



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Training for Success and
ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in
Workforce Training Services
Limited

Report of an Inspection in
June 2014

Contents

Section	Page
1. Context	1
2. Overall finding	2
3. Key findings of the inspection	2
4. Conclusion	6
5. Professional and technical reports	6
6. Inspection method and evidence base	15
7. Information about Workforce Training Services Limited	16
8. Quantitative terms used by the ETI	17

1. Context

Workforce Training Services Limited (Workforce) is a company limited by guarantee and registered for charitable status. The organisation, first established in 1978 as Clowney Youth Training Programme, aims to meet the needs of young people from the West Belfast area who are disaffected or marginalised through social or emotional difficulties, poor educational achievement or lack of employment. Workforce is managed by the general manager and is supported by a deputy manager and an operational manager. The general manager reports to a Board of Trustees.

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure [NIMDM] identifies West Belfast as the most deprived parliamentary constituency area within Northern Ireland. Currently most (86%) of the trainees reside in ten out of the eleven most deprived wards in Northern Ireland. Each of these areas has high levels of unemployment and low levels of educational attainment.

The organisation is contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (Department) to provide the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes. Currently, it delivers the Training for Success programme in the professional and technical areas of: business administration; children's care learning and development; hairdressing; hospitality and catering; information technology (multimedia); transportation operations and maintenance; and wood occupations. The organisation delivers the ApprenticeshipsNI programme in: business administration; children's care learning and development; hairdressing; hospitality and catering; transportation operations and maintenance; and wood occupations. While Workforce is also contracted to deliver the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes in agriculture, information technology, painting and decorating and trowel occupations no trainees or apprentices were registered in any of these areas at the time of the inspection.

During the inspection, there were 306 trainees registered on the Training for Success programme and 43 apprentices registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. Of the 306 trainees, 140 were legacy¹ Training for Success trainees and 166 were registered under the new Training for Success 2013 programme. Of the newly registered trainees, 13 were on the Skills for Your Life strand, 51 on the Skills for Work level 1 strand and 102 on the Skills for Work level 2 strand.

A minority (19%) of the trainees have a disability, special educational needs or are from a care background. The organisation reports that many of the young people who present to them have a range of barriers to learning, the most prevalent being mental health issues, addictions and involvement with the criminal justice system. Almost two-thirds of the trainees have declared no formal qualifications on entry to their training programme. Around 10% of the trainees and 23% of the apprentices entered the programme with four or more GCSE passes or equivalent at grades A* to C. Only 6% of the trainees hold a GCSE qualification at grade C or better in English and mathematics.

¹ The legacy Training for Success programme introduced in 2008 was superseded by Training for Success 2013.

2. Overall finding

Overall, the quality of training provided by Workforce Training Services Limited is very good.

Overall Performance Level	Very Good
Achievements and Standards	Very Good
Quality of Provision for Learning	Very Good
Leadership and Management	Very Good

Professional and technical areas performance levels	
Business Administration	Very Good
Essential Skills	Very Good
Hairdressing	Very Good
Information Technology (Multimedia)	Very Good
Transportation Operations and Maintenance	Good
Wood Occupations	Very Good

What does Workforce Training Services Limited need to do to improve?

- continue to improve the retention rate for the ApprenticeshipsNI programme;
- further develop employer engagement at a strategic level to support the necessary development and growth of the apprenticeship provision; and
- review the middle management arrangements to ensure more effective co-ordination of all aspects of the transportation operations and maintenance provision.

3. Key findings of the inspection

3.1 Achievements and standards are very good.

Almost all of the trainees and apprentices are well-engaged in their learning and make very good progress in their training. Attendance and behaviour in the sessions observed were mostly very good. There are good opportunities through the well-thought out curriculum provided for the trainees and apprentices to achieve beyond the minimum required in their framework, across all of the professional and technical areas. Most of them are developing good or better literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They speak confidently about their experiences in the organisation and the skills they have developed. Across the provision, the marking for improvement is mostly good and the trainees and apprentices benefit from constructive feedback on how to improve their work.

Most of the trainees and apprentices develop an appropriate range of good or better occupational skills; the standards of work in their portfolios and in the workplace are mostly very good. In transportation operations and maintenance, for example, they are able to work to an appropriate industry standard. The multimedia trainees are making effective use of iMac technology that the workplace providers value highly. Nearly all of the employers visited spoke positively about the trainees' and apprentices' time-keeping and punctuality.

