




Inspection Summary Report - March 2025




-  Senior management is committed to achieving the organisation's vision "to empower learners of all ages by delivering high-quality, industry-relevant training that enhances employability, fosters lifelong learning, and contributes to the workforce development of Northern Ireland".
-  A well-defined organisational structure, along with effective channels of communication, creates a well-co-ordinated and collaborative working environment with clear lines of accountability for staff that empowers and fosters a positive culture of self-evaluation and effective quality improvement planning.
-  The organisation is aware of the risks and is addressing well the significant challenges associated with a high turnover of staff and the difficulties in recruiting appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
-  The organisation's self-evaluation and quality improvement planning (QIP) processes identify clearly and appropriately the priority areas for development across the organisation, particularly the need for additional provision to meet more effectively the increasing number of learners enrolling with additional learning and support needs. There is a need to align more clearly the P&T and essential skills with the organisational QIP.
-  Most of the lessons are well-planned, are set within a meaningful context, maintain good pace and use effective questioning techniques. They provide sufficient stretch and challenge, along with a range of purposeful activities that engage and enable successful learning.
-  The quality of the learning environment is too variable across the branches; a significant minority of the classrooms are cramped and not sufficiently conducive to effective learning. Across the provision, the learners would benefit from better access to technology enhanced learning (TEL) and assistive learning technologies.
-  The organisation offers a broad curriculum with a wide range of professional and technical areas across both programmes, providing learners with good opportunities to develop occupational skills and knowledge that are in demand within the local labour market.
-  The provision of impactful health, wellbeing and keeping safe programmes is a key focus of the organisation. It fosters an inclusive and equitable learning environment through tailored learner support services and inclusive approaches to learning and teaching.
-  The majority of trainees (63%) and apprentices (64%) completed and achieved their qualifications, which is above the sector average for AppsNI. Key areas for improvement include progression rates, with 45% of the SfLW trainees progressing to further education, training or employment and only 12% of the apprentices progressing from Level 2 to Level 3. Targeted improvement initiatives have been implemented, and early indications suggest these measures are driving positive change.
-  The outcomes for the essential skills are high, over the past three years almost all (91%) of the trainees and apprentices achieved their targeted qualification in literacy, most (89%) achieved their targeted qualification in numeracy, and most (87%) achieved their targeted qualification in ICT.
-  An extensive range of collaborative networks with employers, external agencies, and other key stakeholders has enhanced the learning experience for the trainees and apprentices.

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Areas for action:

-  align the P&T and essential skills with the organisational QIP and monitor closely the staffing challenges to maintain continuity of learning while adapting to the growing number of learners enrolling with additional learning and support needs;
-  improve further the quality of the learning environment across the branches including access to TEL and assistive technologies; and
-  improve the trainee and apprentice progression rates to higher level education and training from the Skills for Life and Work programme (45%) and ApprenticeshipsNI Level 2 programme (12%), respectively.

Going forward

-  Senior management in Rutledge is committed to achieving the organisation's vision: "to empower learners of all ages by delivering high-quality, industry-relevant training that enhances employability, fosters lifelong learning, and contributes to the workforce development of Northern Ireland". A broad curriculum and a wide range of professional and technical areas across SfLW and AppsNI programmes are available. The organisation fosters an inclusive and equitable learning environment through tailored support and inclusive teaching. The outcomes for the essential skills are high over the past three years.
-  The ETI, through the engagement of the district inspector, will continue to monitor Rutledge's progress as it takes forward the areas for action outlined in this report.
-  Inspectors identified an aspect of highly effective practice from which others may learn. The aspects of practice which should be shared more widely include:
 - to date, 125 trainees have participated in the Turing exchange programme to European countries. The trainees get to experience a work placement over a three-week period. The benefits include the opportunity to develop employability and occupational skills, as well as increased confidence and motivation for learning and employment. The exchange visits also support well the scheme's key objectives of supporting social mobility and widening participation by disadvantaged learners.