



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Training for Success and
ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in
Belfast Central Training

Report of an Inspection in
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Providing Inspection Services for

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1. Context

Belfast Central Training Limited (Belfast Central Training) was established to provide training for people who were unemployed or entering the labour market for the first time. It is contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (Department) to provide professional and technical training under the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes in hairdressing, hospitality and catering, retail and in warehousing and storage¹. The organisation's premises are located on Donegall Street in Belfast where it also operates a commercial hairdressing training salon. The organisation is managed by a curriculum and human resource manager and a finance manager, supported by an assistant manager who is responsible for quality assurance. It employs nine full-time and two part-time tutors, a practical trainer as well as a full-time administrator.

At the time of the inspection, there were 61 trainees registered on the Training for Success programme, and 100 apprentices registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. Most (82%) of the trainees were registered on the Skills for Work level 2 strand², with the remaining trainees being registered on the Skills for Work level 1 strand or on level 1 strands of the legacy Training for Success programme³. On the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, 67 apprentices were registered on the level 2 strand and 33 were registered on the level 3 strand.

On the Training for Success programme, a significant minority (31%) of the trainees had declared no formal qualifications on entry to their training, and 12% had attained four or more GCSEs at grades A* to C. Almost all (90%) of the trainees have essential skill needs in literacy and/or numeracy. A significant minority (35%) of the trainees have identified additional learning needs or disabilities on entry to their training programmes.

On the Apprenticeships NI programme, a significant minority (36%) of the apprentices commenced their training with four or more GCSEs including English and mathematics, at grades A* to C. A significant minority (43%) of the apprentices have essential skill needs in literacy and/or numeracy. At the time of the inspection, 35 of the recently registered apprentices were waiting to access essential skills training.

At the time of the inspection, most (85%) of the trainees on the Training for Success programme were developing their professional and technical skills in a work-placement.

2. Overall Finding

Overall, the quality of training provided by Belfast Central Training is good.

Overall Effectiveness	
Achievements and Standards	Good
Quality of Provision for Learning	Good
Leadership and Management	Good

Professional and Technical Area Performance Levels	
Hospitality and catering	Good
Hairdressing	Very Good
Retail	Good
Essential Skills	Satisfactory

¹ There were no learners registered on the warehousing and storage provision at the time of the inspection.

² There were no trainees registered on the Skills for Your life strand of Training for Success.

³ The Legacy Training for Success programme was introduced in 2007 and was superseded by the Training for Success 2013 programme.

What does Belfast Central Training need to do to bring about further improvement?

- Address the overall satisfactory retention rates on the Training for Success programme;
- Continue to focus on improving the quality of teaching, training and learning for all of the trainees and apprentices by developing and implementing a wider range of strategies to enhance learning, particularly independent learning; and
- Develop further the processes for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning, particularly at professional and technical and essential skills team level.

3. Key Findings of the Inspection

3.1 The achievements and standards are good.

Almost all of the trainees and apprentices are well-motivated and engage positively in their learning. The staff have high expectations of the trainees who respond well to the inclusive ethos of the organisation and, as a result, their behaviour, attendance and punctuality were mostly very good during the inspection. The staff are highly effective in helping most of the trainees and apprentices, including those with multiple barriers to learning, grow in confidence and self-esteem, and to increasingly develop their work-readiness skills. The trainees and apprentices report that they feel well supported by the staff and their employers.

The trainees and apprentices are making good progress in developing their occupational skills and knowledge in the directed training sessions and in the work place. In hairdressing, for example, the majority of the trainees are increasingly developing their skills in blow-drying and apprentices demonstrate high level skills in creative hair styling; in hospitality and catering, the level 3 apprentices are being stretched and challenged to raise the standards of their skills in industry. In retail, the trainees are developing good employability skills and the apprentices have developed their self-confidence in dealing with customers and, as a result of the training, a small number of them have gained promotion to supervisor and manager levels.

Across all of the professional and technical areas, the trainees and apprentices display good or better oral communication skills and use and understand the technical language associated with their occupational area. The quality of the written work in the professional and technical work is variable; it is good in hairdressing but satisfactory in hospitality and catering, and retail. In all of the professional and technical areas, there are not enough opportunities for the trainees and apprentices to develop their extended writing skills. In addition, a minority of the trainees can only transfer their learning to a limited extent from the essential skills to other contexts, including their professional and technical work.