Over the last four years, based on the information supplied by Workforce, a majority (69%) of the trainees on the Training for Success programme are retained, and most (86%) of those who remain achieve the full framework. Most of the trainees (87%) progress to further training or employment. The retention rate on the Skills for Your Life strand has improved consistently over the last three years and is now good at 60%; all of those who stay achieve their target qualifications. The retention rate on the Skills for Work level 1 programme is very good at 76% and all those who stay achieve. The retention rate on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand has improved to 65% over the last three years and is now satisfactory; the achievement rate for the programme is 67%. Nearly all of the trainees who do not complete the full framework requirement successfully achieve a technical certificate and the essential skills.

Over the last four years, it is a concern that just under one-half of the apprentices on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme are retained. While the numbers of apprentices are small overall (less than 3%), this has appropriately been identified by the organisation as an area for ongoing improvement; the range of actions taken over the last two years have had positive results for the current cohort of apprentices and the retention is currently 94%. All the apprentices who stay achieve the full framework.

Over the last four years, the average achievement rate in literacy, numeracy and ICT has been 97%. Last year, a significant minority (31%) and a majority (65%) of the trainees and apprentices achieved an essential skill beyond the minimum requirements of their framework in literacy and in numeracy respectively, many of them from a low baseline on entry.

3.2 The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The curriculum is well-planned to meet the individual needs of the trainees and apprentices to ensure that they have the opportunity to complete full qualifications and gain suitable work experiences to enable them to progress to employment or further training. For example, in transportation operations and maintenance the curriculum has been carefully planned to provide opportunities for the level 1 trainees to complete a good blend of level 1, 2 and 3 units. A strength of the provision is the residential and action days that are organised for the trainees and apprentices which provide excellent opportunities for personal development and to gain team-building skills.

In nearly all (96%) of the directed training sessions observed, the quality of the teaching, training and learning was good or better, with just over one-half (55%) very good or outstanding. In all of the sessions, the tutors have excellent relationships with the trainees and apprentices, underpinned by mutual respect and high expectations. The better sessions were characterised by a very good range of pedagogy, including effective planning, differentiated learning strategies, skilful questioning and appropriate use of information and learning technology (ILT) resulting in excellent levels of engagement by the trainees and apprentices. In business administration, good use was made of tablet computers in the group work activities, which added to the learning experiences for the trainees. There are some very good examples of the professional and technical tutors providing opportunities for the learners to further develop their essential skills through extended writing. In the small number of less effective sessions, the teaching, training and learning was over-directed by the tutors resulting in the trainees and apprentices not having sufficient opportunities to engage in their own learning.

A high priority is given to providing good workplace experiences for the trainees and staff use all of the information available to ensure a close match between the placement and the individual needs and aspirations of trainees. At the time of the inspection most (83%) of the trainees were in placement. For those trainees not in a placement appropriate work-related project work is provided.

The quality of the arrangements for the care, guidance and support of the trainees and apprentices is outstanding. There is a strong inclusive ethos across the organisation which permeates all aspects of the provision. A comprehensive and well-planned induction programme is in place, which does much to set expectations and underpin the positive, learner-centred ethos. The processes and systems for identifying and managing individual support needs are well-established and effective. A coherent approach to planning, identifying, reviewing and supporting the trainees' individual needs is in place and works well. The pastoral care team work hard to ensure that all trainees and apprentices are given effective pre-entry advice and guidance and tailored support throughout the duration of their training programme.

The team engages well with trainees and apprentices, tutors, administrative staff and external agencies to provide effective support for the care, welfare and progress of all trainees and apprentices. Support strategies, which often include an input from external agencies, are deployed effectively to meet the guidance and support needs of the trainees and apprentices, including the provision of specialist equipment and support with educational, personal, social and financial issues. The staff at all levels in the organisation work effectively to establish collaborative links with the parents or guardians of the trainees to strengthen the support they receive at home to help them to be successful on their training programme. At all times, the staff strongly encourage and support the trainees to develop their independence and increasingly to take more responsibility for their learning. As a result most of the trainees and apprentices overcome successfully many of their barriers to learning and progression.

The quality of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is very good. The level and extent of the careers support is aligned well to professional and technical areas and ensures effective individual career planning and guidance. The careers and employability staff provide a timetabled programme of careers advice and guidance, which is an integral part of the curriculum and meets well the needs of trainees and apprentices. The organisation has established a Job Club which provides trainees and apprentices with a good range of high quality, well-organised and up-to-date resources to support the development of employability and work-readiness skills. These arrangements enable most trainees and apprentices to make effective career decisions and to gain access to relevant work placements and viable progression pathways.

All trainees on the Training for Success programme are provided with a very well-planned employability and personal development programme to help them develop the skills they need in their training and to seek and maintain work placements. The personal training plans are mostly good and are complemented to good effect by the comprehensive records kept by the pastoral care team. The trainees have regular reviews in the workplace that are used to set appropriate targets.

