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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

Training for Success Provision

in

RT Resources Limited

Inspected: October 2009

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A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:

More than 90%	-	almost/nearly all
75%-90%	-	most
50%-74%	-	a majority
30%-49%	-	a significant minority
10%-29%	-	a minority
Less than 10%	-	very few/a small minority

All the statistics in this report have been supplied and verified by RT Resources Limited.

1. Grading System

The Education and Training Inspectorate use the following performance levels (grades) in reports:

Performance Level	Grade	Descriptor
Outstanding	1	Outstanding characterised by excellence
Very Good	2	Consistently good; major strengths
Good	3	Important strengths in most of the provision. Areas for improvement which organisation has the capacity to address
Satisfactory	4	Overall sound/satisfactory but with areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed
Inadequate	5	A few strengths; significant areas for improvement which require prompt action
Unsatisfactory	6	Poor; major shortcomings which require urgent action

SUMMARY

1. CONTEXT

1.1 RT Resources Limited (RT Resources) was established in 1998 in Ayr, Scotland. Since September 2008, RT Resources has been contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department), to supply training under the ApprenticeshipsNI programme in the occupational area of glass and glazing at levels 2 and 3, for 22 out of the 26 contract areas.

1.2 In Scotland, RT Resources offers a wide range of training provision across a variety of occupational areas. The glass and glazing provision in Northern Ireland is managed on a part-time basis by an RT Resources marketing manger.

2. PROVISION

2.1 At the time of the inspection, RT Resources was providing training for 16 apprentices, across three programmes; all of the trainees were with two employers. Fourteen of the apprentices were recruited in 2008 and only two were recruited in 2009. Table 1 illustrates the ApprenticeshipsNI registrations at levels 2 and 3 in each programme.

Table 1

Programme	Level	Number of registrations
Glass Processing	2	8
Fenestration Installation	2	1
Fenestration Installation	3	2
Production of Glass Supporting Fabrications	2	3
Production of Glass Supporting Fabrications	3	2

2.2 All of the apprentices are required to complete essential skills qualifications as part of the apprenticeship framework. At the start of the inspection, two of the apprentices had completed a fast-track essential skills qualification in mathematics.

2.3 RT Resources subcontracts the essential skills training for its ApprenticeshipsNI programmes to the Belfast Metropolitan College. The apprentices attend a discrete essential skills class one evening per week.

3. THE INSPECTION

3.1 The inspection took place over two phases, and focused on the quality of training and standards achieved by the apprentices on the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. The first phase of the inspection took place in April 2009, when RT Resources had been operating in Northern Ireland for just eight months; the second phase took place in October 2009.

3.2 A team of inspectors observed the trainees in both directed training and in the workplace. Discussions were held with the RT Resources' marketing manager, assessors, employers and apprentices. The inspectors observed the essential skills provision for the apprentices provided by Belfast Metropolitan College and also held discussions with

representatives of their senior management, and the essential skills tutor. The inspection team also examined samples of apprentices' work, portfolios of evidence, the apprentices' personal training plans (PTPs) and other relevant documentation.

3.3 The arrangements for the inspection of pastoral care and child protection/safeguarding included the opportunity for the apprentices to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings by the inspection team with groups of apprentices from each employer. Sixteen questionnaires were issued to the apprentices, ten (63%) of which were returned to the Inspectorate. The returns show that most of the apprentices are well cared for, guided and supported by RT Resources, and receive good support from the marketing manager in the workplace. The Inspectorate has reported to the marketing manager the outcomes of the questionnaires and the discussions held with the trainees.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of training provided by RT Resources is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in training and learning, achievements and standards, and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the organisation is to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

4.2 The main strengths are the:

- good standards of work achieved by the apprentices; and
- well-motivated adult apprentices, who are keen to achieve their qualifications.

4.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- inadequate leadership and management of the apprenticeship provision;
- inadequate planning and quality of the essential skills provision; and
- insufficient use of the training review process to inform the personal training plans and set appropriate training targets for the apprentices.

Table of Grades

Overall performance level (grade)	Inadequate (5)
Contributory performance levels (grades)	
Leadership and Management	Inadequate (5)
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory (4)
Quality of Provision for Learning	Inadequate (5)
Area of Learning	
Essential Skills	Inadequate (5)

OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The leadership and management of the apprenticeship programmes in RT Resources is inadequate. The senior management team in Scotland provide ineffective strategic leadership and guidance to the marketing manager and there is insufficient planning to integrate effectively the workplace training and the essential skills components of the apprenticeship framework.