Over the last four years, based on the information supplied by Belfast Central Training, the overall retention rate of the trainees on the Training for Success programme is satisfactory (62%), and almost all (99%) of those who remained achieved their target qualifications. The average retention rate on the Skills for Work level 1 strand is good overall at 64% but has decreased over the last three years from 63% to 54%. Retention has increased over the same period from 49% to 60% on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand. Almost all of the level 2 trainees (99%) who complete their training progress to further education, training or employment.

Over the last four years, the average retention rate on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme has remained consistently very good (81%), with all who remain on programme achieving their full training frameworks.

Over the last four years, the average achievement rates in the essential skills of literacy and numeracy have been outstanding at 100%. A minority of the trainees and apprentices with a low entry profile have the opportunity to progress across two levels, this good practice needs to be embedded further to increase the number achieving at a level above that required by their framework.

3.2 The quality of the provision for learning is good.

Belfast Central Training provides a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum in the areas of hairdressing, hospitality and catering, and retail and there are appropriate progression pathways available for the learners to progress from level 1 to level 3. In hospitality and catering, and in retail, the units have been particularly well-mapped to match the skills and competences the trainees and apprentices need to support their ongoing development in their work roles.

Whilst there are appropriate initial and diagnostic assessment processes in place, the outcomes of assessments are not used effectively to plan for differentiated learning across the provision at all levels. In hairdressing and retail, an appropriate induction programme is in place for the trainees and apprentices to introduce them effectively to their programme. In hospitality and catering, however, the arrangements are only satisfactory; there is a need for a more structured induction programme to inform the trainees and apprentices more effectively about all aspects of their programme. Across all of the professional and technical areas, a more robust selection process has recently been introduced for the level 3 ApprenticeshipsNI programme. This process incorporates improved pre-entry guidance for the applicants so that they are more fully informed of the requirements and expectations of their programme.

The quality of the teaching, training and learning ranges from outstanding to satisfactory, and is good overall. It is a particular strength in the hairdressing provision. The most effective sessions are planned well, good links are made to the trainees' and apprentices' work role, differentiation strategies are used well to meet the needs of all the trainees and apprentices, and a supportive and respectful ethos for learning is evident in the sessions, with high levels of engagement of the trainees and apprentices in their learning. In the less effective practice, the planning for learning and the associated schemes of work do not clearly identify the intended learning outcomes, there is an over reliance on whole-class teaching, and differentiation strategies to support the less able and to challenge the more able learners are underdeveloped. The organisation needs to improve further the quality of the teaching, training and learning by supporting staff to develop a wider range of appropriate approaches to support learning, particularly independent learning.

The quality of the assessment across all of the professional and technical areas is good. Assessment activities are generally well-planned and, in all of the professional and technical areas, the organisation has in place an electronic portfolio system to record evidence for assessment. The electronic portfolios and electronic resources are used well in hairdressing, however, in hospitality and catering, and retail they are not yet fully embedded and used effectively by the trainees and apprentices. In these areas, the evidence is mainly collected and uploaded by the tutors and there is a need for the tutors to encourage the trainees and apprentices to take more responsibility for uploading the assessment evidence themselves. The trainees' and apprentices' summative assessment work is well-prepared and presented. The formative work, however, is too focussed on the completion of routine

tasks and needs to support better the trainees' and apprentices' progression to higher levels of work. In hairdressing, there is very good use of Information and learning technology (ILT) in the directed training sessions, such as the effective use of Internet sourced video clips and resources linked to the electronic portfolio, which enhances effectively the learning experience. The use of ILT is not sufficiently exploited in hospitality and catering, and in retail.

All of the trainees and the hairdressing apprentices have access to a range of good quality enrichment activities, including e-safety training. In addition, a small number of the hairdressing trainees have the opportunity to participate in the training organised as part of the tutors' continuing professional development programme, and skills competitions. There are, however, limited opportunities for the trainees and apprentices in hospitality and catering, and retail to undertake appropriate work-related enrichment activities.