3.3 The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The leadership and management of Workforce by the general manager and deputy manager is highly effective. The general manager has a strong and appropriate strategic vision for the organisation. Excellent relationships have been established with a number of other providers including the local further education college. As a result, a wide range of appropriate progression pathways are provided for the trainees and apprentices.

The Board of Trustees is highly committed and supportive of the organisation and they bring a wide range of experience and expertise to the organisation. There is a strong focus on the trainees and apprentices, with a clear vision and ethos on raising aspirations and meeting the needs of a very diverse and challenging profile of trainees and apprentices. The organisation has achieved “Investors in People” accreditation. There are clear lines of communication within the organisation and regular meetings are held with staff at all levels. Workforce places a high priority on providing continuing professional development opportunities for the staff. As a result, staff are well-qualified and appropriately experienced.

The organisation gives a high priority to self-evaluation and quality improvement planning at all levels; the processes are well-embedded and work effectively. The management have worked hard with all staff to raise their capacity for self-evaluation and this has brought increased consistency to the process with many good examples of incisive, evidence-based evaluation across the professional and technical areas. There are high levels of engagement with key stakeholders in the self-evaluation process to inform the judgements. For most of the provision, the collation and analysis of data is well-managed and used effectively to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision. In addition, the organisation has been accredited with the “International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001” quality standard.

Staff are deployed effectively to deliver the training and to meet the needs of the trainees and apprentices. A recent review of staffing has been completed to ensure that the organisation has the correct skills set and balance to meet the curriculum requirements of the new training contract. This well-managed process has, led to a significant change in the staff profile with several new tutors being appointed, and the introduction of a new middle management tier. While at an early stage, the middle management arrangements need to be reviewed to ensure that there is more effective co-ordination of all aspects of the transportation operations and maintenance provision, for example the monitoring of the progress of workplace assessments.

There are good opportunities for continuous professional development with ten tutors having completed the Certificate in teaching, and six tutors having either completed or completing higher level qualifications including degrees and other higher qualifications. The staff development programme is a key priority as evidenced by the considerable investment in it. A strong focus of the staff development programme has appropriately been on the quality of the teaching, training and learning and the formation of effective creative learning teams which currently include a majority of the tutors and includes peer observations.

Although some of the accommodation is cramped, it is well-managed and optimal use is made of the available physical resources, including premises rented from the local further education college. The accommodation is well-maintained to meet the needs of the trainees and apprentices. New accommodation has recently been purchased with plans to have it operational from September 2015. The site has been carefully chosen to provide a neutral location to attract trainees and apprentices from all communities. The senior management team recognise the centrality of effective careers education for their trainees and apprentices and have invested appropriately in a dedicated room and additional resources including computers. Investment has also taken place in a new high specification computer suite to meet the needs of the multimedia curriculum.

The senior management team have well-established collaborative partnerships with a wide range of external organisations and agencies. Effective links exist, for example, with four local post-primary schools that participate in the school links programme and this has proven to provide an excellent transition route for these young people into training programmes with Workforce. The organisation has links with a large number of employers which are used

well to source work placement learning opportunities for the trainees. More work, at a strategic level, is required with employers to further develop and grow the apprenticeship provision.

The arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable groups comply satisfactorily with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007. Appropriate policies including bullying, e-safety and health and safety are well signposted during induction. Information regarding the designated safeguarding personnel is displayed prominently throughout the premises.

The trainees' and apprentices' responses to the online questionnaire and the feedback from the trainee focus group meetings held during the inspection were very positive regarding their experiences in the organisation. Almost all trainees and apprentices reported that they felt safe, secure and supported in the organisation and that they receive good advice and guidance.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the quality of the training provided by Workforce Training Services Limited is very good. The organisation is meeting effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the trainees and apprentices; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

5. Professional and technical area reports

5.1 Business administration

Key findings

In business administration, the quality of the training in Workforce is very good.

Context

At the time of the inspection, 33 trainees were registered under the Training for Success programme. Five were registered on the Skills for Work level 1 strand and 18 on the Skills for Work level 2 and Programme-Led Apprenticeships strands. Most of the trainees enter the programme with low levels of prior educational achievement; nearly all have essential skill needs in literacy and numeracy. Approximately 80% of the trainees on the Training for Success programme are in work placements. The provision under the ApprenticeshipsNI programme is small, with four apprentices registered on the level 3 programme. All of the apprentices had progressed from the Training for Success programme.

Achievements and standards are very good.

The trainees and apprentices display very positive attitudes and dispositions to training and employment. Attendance and punctuality at directed training sessions are excellent and most of them show high levels of motivation and confidence in their work. Most of the trainees and apprentices develop an appropriate range of occupational skills; this is significant given their low levels of prior educational attainment on entry to the programme. They also have good opportunities to develop their communication skills along with the wider skills of team-work and problem-solving. The trainees undertake competently a range of administration duties, including filing, reception work and dealing with customers. They are able to apply their ICT skills well in the workplace. While the apprentices develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the principles of modern office work, the occupational skills for most of them are constrained by limited opportunities to undertake supervisory duties in the workplace.

