

Education and Training Inspectorate

Report of a follow-up inspection

Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI provision

in

Swann Training Services

June 2016

THIRD FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF SWANN TRAINING SERVICES

Swann Training Services was originally inspected in November 2011. The first follow-up inspection of the organisation took place in January 2013 when the quality of the education and training was evaluated as satisfactory¹.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a second follow-up inspection² of Swann Training Services in December 2014 when the quality of the education and training was evaluated as still satisfactory.

The second follow-up inspection identified the need for further improvement in the following key areas:

- to implement the planned actions to improve further the quality and effectiveness of management information to track and monitor the progress of the trainees and apprentices;
- to strengthen the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes, particularly in the identification of strategies to improve outcomes on the Training for Success programme that have not improved sufficiently since the first follow-up inspection;
- to develop more collaborative curriculum planning strategies between the support and development team, and the vocational and essential skills tutors;
- to improve the quality of learning, teaching and training in around one-half of the observed directed training sessions;
- to ensure that employers are more closely involved in setting appropriate targets for the trainees in their professional and technical units; and
- to extend the provision under Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI to ensure it meets fully the needs of the local economy and the career aspirations of the young people in the area.

The organisation's improvement plan submitted in response to the second follow-up inspection took appropriate account of the areas for improvement and was of a good quality.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in December 2015, and a follow-up inspection in June 2016.

In the interval since the second follow-up inspection, the following actions and changes which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- a bespoke management information system has been installed to record and track the progress of the trainees and apprentices;
- a range of relevant continuing professional development activities were undertaken by staff in order to build the organisation's capacity to improve the quality of the provision;

¹ From September 2015, the overall effectiveness of an organisation previously evaluated as 'satisfactory', will now be evaluated as 'important areas for improvement'.

² [Report of the second follow-up inspection.](#)

- the managers and tutors continue to use lesson observations to evaluate and improve the quality of learning, teaching and training;
- the managers visited other training providers to identify external effective practice that could be adapted to improve the quality of Swann Training Service's provision;
- the organisation relocated to smaller adjacent premises to accommodate the lower recruitment levels of trainees; and
- there continues to be a significant turnover of staff, impacting adversely on consistency of delivery and the quality of the provision.

Key findings

- Key staff have begun to use the new management information system to track and monitor the progress of the trainees and apprentices, although further refinement of the system is necessary to improve the accuracy of the data and the quality of the reports produced on the trainees' progress and achievement.
- While the organisation continues to build to good effect its capacity for self-evaluation, detailed and measurable action planning to bring about sustained improvements remains an area for further development.
- The use of collaborative curriculum planning across the provision is at an early stage of development, and requires further work to ensure that the range of learning experiences provided are matched well to the trainees' and apprentices' needs.
- The quality of the learning, teaching and training, over the follow-up period since the original inspection, has improved and is now good.
- The involvement of employers in setting appropriate targets to monitor the progress of the trainees and apprentices in their workplace learning remains underdeveloped.
- The low recruitment levels of trainees and apprentices continue to restrict the organisation's capacity to offer a breadth of curriculum to meet effectively the needs of employers and young people in the area it serves.

Overall Effectiveness

Swann Training Services continues to need to address important areas for improvement identified in the interest of all of the learners, including the need to:

- further embed and more effectively use the new management information system to track, evaluate and report accurately and clearly on the achievements of the trainees and apprentices and to plan for any necessary early intervention;
- review the effectiveness of the quality improvement planning process to ensure action planning at both strategic and operational levels is well-targeted and brings about measurable and sustained improvements;

- improve the curriculum planning to ensure the provision meets more effectively the diverse training needs of the trainees and apprentices, particularly to engage with employers and other relevant stakeholders to expand the work-experience opportunities for the trainees and to ensure the provision meets local need; and
- further improve the leadership and management of the essential skills and retail to sustain continuing improvements in the quality of the provision.

Further action will be considered by the Department for the Economy.

PROFESSION AND TECHNICAL AREAS

Essential skills

The second follow-up inspection identified the need for further improvement in the following key areas:

- the further support for the embedding of the role of the new coordinator;
- the further development of the work of the essential skills team to ensure effective planning for the provision which links appropriately to the trainees' and apprentices' prior learning and professional and technical work;
- the better use of the outcomes of the tutor observation processes to plan for ongoing improvements in delivery and to continue to raise standards; and
- the further development of the self-evaluation, and the quality improvement planning processes within the provision and the capacity building of the essential skills staff to engage fully in these processes.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in December 2015, and a third follow-up inspection in June 2016.