The quality of the workplace training is mostly of a high quality in hairdressing, and hospitality and catering with clear evidence of up-skilling taking place. The trainees and apprentices are provided with good opportunities to develop their occupational, as well as their personal, social and transferrable skills. In retail, however, the training mostly affirms the apprentices existing skills with less emphasis on up-skilling.

The quality of the pastoral care for the trainees and the apprentices is very good. There is a strong inclusive ethos and commitment at all levels in Belfast Central Training to the trainees' and apprentices' care and wellbeing and to providing support to meet their individual personal and emotional needs. The staff have high expectations for the achievements of the trainees and apprentices and for providing positive experiences within the organisation. Relationships between the staff and trainees and apprentices are very positive and are based on respect and trust. The trainees report that they feel well supported and cared for within the organisation.

The quality of additional learning support is very good. Very good links have been established with an appropriate and broad range of relevant external agencies to provide the support that the trainees need to enable them to overcome their individual challenges, and to help them achieve to their full potential. The support for trainees and apprentices is provided within the organisation by staff and, where appropriate, by visiting support agencies such as Disability Action and Nexus. This is supplemented by appropriate signposting to a range of other external support organisations. Belfast Central Training continually review the strategies they use to engage more effectively with parents and carers, to try to keep them informed about the progress of individual trainees.

The quality of the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is variable but is good overall. Most of the trainees and apprentices are informed of possible career opportunities and progression pathways in their professional and technical area by both their tutors and employers. Belfast Central Training has established good links with the Department's careers service and there is a good focus on the development of the trainees' wider employability skills. Nevertheless, Belfast Central Training should implement a more formalised and structured approach to the provision of CEIAG to ensure that all of the trainees and apprentices are better informed about a wider range of progression pathways to further education and training that may be available to them. In addition, the organisation should ensure the CEIAG provision is aligned to the employability and personal development elements of their programme and develop a wider range of relevant careers resources.

The quality of the personal training planning process is variable and ranges from satisfactory to good and is satisfactory overall. The training plans are not consistently updated with the trainees' and apprentices' progress and the key targets for improvement do not clearly identify the occupational and transferable skills they need to develop over the review period.

3.3 The quality of the leadership and management is good.

The leadership of the organisation is effective in promoting harmonious working relationships across the organisation. Roles and responsibilities are mostly well-defined. Belfast Central Training has recognised the need to build capacity and plan for the future leadership of the organisation and has expanded the management team to include a new role of assistant manager. The assistant manager has been supported well in her role through effective mentoring by the managers of the organisation and through being supported to successfully complete a level 5 leadership and management course.

There are open channels of communication between staff at all levels and a collegiate approach to work. The management and staff have a shared vision and they are all highly committed to developing high quality provision that meets the needs of the trainees and apprentices. They have high expectations of the trainees and apprentices and provide them with very good levels of support. The management and co-ordination of the professional and technical training programmes is mostly effective. In essential skills, there is a newly formed team in place led by a recently appointed co-ordinator. Many of the proposals for change and development are still at the planning stage and need to be embedded more fully. There are too few curriculum team meetings to enable the professional and technical and essential skills tutors to work together effectively, and plan for the better integration of the essential skills across the programmes.

Belfast Central Training is developing innovative models of provision in conjunction with employers, such as the Chef Academy which aims to attract high quality school leavers to the industry, and the fast-track retail level 3 apprenticeship to meet the needs of a large national company. The new provision will enhance the existing curriculum and provide better opportunities for trainees and apprentices to progress within these sectors.

Most of the staff are well-qualified and experienced in their professional and technical areas and essential skills. Belfast Central Training has demonstrated a commitment to raising the quality of the teaching, training and learning and the development of the tutors' pedagogic practice, and a small number of tutors have been supported to progress to the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Further Education). The organisation has supported the professional and technical tutors to undertake a range of continuous professional development, such as industry placement and upskilling activities. In addition, external training was delivered on self-evaluation and improvement planning to build the capacity of staff to self evaluate. It is timely and appropriate that the organisation is supporting the continuing professional development of the essential skills co-ordinator.