Over the last four years, the average retention rate on the Skills for Work strand is very high at 78%. Retention rates on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand have improved over the last four years, and have been in excess of 71% for two of the last three years. Nearly all of the trainees who complete their training programmes achieve the full framework. Progression rates to further education, training and employment are excellent at 91%, and this is a major achievement. The outcomes for the very small numbers who have been registered on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme have been poor.

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

Induction arrangements are effective in preparing the trainees for their training programme and the world of work. High quality pastoral care is a feature of the provision. The commitment of the tutor to support the needs of the trainees and apprentices is exemplary. The quality of the directed training sessions observed were mostly very good. The sessions are well-planned and the tutor makes very good use of ILT to enhance and support learning, including the use of tablet computers in group work activities. The trainees and apprentices make very good use of the e-portfolio system to plan and complete their assessment activities. The progress of the trainees and apprentices is well-tracked by the tutor. The personal training planning process and progress reviews are effective in both identifying and supporting those trainees and apprentices at risk of not achieving to their full potential. The quality of the work-based training for most of the trainees and apprentices is very good, and they receive high levels of support from their supervisors. However, while the employers are well-informed about the structure of the programme, they have only a limited understanding of the specific skills and competences the trainees and apprentices develop during their directed training sessions.

The quality of leadership and management is very good.

The provision is well-managed by the tutor. The tutor is appropriately qualified and is currently undertaking relevant management training. Self-evaluation and quality improvement processes are effective in identifying key strengths and areas for improvement. Internal verification procedures are applied systematically. The curriculum planning for the Training for Success programme is very strong. The programmes are well-tailored to the specific needs of the trainees and provide the more capable with good opportunities to undertake additional relevant qualifications that well exceed the requirements of their training frameworks. Employer links are strong and used to good effect in ensuring that trainees secure appropriate placements that also provide them with good employment prospects. The trainees and apprentices have good access to an appropriate range of resources, including office equipment in their directed training. The training room is bright and well-furnished.

5.2 Essential Skills

Key Findings

In the essential skills, the quality of training provided by Workforce is very good.

Context

Essential skills training is offered in literacy, numeracy and ICT up to level 2 for all trainees and apprentices, including those for whom the essential skill of ICT is not a requirement of their framework. The overall entry profile of the trainees and apprentices is low resulting in a high number of trainees requiring essential skills support. At the time of the inspection, 270 trainees and 21 apprentices were undertaking qualifications in the essential skills.

The achievements and standards are very good.

Almost all of the trainees who complete their training programme achieve all of the essential skills required by their framework and a significant minority of them achieve the essential skills at a level higher than that required by the framework, and many from a low baseline on entry. Almost all of the trainees are highly motivated in their essential skills classes and are justifiably proud of their achievements in the essential skills. The achievements in the essential skills over the last four years are very high in literacy and numeracy and ICT.

There is clear evidence of the trainees' and apprentices' growing confidence in their learning and in the application of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to support the work in most of their professional and technical areas, particularly in the hairdressing and multimedia programmes. In most of the professional and technical areas there are good opportunities for the trainees to demonstrate, apply and consolidate the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills they have developed. Most of the trainees' and apprentices' spoken communication skills are well-developed and, although a small minority are reticent communicators, almost all demonstrate growing confidence and increased determination to succeed and to do well. Most of the trainees and apprentices display good progress in their writing skills including extended writing in their professional and technical work. Almost all of the trainees and apprentices are developing good learning dispositions, recognise the value of learning and appreciate the opportunities offered by Workforce to gain qualifications and to access relevant career opportunities.

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

Punctuality and attendance in the essential skills classes are good. All of the interactions between the tutors and the trainees and apprentices are underpinned by high levels of mutual respect the staff work hard to support the trainees and apprentices and they set high expectations for positive behaviour and achievement. The trainees and apprentices respond very well to the classroom ethos of supportive challenge in which they are all encouraged to aspire to reach their full potential regardless of profile on entry. There are good initial and diagnostic assessment processes in place and the tutors use this information to plan effectively to meet the trainees' and apprentices' needs in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

The quality of a majority of the teaching, training and learning in the sessions observed was good or better. There are very strong and productive working relationships between the tutors and the learners and almost all of the tutors provide differentiated and targeted one-to-one support of a very high quality. The individualised support provides very good opportunities for the trainees and apprentices to address specific gaps in their literacy and numeracy and to consolidate and extend their learning. Most of the tutors use a good range of teaching, training and learning strategies, including effective use of ILT and active learning methodologies to engage and motivate the trainees. The levels of engagement by almost all of the trainees are high even amongst the more reluctant learners. Most of the tutors are skilled in their use of questions to develop and embed the trainees' and apprentices' levels of understanding. A few of the tutors, however, need to build in more time to allow the trainees and apprentices to articulate more extended responses to questions in the whole group sessions. Most of the tutors provide effective ongoing spoken feedback to the trainees and apprentices, but there are some inconsistencies in the approaches to marking for improvement.