5.2 The marketing manager is the sole representative of RT Resources in Northern Ireland and carries out administrative tasks from a small office in Lisburn. The apprentices do not have access to meeting rooms or training rooms where they can use learning resources or receive directed training to support them in their learning. The marketing manager has worked hard to promote glass and glazing apprenticeship programmes across Northern Ireland, but reports that, due to the current economic downturn, it has been difficult to recruit additional apprentices.

5.3 The quality improvement and self-evaluation processes within RT Resources are inadequate. The self-evaluation report is overly descriptive and lacks appropriate evidence to support evaluative statements. As a result, the report does not evaluate effectively the training and learning provided for the apprentices. RT Resources has made too little progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified during the first phase of the inspection in April 2009.

5.4 The mechanisms for reviewing and monitoring the apprentices' progress across the full framework are not effective. Consequently, the procedures for tracking their progress have focussed inappropriately and exclusively on achievement of the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

5.5 The quality and extent of the communication between RT Resources and the Belfast Metropolitan College, with regard to the essential skills provision for the apprentices, is inadequate. As a result there is no service level agreement between RT Resources and the Belfast Metropolitan College for the supply of essential skills.

5.6 The majority of the apprentices work in an automated factory with modern computer numerically controlled cutting machines and on computer aided production lines. A minority of them work on construction sites, where they are supplied with up-to-date tools and equipment for the installation of large aluminium windows. Too few of the apprentices, however, have adequate access to information learning technology resources in the workplace to consolidate and further develop necessary information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

5.7 RT Resources has established good relationships with the two employers. The employers report that RT Resources communicates effectively with them and that they are supported well by the marketing manager, who organises well-planned, timely on-site assessments for the NVQs. In contrast, the employers report that the delays in the provision of the essential skills has had a de-motivating impact on the apprentices.

5.8 Although RT Resources has developed links with Proskills, the sector skills council for the process and manufacturing sector, which includes the glass and glazing industries, only two apprentices were registered in 2009.

6. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

6.1 All of the apprentices are experienced workers in the glass industry and as a result they make good progress through their competency-based NVQs. Thirteen of the apprentices (81%), have completed their NVQ. Of the remaining apprentices, one has yet to complete the assessment and two of them have only recently been registered. The occupational standards achieved by the apprentices in the glass and glazing programmes are good or better. They are well-motivated and enthusiastic about their vocational training; the majority of them have enjoyed returning to formal learning after a prolonged period out of education. It is unacceptable that none of the apprentices has successfully completed their essential skills in both numeracy and literacy. In addition, they have too few opportunities to develop their ICT skills, including on-line research and the contextualised use of word processing or spreadsheet software.

6.2 During the inspection, the apprentices were observed operating computer numerically controlled glass cutting machines, which they used to cut and shape glass panels to a high standard. An apprentice was also observed using computer-aided-design (CAD) software to design and cut decorative glass panels, which matched well the needs and expectations of a private client. In addition, the apprentices were able to unload large glass panels from a delivery vehicle. The apprentices understand clearly company health and safety procedures; for example, they were able to remove carefully and safely a broken glass panel discovered during an unloading operation.

6.3 The apprentices on a construction site were able to take accurate measurements for large bespoke windows in a new primary school building; they were also observed fitting windows to a good standard. They were also well aware of, and benefited from, the high on-site health and safety standards set by the main contractor such as safe areas to receive and make mobile phone calls, continuous tidying of the site into recycling areas, the removal of tripping hazards and a thorough induction process for operatives and site visitors.

6.4 The retention of the first cohort of apprentices to commence training is excellent at 94%. Since the commencement of the glass and glazing apprenticeship programmes in September 2008, only one apprentice has left the programme. In contrast, over the same period only two apprentices have achieved an essential skill qualification in numeracy and it is unsatisfactory that none of them has yet achieved an essential skill qualification in literacy.

6.5 The apprentices' personal and social barriers to learning are not adequately identified in their PTPs and there is no initial record, or tracking, of their progress in important transferable skills such as problem solving and working with others. In addition, the apprentices' portfolios do not record adequately the apprentices' knowledge and understanding of vocational topics. As a result, the apprentices are not involved in agreeing and setting short-term training targets with their NVQ assessors or their employers.