Self-evaluation arrangements are effective in identifying the main areas for improvement in the provision, however, the associated actions identified in the overall organisation quality improvement plan need to be clearer and more specific. The management team have put in place an appropriate quality cycle which includes key monitoring points throughout the year and engagement with key stakeholders. The management team also undertake lesson observations as part of this process, however, greater use needs to be made of these observations to target staff development activity and to improve the overall quality of teaching, training and learning. Individual self-evaluation reports have been compiled for each of the professional and technical areas and for essential skills, however, the tutors' use of data, self-reflection skills, and action planning are all areas for further development.

Although systems are in place to track the progress of the trainees and apprentices in each of the professional and technical areas, there is a need to implement a mechanism by which the trainees' and apprentices' progress can be tracked and monitored across all elements of their programme. The organisation recognises the need to urgently implement a management information system to enable key performance data to be collated and analysed regularly to inform improvement planning.

Belfast Central Training has very strong relationships with employers across a wide range of small, medium and large companies in each of the three professional and technical areas. These include large multinational retail chains, prestigious hotels and restaurants, and a wide range of hairdressing salons. There is good communication with employers and the training and qualifications are valued by them, the trainees and apprentices.

The organisation has invested significantly in the refurbishment of its accommodation and in resources including, interactive whiteboards, tablet computers, laptops, and interactive training packages to support and enhance the learning experience of the trainees and apprentices. There is, however, a lack of space for trainees and apprentices to socialise in the premises.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, while the arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable groups comply satisfactorily with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007, the following areas need to be addressed by the organisation:

- ensure all staff undertake appropriate update training; and
- extend the code of practice for staff to include more guidance on one-to-one interviews with trainees and apprentices.

4. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of training provided by Belfast Central Training is good. Belfast Central Training has important strengths in most of its training and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for development which the organisation has demonstrated its capacity to address. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor Belfast Central Training's progress on the areas for development.

5. Professional and Technical Reports

5.1 Essential Skills

Key findings

In essential skills, the quality of training provided by Belfast Central Training is satisfactory.

Context

Belfast Central Training offers all its trainees and apprentices the opportunity to undertake the essential skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Appropriate essential skills training is in place for all of the trainees. By contrast, however, only eight of the apprentices are currently undertaking the essential skills and a further 35 recently registered apprentices are awaiting training. The organisation should address this training need as soon as possible.

The achievements and standards are good.

The trainees' and apprentices' levels of motivation are mostly good and the standards of behaviour in the essential skills sessions visited are very good. The trainees and apprentices are encouraged and supported effectively to develop positive learning dispositions and most report favourably on their learning experiences in the essential skills, and demonstrate enjoyment in their learning. The overall standard of the trainees' and apprentices' work is mostly good in each of the essential skills. All of the trainees and apprentices achieve good standards of oral communication skills and display good levels of self-confident communication in the workplace. While there is some evidence of the application of the essential skills in hairdressing through the vocational work, there is more limited evidence in hospitality and catering and in retail where only a minority of the trainees' demonstrate the capacity to apply their learning in the essential skills to support their written work, particularly their extended writing. Whilst the standard of the trainees' and apprentices' summative work is mostly good in the essential skills more needs to be done to develop the formative work which has a narrow skills development focus.

The broad outcomes across the essential skills have been consistently outstanding over the last three years with all of the trainees and apprentices who complete their training achieving all of the essential skills required by their framework. All of the trainees and apprentices are given the opportunity and support to progress across two levels of the essential skills and a minority achieve the essential skills at a level higher than that required by their framework. More, however, more needs to be done to report on the outcomes achieved in each of the levels of the essential skills.