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

The overall planning and co-ordination of the essential skills provision is good. At a senior level, the organisation provides a well-structured and highly supportive learning environment wherein expectations and aspirations for all of the trainees and apprentices, including those who are hardest to reach, are high. The trainees and apprentices are provided with very good opportunities to achieve essential skills qualifications at a level higher than that required in their framework. It is noteworthy that provision for the essential skill of ICT is made available to all of the trainees and apprentices in all of the professional and technical areas, regardless of framework requirements. The trainees and apprentices benefit from a good standard of accommodation and the organisation has invested in small, manageable essential skills class sizes to facilitate a learner-centred, supportive ethos.

A new co-ordinator has been appointed recently and a good start has been made to developing further the systems and processes which underpin the essential skills provision. The timetabling system for the essential skills has also been reviewed to good effect. A tutor observation process is in place for the essential skills provision which is informed by the services of an external observer. It is timely for the organisation to extend this process and to build the capacity from within for the tutor observation and feedback cycle in order to inform the ongoing quality improvement planning process and the sharing of good practice. A self-evaluation process for the essential skills is in place, and whilst it is effective in identifying a number of areas for improvement, it needs to be strengthened to focus more robustly on data analysis in order to refine the target-setting process for the essential skills particularly in relation to the Training for Success 2013 intake. The self-evaluation process also needs to make better use of the outcomes of the cycle of tutor observations in the ongoing improvement planning process.

5.3 Hairdressing

Key findings

In hairdressing, the quality of training provided by Workforce is very good.

Context

Over the past four years, recruitment to the hairdressing provision has grown steadily. At the time of the inspection, 46 trainees and apprentices were registered. There were sixteen Programme-Led Apprentices on the legacy Training for Success programme. On the Training for Success 2013 programme, there were nine level 1 Skills for Work trainees and 15 level 2 Skills for Work trainees; the recruitment to the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes is low with only six apprentices currently registered. The directed training for hairdressing is delivered in Sullivan House, located on the nearby Falls Road.

Achievements and standards are good.

The standards of work produced by most of the trainees are good or better. They have a good awareness of health and safety which they apply appropriately while working on clients. They are well-presented and personable and are able to speak confidently about the treatments and hairstyles they are undertaking. Most of them enjoy the training and learning, attend well, are punctual to lessons, have a positive attitude to learning and show enthusiasm for their chosen course and a desire to progress to a higher level qualification. The tutors and employers report significant improvements in the trainees' level of confidence and self-esteem as they progress through their training programme. Of particular significance, is the good quality of most of the written work of the level 1 trainees; their portfolios of evidence are well-organised, presented clearly and the marking for improvement is consistently good. The written work of the apprentices is mostly good.

Over the last four years, a majority (58%) of the trainees and apprentices in hairdressing were retained, and all those who remained achieved the full framework. Over the same period, the average retention rate on the Skills for Work strand is good at 62%. The retention rate on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand has improved steadily over the last four years, and is now 85%. Progression rates to further education, training and employment are very high at 90%, and this is a major achievement.

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The quality of the teaching, training and learning is good or better. The co-ordinator and tutors are highly committed to helping the trainees to achieve; they provide them with high levels of support and have realistic aspirations for them. The sessions are consistently well-planned and engage effectively the trainees and apprentices. Careful sequencing encourages the trainees to link underlying theory with practice. The tutors use effective questioning techniques to develop the trainees' understanding of the topics being covered and to reinforce the learning. The organisation has worked hard to provide access for the trainees to a good range of commercial work placements in which the trainees are able to develop their work preparation, occupational and communication skills. Subsequently, at the time of the inspection most of the trainees were in work placement. Whilst engagement between the employers and the staff is very good, the employers need to be more involved in the setting of short-term training targets to be undertaken in the workplace and against which the trainees' progress can be measured. In addition to the very good ongoing careers information and advice provided to the trainees, they have appropriate opportunities to gain experience of the industry through access to an enhanced programme of relevant activities, including well-organised demonstrations by product suppliers and motivational talks by employers.