6.6 RT Resources has recently introduced revised and more appropriate level 2 and level 3 portfolios to record the apprentices' progress. The portfolios integrate well the evidence presented by each apprentice for the level 2 and level 3 technical certificates in glass related operations, and the respective NVQs.

7. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

7.1 The quality of the on-the-job training provided by the employers is good; they provide up-to-date training in specialist manufacturing techniques in glass processing, fabrication and installation. The NVQ assessors in the workplace use questioning effectively to draw

out detailed responses from the apprentices to gauge their prior learning. They also provide constructive feedback at all stages of the assessment. The assessors address the identified gaps in the apprentices' knowledge and understanding by providing additional training in the workplace.

7.2 The overall quality of the training and learning in RT Resources' essential skills programme, delivered by Belfast Metropolitan College, is inadequate. There are no training strategies to link the practical work-based tasks with the essential skills directed training. The implementation of the essential skills provision across the apprenticeship programmes has been slow and the provision is not sufficiently contextualised to the glass and glazing industries.

7.3 The quality of the induction provided by RT Resources for the apprentices is satisfactory and covers adequately the administrative requirements of the programmes and health and safety matters. The apprentices, however, were not informed adequately, at the start of their training, about the essential skills elements of each programme. The outcomes of the initial assessments are not well used to plan appropriately for training, learning and progression in the essential skills.

7.4 The quality of the personal training plans is inadequate. They are not sufficiently tailored to meet the personal, social or work-related development needs of individuals. As a result, they do not contain clearly defined targets and outcomes which will help prepare the apprentices for progression to higher level training, further education or employment. Too little cognisance is taken of the outcomes of any initial assessments and there is insufficient evidence of the use of the plan in monitoring and reviewing the apprentices' progress. The processes to identify and provide for the apprentices' requirement for additional learning support are ineffective. Too few of the apprentices interviewed were aware of their personal training plans or the milestones contained within them.

7.5 There are too few opportunities for the apprentices to use information and learning technology in an interesting or challenging way to support or enhance their learning. RT Resources has not developed any on-line resources to support the apprentices as they revise for tests or review topics.

7.6 The arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults do not reflect good practice. In the context of the vetting and barring legislation (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007), the current arrangements for promoting the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults are not sufficiently robust and urgent action is required to address this. In particular RT Resources needs:

- to review, update and implement appropriate policies and arrangements for the protection/safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults; and
- to provide appropriate training on pastoral care, child protection/safeguarding for the designated staff.

7.7 Most of the apprentices receive insufficient careers education, information, advice and guidance, and they do not understand the overall structure of the glass, glazing and wider construction industries, or the career pathways within them. As a result, they are not aware of the career opportunities available to them.

7.8 One of the employers, in addition to the apprenticeship framework, has recently offered their apprentices the opportunity to begin an essential skill in ICT, which will be delivered in off-the-job directed training sessions.

8. AREA OF LEARNING REPORTS

8.1 AREA OF LEARNING: ESSENTIAL SKILLS

In the area inspected, the quality of training provided by the organisation is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in, training and learning, and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the organisation is to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

Summary of Main Findings

The main strength is:

- the high level of motivation of the adult apprentices who are keen to achieve.

The main areas for improvement are the:

- ineffective communication and coordination between RT Resources and Belfast Metropolitan College which has resulted in an inadequate provision;
- poor use of the outcomes of the initial assessment process to plan appropriately for training, learning and progression in the essential skills; and
- inadequate pace of progress in the trainees' acquisition and improvement of their essential skills of literacy and numeracy.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of training provided by RT Resources Limited is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in, learning and teaching, achievements and standards, and leadership and management, which need to be addressed urgently if the organisation is to meet effectively the needs of all of the learners.

The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

10. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

10.1 RT Resources Limited needs to revise the annual development plan to take account of the following key priorities:

- The improved strategic leadership to guide and support the marketing manager in the delivery and expansion of apprenticeships in the glass and glazing industries in Northern Ireland.
- The development of an effective training review process to inform the personal training plans and set appropriate training targets for the apprentices.
- The improved planning and quality of the essential skills provision.

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