The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory

All of the essential skills staff work consistently to provide a very supportive learning environment for all of the trainees and apprentices, who are currently accessing essential skills, and they have established a very good rapport with all of them. There are appropriate initial and diagnostic assessment processes in place but more work is needed to match the outcomes of these processes to planning more effectively for differentiated learning across the provision at all levels. The quality of the teaching, training and learning ranges from good to satisfactory but is mostly satisfactory. In the better sessions, the pace of learning was appropriate, tutors used a selection of well-prepared resources, and there was effective integration of ILT to support progress in learning. In these sessions, there was evidence of skilful questioning to probe and extend understanding. In the satisfactory sessions, whilst the trainees and apprentices engaged with the learning process, the pace of learning was slow, there was an over-reliance on whole class teaching, limited effective differentiation, limited use of appropriate contextualisation, and too little time planned, and afforded, to the trainees and apprentices to talk about their learning. In addition, in these sessions, there was limited evidence of the integration of the essential skills within most of the professional and technical areas, and the work undertaken was largely assessment driven. Work is underway, however, to develop more effective links between the essential skills and the personal development, employability and careers areas of the curriculum.

The quality of the leadership and management is satisfactory.

The quality of the leadership and management of the essential skills is satisfactory. There have been significant staffing changes which have impacted negatively on the continuity of the provision. The organisation has restructured the delivery team and has recently appointed a new co-ordinator for the essential skills provision. The new roles are at an early stage of development and need to be embedded more fully in order to address the key actions for improvement. These actions include the review and updating of the essential

skills policy, the strengthening of the cycle of tutor observations, and the strengthening of links with the professional and technical tutors to improve contextualisation and to embed a shared understanding of standards. The planning at management level for investment in the continuing professional development of the essential skills team and management should continue to ensure that all essential skills staff's qualifications meet the requirements of the Department and that the development of a suitably wide range of pedagogic practices remains the firm focus of staff development.

Whilst there is an individual self-evaluation report for the essential skills, the process lacks evaluative rigour and is not well informed by robust data analysis. All of the new essential skills team, together with the management, are fully committed to an improvement agenda, and planning is in place to bring about improvements in both the quality of the provision and in leadership and management.

5.2 Hairdressing

Key findings

In hairdressing, the quality of training provided by Belfast Central Training is very good.

Context

Belfast Central Training offers hairdressing on all strands of the Training for Success programme and at levels 2 and 3 on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. During the inspection, there were 49 trainees registered on the on the Training for Success programme and 16 apprentices registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

The achievements and standards are good.

In the directed training sessions observed, almost all of the trainees and apprentices engage well in their learning and demonstrate enthusiasm for their training. They are well supported to overcome their barriers to learning and increasingly gain employability skills. The tutors work hard to raise the expectations and self-confidence of all of the trainees and apprentices. The employers report that they have benefitted from the high calibre of trainee on the programme. The trainees gain relevant workplace experiences and the apprentices have appropriate job roles that complement their training. Levels of attendance and punctuality in directed training are very good for most of the trainees and apprentices.

The professional and technical standards of work demonstrated by the trainees and apprentices are mostly good and almost all of them are making good progress towards achieving their accreditation. Most of the trainees' and apprentices' assessment portfolios are well structured and the quality of their written work is mostly good or better. Most of the trainees are able to undertake effectively an appropriate range of salon based tasks; such as blow-drying and customer consultation. The apprentices demonstrate a high level of expertise and engage well in up-styling and vintage hair techniques through practical demonstrations and peer to peer learning. The tutors integrate well the essential skills within the learning experience, although the trainees and apprentices would benefit from more opportunities to develop their independent writing skills.

Based on the data provided by the organisation, overall outcomes are satisfactory (63%) for Training for Success and good (71%) for ApprenticeshipsNI; and the average progression rate for those who complete their training is outstanding at 99%.

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The quality of the teaching, training and learning is a key strength of the provision. In the observed directed training sessions, the quality of teaching, training and learning was very good or better. The sessions had clear learning objectives and a range of practical activities to motivate and encourage the trainees and apprentices. The tutors provide well-planned opportunities for the trainees and apprentices to engage in practical industry relevant experiences. Peer to peer activities are used effectively to support the trainees' and apprentices' develop their professional and technical skills, while also improving their team work and communication skills. The tutors use a range of ILT productively to enhance and support the trainees' and apprentices' learning experiences.

The tutors have developed an excellent rapport with the trainees and apprentices and provide a high level of care, guidance and support that is delivered effectively to almost all of them. There is appropriate pre-entry guidance provided for all of the trainees and apprentices. This has been further strengthened with the introduction of a level 3 selection panel which has proved highly effective and ensured that the apprentices are well informed about the requirements of the programme prior to commencing training. The trainees and apprentices are provided with up-to-date careers advice and the majority of them are well informed about their career pathway.