The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The hairdressing provision is well led and managed. The co-ordinator and tutors form a cohesive unit and work effectively in raising standards and improving the quality of the provision. The values and ethos of the organisation are well-established and permeate throughout all aspects of the work of the hairdressing provision. The strategic leadership has identified appropriately the key issues requiring improvement and has been proactive in introducing a number of intervention strategies to deal with the issues, in particular retention rates. The tracking of the trainees' progress is very good and is enhanced by the use of an overall group tracking sheet. Workforce has invested significantly in providing very good resources for the hairdressing provision which is accommodated in a designated commercial salon. However, the reliability of the network connectivity on the Falls Road site is restricting the use of the electronic portfolio system and can be a source of frustration for the trainees and tutors. Although the arrangements for the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning of the hairdressing provision are good overall, more needs to be done to strengthen the role of the new tutors in the processes.

5.4 Information Technology (Multimedia)

Key findings

In multimedia, the quality of training provided by Workforce is very good.

Context

The multimedia provision was introduced as a pathway on the Training for Success programme in 2009 and is offered at levels 1 and 2, with an established level 3 progression pathway to further education. During the inspection, 32 trainees were registered on the Training for Success programme; eight on the Skills for Work level 1 strand, ten on the Skills for Work level 2 strand and 14 on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand. Workforce reports that the trainees present with a range of educational, personal and social barriers to learning and most of them hold no formal qualifications on entry to their training programme.

The achievements and standards are very good.

The trainees are well supported to overcome their barriers to learning and consequently almost all of them gain in self-confidence and enhance their occupational and employability skills. The trainees have very good learning opportunities to develop and apply their multimedia and business skills, which are well-linked to the wider curriculum and the essential skills. They demonstrate a good breadth of appropriate technical and transferrable skills, including the effective use of iMac technology. Levels of attendance and punctuality in directed training are very good for the majority of the trainees.

The occupational standards achieved by the trainees are very good and almost all of them demonstrate high levels of confidence and creativity in their work and are making good progress in achieving the professional and technical units. Most of the trainees are able to produce a wide range of good quality documents and undertake an appropriate range of multimedia-related tasks. A strong emphasis is placed on ensuring the trainees gain regular and relevant workplace experiences. The trainees are well-equipped and prepared through their training to succeed in the workplace and the employers report that they have benefitted from their high skills levels and good attitudes to work.

The overall outcomes are very good; over the past four years, most (84%) of the trainees were retained and all those who completed their training achieved. Progression rates are high at 84% and there is a defined and appropriate progression pathway to further education, which is well understood and used by the trainees.

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The quality of teaching, training and learning in the directed training sessions observed is mostly outstanding. The sessions had clear learning objectives, well-integrated opportunities for the trainees to apply and consolidate the essential skills and a range of interactive activities to motivate and encourage trainees. Assessment activities are well-planned and inform clearly the training and learning strategies. The use of ILT in teaching and learning is well-developed and there are many good opportunities for trainees to access and use ICT. Overall the trainees' ICT skills are very well developed. The organisation places a strong emphasis on developing the trainees' employability skills and the work placements are matched well to their individual needs, interests and career aspirations.

The standardisation processes are robust and well-planned. The trainees are provided with timely, effective feedback, mainly through the electronic learning platform, on how to improve and develop their learning. The personal training plans are mostly good and complemented to good effect by other documents, such as the detailed progress reviews.

The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The multimedia provision is led and managed effectively, and underpinned by a strong and inclusive pastoral ethos. The tutor is appropriately qualified, has a very good oversight of the provision, and collaborates effectively with the essential skills team to support the trainees' learning across all of the curriculum. Expectations are high and a positive emphasis is placed by on the trainees achieving to their full potential. The senior managers have implemented effective strategies to monitor, on an ongoing basis, the overall quality of the provision, which contributes to the high quality of teaching, training and learning.

Quality assurance arrangements and the internal verification process are applied systematically. While the processes for self-evaluation and quality improvement planning are well-established and mostly effective, they should be strengthened further to specify measurable outcomes for improvement and to include more feedback from the trainees and other stakeholders to better inform improvement planning.

The planning for the progression of the trainees is a significant strength and good collaborative links exist with the local further education college. The organisation employs the services of a range of external agencies and organisations, which are used to good effect to support the trainees into further education, training and employment.

5.5 Transportation Operations and Maintenance

Key Findings

In transportation operations and maintenance, the quality of training provided by Workforce is good.

Context

A suitable range of programmes at levels 1 to 3 is offered in the specialist areas of vehicle fitting and light vehicle maintenance and repair. Of the 102 trainees and apprentices registered on these programmes: 20 trainees (19%) are on Skills for Work level 1; 24 (24%) on Skills for Work level 2; 49 (48%) on the Programme-led Apprenticeship strand; two apprentices (2%) on ApprenticeshipsNI level 2; and seven apprentices (7%) on ApprenticeshipsNI level 3. Currently, most (84%) of the trainees on the Training for Success strands have suitable work-experience placements, of which most provide the trainees with good opportunities to achieve relevant vocational skills. Those without placements have a programme of extra-curriculum activities.

