management and training and learning remain to be addressed if the needs of all of the apprentices are to be met effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the progress made by Engineering Training Services in addressing the remaining areas for improvement.

ENGINEERING

The original inspection in April 2013 identified strengths in the engineering provision including the: very good links and partnerships with employers; very good standards of the apprentices' occupational work; very good opportunities in the workplace for the apprentices to develop their occupational skills; and the very good practical training provided for a significant minority of the apprentices.

The inspection identified the need for further improvement in the following key areas:

- the development of the curriculum to include appropriate levels of challenge that are matched to the range of abilities and experiences of the apprentices;
- the quantity and quality of practical training equipment to support the development of the occupational skills for the majority of the apprentices;
- to provide professional development to enhance the quality of the teaching, training and learning, including the effective use of information and learning technology;
- the development of a cohesive planning, tracking and monitoring system to record clearly and precisely the apprentices' progress and achievements;
- the appropriate deployment of the assessors for assessing the apprentices' achievement of occupational competences; and
- the development of more rigorous quality improvement planning for this professional and technical area.

In the interval since the inspection, the following actions which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- the significant changes in leadership and management, including the very recent appointment of the third training manager since the original inspection;
- the ongoing turnover in the staffing complement during the period of the follow-up process, resulting in significant disruptions to the apprentices' directed training;
- the renewal of its contract, in August 2013, with the Department for Employment and Learning to deliver the ApprenticeshipsNI Programme, including an extension to deliver level 3 engineering apprenticeships;
- the termination of its sub-contract arrangements to deliver the off-the-job training to the engineering apprentices with Springvale Learning and Development, and the introduction of a revised directed training model that relies exclusively on the practical skills training being delivered and assessed in the apprentices' workplaces; and
- the very recent leasing of a training room in Belfast for the delivery of the technical certificate training and assessment to a significant minority of the apprentices, for whom suitable or viable off-the-job training arrangements are not available to them in their workplaces.

The following is the most important improvement that has taken place since the original inspection:

- the recognition by senior management of the need for significant and urgent improvement the engineering provision, as evidenced in the very recent redeployment of an experienced member of staff to manage the provision.

The areas which require further improvement:

- the unsatisfactory progress made by the organisation's leaders and managers in addressing adequately the areas for improvement in engineering identified in the original inspection report;
- the inadequate planning and resourcing of the engineering provision to meet the range of abilities of the apprentices and the training needs of their employers;
- the unsatisfactory quality assurance systems to bring sustained improvement in engineering; and
- the lack of consistent, appropriate processes and practices for assessing the apprentices' occupational competences.

Conclusion

In engineering, the quality of training provided by Engineering Training Services is now inadequate. The organisation has demonstrated little evidence of improvement and significant areas for improvement in the leadership and management and training and learning remain to be addressed if the needs of all of the apprentices are to be met effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the progress made by Engineering Training Services in addressing the remaining areas for improvement.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

The original inspection in April 2013 identified strengths in the essential skills provision including the: good quality of the contextualised training resources for the essential skills; the opportunity for a minority of essential skills learners to achieve at a level higher than that required by their framework; and the good outcomes in the essential skills.

The inspection identified the need for further improvement in the following key areas:

- the leadership and management of the essential skills to ensure an adequate staffing complement to provide more systematic delivery arrangements;
- the provision of more effective contingency arrangements to ensure that all apprentices have access to regular training and learning sessions which support the learning and development of their essential skills;
- the gathering and collation of key data, including employer feedback, to inform more fully the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes; and
- the review and strengthening of the initial assessment processes for the essential skill of information and communication technology (ICT).

In the interval since the inspection, the following action which affects the work of the organisation has taken place:

- the commencement of strategic planning for the more effective delivery of the essential skills training.

The following is the most important improvement that has taken place since the original inspection:

- almost all of the apprentices in the original essential skills backlog have completed their qualification successfully.

The areas which require further improvement are:

- the management of the essential skills provision which is currently fragmented and inadequate;
- the delivery arrangements for the essential skills which are still not timely enough and do not support adequately the apprentices' progression and achievements across the duration of their programme;
- the limited collation and use of data, including apprentice entry profile data, to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning; and
- the need for an urgent review of the staffing complement to ensure that the apprentices benefit from an effective essential skills learning programme.

Conclusion

In the essential skills, the quality of training provided by Engineering Training Services is now inadequate. The organisation has demonstrated little evidence of improvement and significant areas for improvement in the leadership and management and training and learning remain to be addressed if the needs of all of the apprentices are to be met effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the progress made by Engineering Training Services in addressing the remaining areas for improvement.

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