The personal training plans are working documents which reflect accurately the progress of the trainees and apprentices. The electronic portfolio is used to good effect to support the efficient co-ordination and delivery of the programme.

The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The leadership and management effectively support the professional and technical area, including the operation of a commercial salon. The tutors are well qualified and have a wide range of professional experience and expertise. The focus of the learning experience in the salon on additional practical training to provide invaluable hands-on support for the trainees and apprentices is highly beneficial to the development of their skills. The organisation provides an engaging learning environment which is well resourced and includes a range of ILT to support learning.

The tutors are encouraged to participate in ongoing professional development opportunities, including sector specific training, to enhance their teaching and training expertise. There is an appropriate emphasis placed on encouraging and supporting trainees and apprentices to achieve to their full potential. The hairdressing staff collaborate well with a range of external support services to improve the experiences of the trainees and apprentices. The tutors maintain a high level of employer engagement and deliver a flexible provision of work-based training that meets well the needs of employers across the sector.

The internal verification and standardisation processes are robust and contribute well to the quality assurance of the provision. The processes for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning are established, and should be strengthened further to specify measurable outcomes for improvement in the professional and technical area.

5.3 Hospitality and catering

Key findings

In hospitality and catering, the quality of training provided by Belfast Central Training is good.

Context

The professional and technical area of hospitality and catering is offered on Training for Success programmes at levels 1 and 2 and at levels 2 and 3 on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. At the time of the inspection three trainees were registered on the Training for Success, one at Level 1 and two at Level 2. 63 apprentices were registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, 48 at Level 2 and 15 at Level 3.

The achievements and standards are good

The standard of the trainees' and apprentices' occupational skills range from good to very good. Most of the trainees and apprentices are making good progress with their training and they display good occupational skills in their job role, including the development of a good level of understanding of health, safety and hygiene regulations within the workplace. There is evidence that some of the learners are challenged beyond the requirements of the awarding body to raise the standards of their skills in industry, for example, in the extensive range of units covered on the level 2 professional cookery. The trainees and apprentices display good or better oral communication skills and are well motivated and engaged. There are, however, limited opportunities to extend the quality of their written work due in part to the overuse of multiple-choice question tests and worksheets. Most of the trainees and apprentices are not sufficiently motivated to use or challenged to use or access the electronic resources and electronic portfolio. As a result, there is an over-reliance on the tutors to upload the trainees' and apprentices' assessment evidence to the electronic portfolio and this is inhibiting the development of their independent skills. Trainees and apprentices report that their confidence has increased as a result of their participation in the training. There is good progression for trainees to the apprenticeship programme and from level 2 to level 3 apprenticeships, which is encouraged and supported by most employers.

Based on the data provided by the organisation, the retention rate over the last four years is good at 77%. It was satisfactory on the Training for Success programme at 56% and very good at 81% on the ApprenticeshipNI programme. All of the trainees and apprentices who remain achieve their full qualification. Progression is outstanding at 92% for trainees and 100% for apprentices.

The quality of the provision for learning is good

The induction arrangements in place to prepare the trainees and apprentices for their training programme are satisfactory and a more structured approach would better support them. In particular they need to be better informed about the learning journey ahead of them and the milestones along the way. The broad, balanced and flexible curriculum available in hospitality and catering is well-matched to the needs of the trainees, apprentices and employers. The planning for training sessions is mostly good, however some of the schemes of work and lesson plans require further development, identifying more clearly the intended learning and differentiation strategies to be used to support the needs of all the trainees and apprentices. The quality of the teaching, training and learning in the directed training sessions ranges from good to very good. Of particular note is the very good quality of the "hands on" practical approach to delivering cooking skills in the employers' premises. Assessments are carried out with rigour and ILT is used effectively by the tutors, with all evidence recorded and uploaded to the electronic portfolios, for example, photos of completed dishes, audio voice recordings of professional discussions, and photos of "before and after" used in housekeeping.