The achievements and standards are good.

Almost all of the trainees and apprentices are motivated, maintain positive relationships with their peers and tutors, and are able to work effectively as part of a team or independently. The standard of work achieved by most of them is good to very good. They are, for example, able to carry out routine inspections and services and remove and replace failed components to an acceptable industry standard. Most are developing good self-confidence, appropriate problem-solving skills and the ability to work on their own initiative. The trainees' verbal communication skills are well-developed and their written skills are mostly good. In particular, the apprentices' level 3 written assignments are well-presented and to a high technical standard.

Over the last four years, most (77%) of the trainees and apprentices in transportation operations and maintenance were retained and most (76%) of those who remain achieve. It is noteworthy that 82% of the level 1 trainees are retained, all achieve and 90% of them progress to level 2. While the achievement of the full framework by level 2 trainees is low (42%), all of them manage to achieve the essential skills and technical certificate. Nearly all (92%) of those who successfully complete their programme progress to a higher level programme or employment. Just over one-half of those who successfully complete level 2 progress to level 3 apprenticeships.

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

The training programmes are well-designed, providing coherent progression pathways from level 1 to level 3. In particular, the Skills for Work strands have a well-balanced range of units at levels 1 to 3, which prepare the trainees well for progression to level 3 apprenticeships. The trainees and apprentices benefit from a well-balanced and integrated programme of directed training to develop both their occupational skills and their understanding of the underpinning principles. All of the directed training sessions observed were good or better; most of them were very good or outstanding. The tutors plan and prepare thoroughly and they deploy effectively a wide range of teaching and training approaches to engage the trainees and apprentices in active learning. Key features include: confident use of ILT to stimulate interest and learning; reflective discussions drawing on workplace experiences; the use of well-considered handouts and relevant textbooks to reinforce technical skills and knowledge; and well-organised practical skills training, reflecting industry standards and practice. Consistently, the behaviour of the trainees and apprentices and their mutual respect for others were exemplary. The quality of their workplace training is mostly good. There are good opportunities for the trainees and apprentices to apply and develop further their professional and technical skills and knowledge. While they benefit from regular and supportive workplace monitoring, the assessment and recording of their occupational competences are not sufficiently consistent. Consequently, a significant minority of them are not achieving their vocational competence qualification in a timely enough manner. Tracking, recording and internal verification of the trainees' and apprentices' achievements are supported effectively by the use and ongoing development of an electronic portfolio.

The quality of the leadership and management is good.

The organisation is committed to developing a coherent and well-regarded provision for school leavers to access appropriate training and follow a career within the motor vehicle industry, irrespective of their prior achievement. It has established an industry-standard skills training workshop, technology enhanced learning and assessment resources, and an enthusiastic and dedicated team of appropriately qualified tutors who are very committed to continuous improvement and to the success and well-being of trainees and apprentices. There are well-developed links with local schools and employers, resulting in clear progression pathways from post-primary education to the Training for Success strands and employment opportunities. Although links with the local independent vehicle repair garages are very strong, links and partnerships with larger dealerships are less well-developed.

Through sound self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes, the senior staff have identified accurately the important areas for development. These include: increasing recruitment to the ApprenticeshipsNI programme through enhanced partnerships with employers; expanding the range of modern training vehicles and increasing the proportion of trainees achieving their full qualification framework. There remains, however, an important need to embed more fully the well-designed systems for planning, tracking and monitoring the trainees' and apprentices' learning in the workplace to ensure timely progression in all elements of their programme.

5.6 Wood Occupations

Key Findings

In wood occupations, the quality of training provided by Workforce is very good.

Context

Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes are offered in wood occupations at levels 1 to 3. Currently, 55 trainees are registered on programmes in wood occupations: 13 on the Skills for Work strand; 41 on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand; and one on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme at level 3.

The achievements and standards are good.

The trainees are well-motivated and enthusiastic about their training programme. They have a positive disposition to learning and make good progress, often from a low baseline. The trainees are achieving appropriate standards of work in directed training through well-organised opportunities for team-working, problem-solving and independent work. Those trainees who are in work placements are developing well a good range of occupational and practical skills through, for example, first fix work on stairs and handrails, lock fitting and constructing roofing structures. The proportion of trainees in a work placement has been increasing and members of staff at all levels have a clear focus on ensuring that the work-readiness and the work ethic of the trainees are sustained to enable full framework achievement.

Over the last four years, the overall retention rate across the wood occupation programmes is high at 74%, the achievement rate is 77% and the progression rate is very high at 92%. In the Skills for Life programme, most (83%) of the trainees are retained, all achieve and the progression rate is excellent at 96%. In the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand, the overall retention rate is 64% and the progression rate is high at 83%, and while the overall achievement rate is low at 47%, almost all of the trainees achieved their technical certificate and essential skills.

