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*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 Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI Provision

in

Springvale Employment and Learning Solutions

September 2013

FOLLOW-UP TO THE INSPECTION OF SPRINGVALE EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING SOLUTIONS (SPRINGVALE LEARNING)

The original inspection in June 2011 highlighted strengths in the provision, including the: very good quality of the pastoral care and additional learning support; good quality of the learning opportunities provided in most of the work placements and the positive relationships with most of the employers; good or better quality of the directed training in a majority of the sessions observed; good average achievement rate for those trainees and apprentices who complete their programmes; and good occupational standards achieved by most of the trainees and apprentices.

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

- the leadership and management of the provision, including the inadequate self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes;
- the inadequate use of the training review process to update personal training plans, engage employers and set training and progress targets for the trainees and apprentices; and
- the overall average rates of retention and progression, at 66% and 52% respectively.

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

- a restructuring of the senior management team;
- the appointment of additional tutors and support staff;
- the implementation of a new strategic vision and business planning processes to improve further the quality and effectiveness of the provision for trainees and apprentices;
- high levels of investment in modernising the accommodation and resources; and
- the benchmarking of good practice against other organisations.

The improvement plan produced by the organisation in response to the inspection findings was of a good quality, and has been adjusted in light of the inspection findings. The Inspectorate carried out two interim follow-up visits, in June 2012 and February 2013, and a follow-up inspection in September 2013.

The following are the most important improvements that have taken place since the original inspection:

- the enhanced learning environment and resources which have improved the learning experience for the trainees and apprentices;
- the new staffing appointments and management structures which have led to improvements in the quality of provision and better additional support for trainees and apprentices;
- the enhanced employer engagement strategy which has increased the quantity of good quality work placements available to learners;

- the increased focus on self-evaluation and quality improvement planning across the organisation;
- the strategies implemented to raise the aspirations of trainees and apprentices and to support and prepare them to progress into employment;
- the improved quality of provision in catering, electrical engineering, essential skills, and retail which are now good; and
- the improved rate of progression which is now good at 71%.

The areas which require further development are:

- the further embedding of the self-evaluation and quality improvement procedures across the organisation; and
- the strategies to improve the retention rate which is just satisfactory at 60%.

CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education and training provided by Springvale Learning is now good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its training and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor Springvale Learning's progress on the areas for improvement.

PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL AREA: CATERING

The original inspection in June 2011 highlighted strengths in the provision, including the: good, supportive relationships between the tutors and the trainees and apprentices; appropriate curriculum, including additional subjects and enrichment activities which enhance the trainees' and apprentices' personal and social development; good or better quality of most of the work placements which provide a suitable range of opportunities for the trainees and apprentices to develop and apply good occupational skills; good quality of the majority of the directed training observed; and good average achievement rate, at 88%, for those trainees and apprentices who complete their programmes.

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

- the inadequate arrangements for the monitoring and quality assurance of the provision, and actions to address the poor (55%) average retention rate;
- the inadequate quality of the personal training planning process, reviews of progress and use of the workplace for assessment purposes; and
- low standards of work in most of the trainees' and apprentices' portfolios.

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

- the introduction of an attendance policy together with the implementation of an electronic attendance recording system;
- the appointment of an attendance monitoring officer and learner counsellor;
- the development of appropriate quality assurance processes; and
- the implementation of monitoring systems to track the trainees' and apprentices' progress.

The Inspectorate carried out an interim follow-up visit in February 2013 and a follow-up inspection in September 2013.

The following are the most important improvements that have taken place since the original inspection:

- the good strategies implemented which have improved the attendance and retention rates of the trainees and apprentices;
- the high levels of investment in accommodation and equipment which have significantly improved the learning experiences for trainees and apprentices;
- an increased involvement of employers in the trainees' and apprentices workplace training and monitoring; and
- effective tracking arrangements to monitor trainees' and apprentices' progress at all levels.

The areas which require further development are the:

- more effective co-ordination of the catering provision, with a particular focus on planning for continuous improvement; and
- better opportunities for the trainees and apprentices to develop written communication skills within their vocational work.

CONCLUSION

In catering, the quality of education and training provided by Springvale Learning is now good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its training and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor Springvale Learning's progress on the areas for improvement.

PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL AREA: ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

The original inspection in June 2011 highlighted strengths in the provision, including the: high levels of enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by the recently appointed electrical tutor; good quality of most of the work placements; and good standards of work demonstrated by those trainees with a work placement.

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

- the inadequate leadership and management of the electrical engineering provision;
- the poor match between the curriculum, the workplace training and the aspirations of most of the trainees; and
- the poor average retention rate at 50% on the Skills for Work strand of Training for Success, and the poor average progression rate at 25% on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand.

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

- the appointment of two new enthusiastic and highly committed specialist electrical and electronic engineering tutors to support the delivery of the training programmes;
- the revised structure and content of the training programmes, which now match more appropriately the needs of the trainees and the employers;
- the development of more effective links and partnerships with employers to provide a greater range of relevant work placements and more coherent progression opportunities for the trainees;
- the provision of appropriate staff development with a particular focus on assessment, progress reviews, self-evaluation and standardisation to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of training and assessment; and
- the introduction of session observations by the line managers and peer tutors to identify and share good practice, and to improve the quality of training and learning.