A particular strength of the hospitality and catering provision, is the very good range of high quality workplaces and the strong partnerships the training organisation have developed with the employers. The tutors have a good rapport with the trainees and apprentices and provide them with good levels of support. The quality of the personal training plans is variable; they are not used as a working document with clearly identified targets and tracking of progression to support and promote the progression of the trainees and apprentices. While there is evidence of some very good individual support with careers advice and guidance, a minority of trainees and apprentices have limited knowledge of potential career pathways in the hospitality and catering industry. A more formalised and structured approach to careers advice and guidance would assist them in fulfilling their potential.

The quality of the leadership and management is good

The leadership and management of the hospitality and catering provision is effective, with a clear vision to expand the provision. Plans and partnerships with employers are in place to set up a Chef Academy to recruit school leavers onto a fast track programme and to progress them to the apprenticeship programme. While there are self-evaluation and planning for improvement processes in place, the self-evaluation report is not sufficiently evaluative. There is a need to develop further the tutors' self-reflective skills and for them to participate more fully in the self-evaluation process, in order to promote improvement in the quality of the provision.

The recently appointed co-ordinator has extensive industrial experience which is regularly updated through continuing professional development activities in industry. All of the tutors are highly committed and suitably qualified. There are well established and productive links with employers. Employers report that there is effective communication and consistent contact with the training organisation. The introduction of the electronic portfolio is a positive step and this now needs to be further embedded into the learning for the trainees and apprentices. While the electronic portfolio's tracking and monitoring system is in place for the professional and technical units, there is a need for a more holistic tracking system to track and monitor the trainee' and apprentices' overall progress across all elements of their programme, including the essential skills.

5.4 Retail

Key findings

In retail, the quality of training provided by Belfast Central Training is good.

Context

At the time of the inspection, nine trainees were registered on the Skills for Work level 2 strand of the Training for Success programme, and 21 were registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme; 18 at level 2 and three at level 3. At the time of the inspection, six (67%) of the trainees had a relevant work placement, which they attended for three days each week.

The achievements and standards are good.

The quality and standards of the trainees' and apprentices' work are mostly good, and are in-line with their ability levels. The trainees on the Training for Success programme are well motivated and participate effectively in their training programme; for example, in one session, they participated well in a 'mystery-shopper' exercise to identify retail practices in a number of large city-centre stores. Their written work and presentation are of an appropriate standard, however, opportunities for them to develop extended pieces of writing are limited.

The apprentices, and those trainees with work placements, have good opportunities to develop and apply their occupational skills in relevant settings. They carry out a range of tasks to a good standard and are developing good employability skills. Those trainees without a work placement undertake an appropriate range of in-house administration and training tasks to enhance their employability skills. Feedback from employers is positive and they report that they are kept well-informed about the progress being made by the trainees and apprentices. Most of the employers report that the trainees and apprentices have: developed confidence and good interpersonal skills when dealing with customers; undertaken in-house training to enhance their skills; and gained promotion to supervisor and other management roles, in a small number of cases, as a result of undertaking their training programme.

Over the past four years, the average retention rate on the Training for Success programme is satisfactory at 57%, it is very good at 80% on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme; the overall retention rate is good at 74%. All of the trainees and apprentices who completed their programmes achieved their full training frameworks.

The quality of the provision for learning is good.

The quality of both the directed and workplace training observed was good. There is evidence of appropriate planning by the tutors with an emphasis on the use of practical and active learning tasks to engage the trainees on the Training for Success programme; for example, the use of a task, based on the Apprentice television programme format, to allow two groups to set up and compete in a small business venture, with identified links between the professional and technical area, the essential skills, and the learning support needs of the trainees. While the workplace training is regular and well-planned, with good relationships developed with employers and workplace supervisors, it consists mostly of the observation of the trainees' and apprentices' existing skills and competences and work practices with limited up-skilling taking place. The tutors make good use of mobile devices to record the outcomes of the workplace visits and a suitable electronic portfolio system is in place for the trainees and apprentices to record their evidence requirements.