The quality of the provision for learning is very good.

There are well-targeted and effective arrangements for identifying and addressing the trainees' barriers to learning and employment. The tutors set a positive tone for learning and take full account of the outcomes from the initial and diagnostic assessments along with their professional judgement in order to meet the pastoral needs and the varying abilities of the trainees.

The trainees benefit from well-planned individual and group support from the tutors in theory classes and during practical sessions in the workshop. In the directed and workplace training sessions observed, the quality of the planning, teaching, training and assessment was good or very good. In the most effective practice, the sessions are characterised by: realistically high expectations; an appropriate balance of theory tasks and practical activities; well-focused questioning to develop the trainees' problem-solving, thinking and wider employability skills; ongoing assessment to gauge the extent of the trainees' progress in their learning; one-to-one support to reinforce learning; and relevant, timely information about career progression pathways.

Assessment is planned well and the progress of the trainees is tracked effectively. The workplace assessments are undertaken regularly and recorded systematically; the trainees are provided with constructive feedback on how to improve within the context of their work placement. The employers report that the trainees are gaining in confidence, have good attitudes to work and complete their tasks to a good standard. The conduct, behaviour and progress of the trainees during the inspection were very good.

The quality of the leadership and management is very good.

The wood occupations provision is effectively led and managed. It is learner-centred and underpinned by a clear strategic vision to provide high quality training within a distinctive ethos of strong pastoral support for the trainees along with effective mentoring and guidance. Roles and responsibilities are well-defined and there are clear lines of communication between staff at all levels. The tutors are deployed effectively, and they work well together to plan and share resources in order to effect improvement. There are good opportunities for the tutors to engage in continuous professional development and both of them have completed the Certificate in Teaching at the University of Ulster; this is impacting positively on the learning experiences for the trainees.

The processes for self-evaluation are effective and the resulting improvement planning has identified the key areas for development in standards and achievements, teaching and learning, and acquisition of relevant work placements, which are being addressed to good effect. Key improvement actions, including peer observations and observations by an external evaluator have ensured consistently good or better teaching, training and learning.

The arrangements for quality assurance and internal verification are thorough and systematic. Staff at all levels work hard to sustain the well-established relationships with employers who provide supportive work placements that enable the trainees to develop their occupational and wider employability skills.

6. Inspection method and evidence base

The inspection focused on:

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

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 seven inspectors and two associate assessors observed a total of 230 apprentices and trainees in 49 directed training sessions. Inspectors visited 39 work places and 53 trainees and apprentices were interviewed in focus groups. The inspectors also held discussions with the general manager, the deputy manager, the operational managers, co-ordinators, and tutors. In addition, inspectors examined samples of the trainees' and apprentices' work, tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans and 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 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.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned (%)	Number with comments
Learners	270	229	85%	18

The returns show that the apprentices' and trainees' have a positive training experience in Workforce. Almost all of the apprentices and trainees who responded to the questionnaire were positive about their training experiences, and all of those who made written comments were positive about the quality of training and support provided in Workforce.

7. Information about Workforce

Current registrations by programme

Programme	Number of trainees and apprentices	% of total registrations
ApprenticeshipsNI	43	12%
Training for Success (2008) Skills for Your Life	0	0%
Training for Success (2008) Skills for Work	4	1%
Training for Success (2008) Programme-Led Apprenticeship	136	39%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Your Life	13	4%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (strand 1)	51	15%
Training for Success (2013) Skills for Work (strand 2)	102	29%

Current registrations by professional and technical area

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations
Business Administration	33	11%
Catering	15	5%
Children's Care Learning and Development	22	7%
Hairdressing	40	13%
Information Technology (Multimedia)	32	11%

Skills for Your Life	13	4%
Transportation Operations and Maintenance	93	30%
Wood Occupations	58	19%
Professional and technical area	Number of apprentices	% of total registrations
Business Administration	4	9%
Catering	3	7%
Children's Care Learning and Development	20	47%
Hairdressing	6	14%
Transportation Operations and Maintenance	9	21%
Wood Occupations	1	2%

Qualifications of current apprentices on entry to their programme

Qualifications of current trainees/apprentices on entry to their programme	Training for Success (%)	ApprenticeshipsNI (%)
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C including English and mathematics	5	23
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C	10	23
(%) of learners with GCSE English and mathematics or equivalent at Grades A*-C	6	23
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-G	30	47
(%) of learners with no prior level 1 or level 2 qualifications	66	53

Note: All data was sourced from Workforce 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 use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

Key Performance Indictors

Key Performance Indictors 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.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2014

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