The Inspectorate carried out two interim follow-up visits in June 2012 and February 2013 and a follow-up inspection in September 2013.

The following are the most important improvements that have taken place since the original inspection:

- the more effective leadership and management of the electrical engineering provision, which is now good;
- the high levels of investment in accommodation and physical resources, which are now good;

- the implementation of effective quality assurance processes, including enhanced attendance tracking and progress monitoring systems to target support for the trainees, and inform appropriately their training plans;
- the more effective assessment arrangements, which are now very good; and
- improved retention and progression rates which are now good at 72% and 75% respectively.

The areas which require further development are the:

- further implementation of strategies to increase the number of suitable work placements; and
- planning for the revised level 1 programme to ensure it meets effectively the needs of all trainees.

CONCLUSION

In electrical engineering, the quality of education and training provided by Springvale Learning is now good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its training and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor Springvale Learning's progress on the areas for improvement.

PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL AREA: ESSENTIAL SKILLS

The original inspection in June 2011 highlighted strengths in the provision, including the: good or better quality of the teaching and learning in most of the lessons observed; very good one-to-one tuition provided for individual learners who are identified as making insufficient progress in their essential skills; very good relationships between tutors and the trainees and apprentices, and the positive attitude to learning demonstrated by almost all of them; good use of information and communication technology (ICT) resources to support the trainees in-house; and good average achievement rate over the last three years for the trainees and apprentices in literacy and numeracy, at 88% and 86% respectively.

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

- the delay in the provision of the essential skills training for a significant minority of the apprentices in the workplace;
- strategies to address the overly variable attendance and timekeeping of the trainees and apprentices; and
- the inadequate arrangements for the quality assurance of the essential skills provision.

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

- the appointment of three additional essential skills tutors for the ApprenticeshipsNI provision;
- the introduction of an attendance policy which includes the implementation of an electronic attendance recording system; and
- the appointment of an attendance monitoring officer supported by a learner counsellor.

The Inspectorate carried out an interim follow-up visit in February 2013 and a follow-up inspection in September 2013.

The following are the most important improvements that have taken place since the original inspection:

- the improved attendance rates in essential skills classes;
- the more manageable case load of the tutor's delivering essential skills to the apprentices;
- the appropriate arrangements implemented to deliver the essential skills in a more timely manner; and
- the more robust self-evaluation of the provision which is now good.

The area which requires further development is the:

- intervention arrangements to support a small number of the apprentices to achieve their essential skills by the target date.

CONCLUSION

In the essential skills, the quality of education and training provided by Springvale Learning is now good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its training and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor Springvale Learning's progress on the areas for improvement.

PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL AREA: RETAIL

The original inspection in June 2011 highlighted strengths in the provision, including the: good range of optional units available within the apprentices' training programme, which are matched well to their workplace training opportunities and their individual training requirements; good relationships and co-operation between the tutors, the apprentices and the employers to facilitate a flexible delivery of the apprenticeship programme; good or better standards of the professional and technical skills achieved in the workplace by most of the apprentices; and good average retention rate, at 85%, and the excellent average achievement rate at 100%.

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

- the inadequate leadership and management of the retail programme, including the planning of the apprentices' directed training, the extent of employer involvement in the workplace training and the use of the self-evaluation process to bring about sustained improvement;
- the insufficient planning of the apprentices' training and assessment to utilise more fully information and learning technology (ILT) and workplace training;
- better integration of the essential skills to the vocational training; and
- the inadequate use of the apprentices' personal training plans to plan, monitor and review the apprentices' acquisition of occupational skills, essential skills, transferable skills and knowledge of career progression opportunities.

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

- the tutors have undertaken relevant professional development, including the Certificate in Teaching programme;
- the implementation of more appropriate management and co-ordination arrangements;
- revised self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes;
- review and revision of the personal training planning process;
- the improved development of ILT to support the apprentices' learning; and
- the integration of more aspects of the essential skills development within the apprentices' vocational training.

The Inspectorate carried out an interim follow-up visit in February 2013 and a follow-up inspection in September 2013.

The following are the most important improvements that have taken place since the original inspection:

- the quality of leadership and management, particularly the focus on strengthening the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes, which are now good;

- the more effective contextualisation of the apprentices' essential skills training and development through the good opportunities that exist within their vocational training;
- the good start to broadening the teaching, training and learning strategies through the provision of group learning sessions, and more effective independent learning by the apprentices through the use of ILT; and
- the on-going development of more robust recording and tracking arrangements to monitor on a regular basis the apprentices' progress against targets.

The areas which require further development are the:

- further refinement of the personal training planning and review processes, particularly to provide a more cohesive approach which links with the electronic recording and tracking systems, and articulates more clearly the role of employers in workplace training; and
- further development and implementation of a wider range of online resources to support the apprentices' training and assessment.

CONCLUSION

In retail, the quality of education and training provided by Springvale Learning is now good. The organisation has important strengths in most of its training and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address. The Inspectorate will monitor Springvale Learning's progress on the areas for improvement.

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