



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Training for Success and  
ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in  
Northern Regional College

Report of a Follow-up Inspection  
in June 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

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CUSTOMER  
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## **FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE**

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an inspection of the Northern Regional College in March 2017 when the quality of the Training for Success programme and the provision for the essential skills was evaluated as having important areas for improvement.

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

- to address the low retention (43%) and progression (68%) rates on the Training for Success programme;
- improve the quality of the essential skills provision;.
- develop further the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes, particularly the effective collation and use of data to inform, plan and evaluate the quality of the provision; and
- implement strategies and support for lecturers to further improve the quality of the provision, including a stronger emphasis on reflective practice to promote greater use of a broader and more appropriate range of learning, teaching and training approaches.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an interim follow-up visit in December 2017 and a follow-up inspection in June 2018.

In the interval since the original inspection, the following changes and actions which affect the work of the College have taken place, and in particular the College has:

- established a work-based learning forum to identify and address emerging issues that affect the progress of the trainees and apprentices;
- appointed permanent essential skills co-ordinators for each of the four main campuses;
- strengthened the links with the trainees' parents and revised the induction process to meet the trainees' needs more closely;
- strengthened the trainee review process to track and monitor better their progress across all elements of their training programme;
- introduced e-portfolios across all of the first-year work-based learning programmes;
- provided a range of continuing professional development opportunities for staff, in particular to improve the quality of the learning, teaching and training and to support the implementation of the refreshed essential skills curriculum; and
- restructured the quality unit, including the recruitment of additional staff, resulting in a more coherent and cohesive approach to quality improvement planning.

## **Key Findings**

### **Outcomes for learners**

- Through the introduction of a range of measures, the retention rate on the Training for Success programme has improved to 66% for 2016/17; this needs to improve further and remains an important area for improvement.
- The progression by the trainees to employment or further training on completion of the Training for Success programme has not improved sufficiently over the period of the follow-up inspection and remains an important area for improvement.

### **Quality of provision**

- A more pervasive culture of reflective practice is being fostered through a supportive cycle of session observations, increased opportunities for staff to share best practice and well-targeted continuing professional development. This improvement work has been supported to good effect by the teaching and learning advisors and digital learning team. There continues to be a need, however, to improve further the consistency of the quality of the learning, teaching and training across the provision.
- Links with employers have been developed further; consequently, almost all (97%) of the trainees are in a relevant work-experience placement and it is appropriate that there are increasing opportunities for them to progress early to the apprenticeship programmes.
- The quality of the essential skills provision has improved and is now good.

### **Leadership and management**

- The programme of continuing professional development is now informed better by the outcomes of an extensive programme of supportive session observations. Where necessary, lecturers benefit from a well-targeted lecturer support programme in order to sustain improvements in the quality of the learning, teaching and training.
- The progress of the trainees and apprentices across all elements of their training programme is now monitored and tracked more systematically and effectively, with clearer reporting and accountability arrangements, including robust action planning to address any slower than expected progress.
- The revised essential skills policy now articulates clearly a more comprehensive framework of entitlement to learning for the trainees and apprentices in literacy and numeracy, including appropriate pathways to GCSE level.
- The leadership and management structure of the essential skills is more embedded and fit-for-purpose.

- The quality improvement planning process has been revised and strengthened; consequently, it is now more robust and effective. There is a continuing focus on developing systems to increase access for staff to reliable, timely data to inform self-evaluation and action planning. To improve the process further, more needs to be done to ensure course teams make better use of key performance indicators in the professional and technical areas summary of key findings and for the quality improvement plan to include more specific targets for improvement by which progress can be more robustly measured.

### **Overall effectiveness**

In the essential skills and Training for Success provision, the quality of the education and training provided by the Northern Regional College is now good. The Northern Regional College demonstrates that it has the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interests of the trainees. The ETI will continue to monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the remaining areas for improvement, particularly the need to:

- improve the consistency of the quality of the learning, teaching and training;
- improve the retention and progression rates on the Training for Success programme, and the achievement rates of the trainees in the essential skills; and
- further embed the use of key performance indicators at course team level to underpin robust, accurate self-evaluation and improvement action planning.

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