In the interval since the second follow-up inspection, the following actions and changes which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- a review, by management, of the staffing complement of the essential skills provision, and the actions taken as a result of this, including the appointment of a new co-ordinator and a new tutor for the essential skill of information, communication and technology (ICT);
- the commencement of initial planning for collaborative working arrangements with other training providers to support the development of the essential skills provision;
- the investment in appropriate continuing professional development, including externally provided training, for the essential skills tutors;
- the implementation of a more extensive programme of tutor observations including peer observations; and
- the development of more regular channels of communication, both formal and informal, to improve practice.

Key Findings

- The management and tutors remain committed to bringing about improvement in the essential skills provision and are working hard to establish productive links with other work-based learning providers to inform their practice and to extend their range of expertise.
- Consistent and sustained improvement in the essential skills provision has been impeded significantly by ongoing staffing changes, at the level of co-ordination and delivery.

- The mechanisms and processes for the recording of key data, including key outcomes data within a new management information system, are improving and are beginning to be used more appropriately to evaluate the organisation's performance in the essential skills.
- The opportunities provided for staff development have begun to impact positively on the quality of the learning, teaching and training in the essential skills.
- The initial, diagnostic and formative assessment processes have been reviewed and improved.
- The outcomes in all of the essential skills need to be kept under constant review and improvements need to be made in the outcomes in communication, application of number and information and communication technology.

Overall Effectiveness

In the essential skills, the quality of the education and training provided by Swann Training Services continues to have important areas for improvement, including the need to:

- implement the planned links with appropriate organisations to support staff development and to support the embedding of key processes, including moderation processes, within Swann Training Services;
- develop the co-ordination role within the essential skills provision and to more effectively embed the functions of the role in order to bring about sustained improvement;
- further support the essential skills teaching team through appropriate staff development to continue to raise standards and improve outcomes in the essential skills; and
- review the provision of the essential skills for the apprentices to ensure that it is timely, consistent, of high quality, and meets the needs of each apprentice.

Retail

In retail, the second follow-up inspection identified the need for further improvement in the following key areas:

- the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes, to support the necessary further improvements in the quality of provision, particularly the quality of the learning, teaching and training;
- the retention rates on the Training for Success programme, particularly the Skills for Work level 1 provision, which were just satisfactory for the period 2013/14;
- the quality of the work placements for a minority of the trainees, which do not provide them with a sufficiently broad range of training experiences; and
- the engagement with employers to better inform them about the trainees' and apprentices' training programme.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up visit in December 2015, and a third follow-up inspection in June 2016.

In the interval since the second follow-up inspection, the following actions and changes which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- developed further the self-evaluation process in the professional and technical area to identify key areas for improvement;
- continued to target improvement in the retention rates on the Training for Success programme;
- continued to build links with employers to expand the range of suitable work-experience placements for the trainees;
- increased the recruitment level in the professional and technical area, although from a very low base, to 15 trainees and four apprentices for 2015/16; and
- appointed a new retail tutor, to improve the quality of delivery across the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI provision.

Key findings

- While only a minority of the trainees and apprentices recruited in 2014/15 completed or remain on their training programme, the early retention rate for 2015/16 is currently outstanding at 90%.
- The proportion of the trainees in suitable work-experience placements has increased to 50%, and the experience is supporting well the development of their employability and occupational skills and providing them with a broader range of training experiences.
- The arrangements with employers to monitor and review the trainees' and apprentices' progress in the development of their employability and occupational skills are at an early stage of development.

Overall Effectiveness

In retail, Swann Training Services continues to need to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all of the learners, including the need to:

- continue to increase and sustain the improving retention rates across the retail Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes;
- continue to extend the range of appropriate work-experience placements available for all of the trainees to ensure that more of them have opportunities to develop their employability and occupational skills; and
- implement and embed suitable arrangements with employers for monitoring and reviewing the progress of the retail trainees and apprentices in developing their employability and occupational skills in the workplace.

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