The quality of the learning resources is good, however, these tend to be mostly paper-based and consideration should be given to the development and use of more electronic learning materials to support and enhance the trainees' and apprentices' learning experiences. The assessment tasks set are of an appropriate standard, they are matched well to the abilities of the trainees and apprentices, however, the use of marking for improvement and the provision of positive and constructive feedback in their portfolios of evidence is limited. In addition, while the tutors have developed systems to record and track the progress of the trainees and apprentices in their professional and technical training, no mechanism is currently in place to record and track their overall progress across all elements of their training programmes.

While most of the trainees and apprentices interviewed are aware of possible career progression pathways, the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance is mostly informal and, for the trainees, is not aligned sufficiently to the employability and personal development elements of their training programme.

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

The retail provision is effectively co-ordinated; an appropriate curriculum offer is in place to meet the learning and progression needs of the trainees and apprentices, and the programme content is sufficiently tailored to match their specific job roles. Effective links have been established with a range of key regional and national retail stores to support the delivery of the retail training programmes. The provision of enrichment activities such as the use of guest speakers and external visits to support learning are currently under-developed. Staff are well-qualified and experienced in the delivery of retail training programmes, and they are provided with good opportunities to undertake continuing professional development. The quality of the training accommodation and physical learning resources is good. While self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes are in place, these are mostly descriptive and do not identify clearly enough key strengths and areas for improvement, or make effective use of key performance data to monitor outcomes and promote on-going improvement across the training programmes.

6. Inspection method and evidence base

The inspection focused on:

- the achievements and standards;
- the effectiveness of the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes;
- the quality of provision for training and learning; and
- the quality of the leadership and management of the organisation.

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation in these three aspects of training supplier organisations, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI's publication *Improving Quality: Raising Standards Work-based Learning* <http://www.eti.gov.uk/index/improving-quality-raising-standards/improving-quality-raising-standards-iqrs-work-based-learning.htm>

A team of five inspectors and two Associate Assessors observed a total of 20 directed training sessions and ten work place training sessions. Inspectors visited workplaces and trainees and apprentices were interviewed in focus groups. The inspectors also held discussions with the management team, co-ordinators and tutors. In addition, inspectors examined samples of the trainees' and apprentices' work, tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans and trainees' and apprentices' personal training plans. The organisation's self-evaluation report and other relevant documentation were also scrutinised.

The inspection also focused on the arrangements for care, support and guidance and the safeguarding of vulnerable groups. The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the trainees and apprentices to complete a confidential online questionnaire prior to the inspection.

The returns from the trainees and apprentices were very positive and indicated that they felt that the training programme met their needs, that the staff and the organisation care about them and their progress, and that they felt safe and secure.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned (%)	Number with comments
Learners	161	70	42%	9

7. Information about Belfast Central Training

Current registrations by programme

Programme	Number of trainees/ apprentices	% of total registrations
ApprenticeshipsNI	100	62%
Training for Success (2008) Skills for Your Life	0	0%
Training for Success (2008) Skills for Work	3	2%
Training for Success (2008) Programme-Led Apprenticeship	4	2%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Your Life	0	0%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (level 1)	4	2%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (level 2)	50	31%

Current registrations by professional and technical area

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations
Hairdressing	49	80%
Hospitality and catering	3	5%
Retail	9	15%
Professional and technical area	Number of apprentices	% of total registrations
Hairdressing	16	16%
Hospitality and catering	63	63%
Retail	21	21%

Qualifications of current trainees/apprentices on entry to their programme

Programme	Training for Success (%)	ApprenticeshipsNI (%)
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C including English and mathematics	(5) 9%	(36) 36%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C	(7) 12%	(49) 49%
(%) of learners with GCSE English and mathematics or equivalent at Grades A*-C	(4) 7%	(40) 40%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-G	(31) 53%	(38) 38%
(%) of learners with no prior level 1 or level 2 qualifications	(18) 31%	(19) 19%

Note: All data was sourced from Belfast Central Training at the time of the inspection.

8. Quantitative terms used by the ETI

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

Performance levels

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

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicators and Definitions	
Retention	The percentage of enrolments at week 4 of year one who completed their occupational training framework, measured over the full duration of their course.
Achievement	The percentage of trainees/apprentices who completed their occupational training framework and who fully achieved their framework qualification.
Progression	The percentage of successful completers who progressed to further/higher education/training or employment.

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