



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Training for Success and
ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in
Springvale Learning Limited

Report of a Second Follow-up
Inspection in September 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

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CUSTOMER
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FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION TO SPRINGVALE LEARNING LIMITED

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out a follow-up inspection of Springvale Learning Limited in April 2018. The overall effectiveness of the organisation was evaluated as having important areas for improvement.

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

- the close monitoring of the impact of the recent changes in senior management to ensure the necessary improvements are implemented;
- the quality improvement planning processes across the organisation to identify and action the key areas for development;
- the remaining areas for improvement in the professional and technical areas of construction, engineering, health and social care and the essential skills; and
- the overall average retention and progression rates on the Training for Success programme and the retention rate on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

The ETI carried out an interim follow-up inspection visit in September 2018 and a second follow-up inspection in September 2019. In the interval since the first follow-up inspection, the following key actions or changes which affect the work of the organisation have taken place:

- Springvale Learning Limited merged with Upper Springfield Development Trust in April 2019;
- an executive chairperson of the Springvale Learning board of directors has been appointed;
- the senior management team has been almost entirely restructured;
- the number of trainees and apprentices enrolled has decreased from 520 at the time of the original inspection to 259 at the second follow-up inspection; and
- the provision for engineering ended in January 2019.

Key Findings

The **outcomes for learners** remains as an important area for improvement.

- While Springvale Learning has worked to address and improve the average retention rates across the Training for Success and the ApprenticeshipsNI programmes, they remain an important area for improvement. The retention rate on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme has improved and is now an important area for improvement (67%). The retention rate on the Training for Success programme, however, remains a significant area for improvement (55%).
- The progression rates of the trainees on the Training for Success programme to further training, education or employment have improved, but still require significant further improvement (56%).

The **quality of provision** is now good.

- The quality of the learning, teaching and training has improved across most of the areas inspected, with most (78%) of the sessions observed during the follow-up inspection being good or better. A broader range of teaching and training strategies, including an increased focus on practical activities, is being implemented well to promote more effective learning.
- The curriculum offer has been enhanced to include appropriate initiatives, such as a number of social enterprise and community-based projects, to provide those trainees who are not in a work placement with relevant work-related and practical activities, which are enhancing their work-readiness.
- Some progress has been made in addressing the important areas for improvement across the construction provision, including the implementation of a more appropriate curriculum offer of carpentry and joinery, which provides a more coherent progression pathway for the trainees and apprentices and more effective learning, teaching and training. The area of construction, however, continues to have important areas for improvement, including the need to review timetabling arrangements, increase work-experience placement rates for trainees and improve the outcomes they attain.
- The essential skills provision is now good. The organisation has reviewed the initial assessment process for literacy and numeracy, which has resulted in revised and more appropriate initial assessments being developed. As a consequence, all apprentices who require essential skills training are identified early and start their essential skills provision in a timely manner. Across the essential skills provision, the organisation has placed a much higher focus on the learners' progression, with currently just under one-half of the trainees and apprentices having achieved either level 1 or level 2 literacy and numeracy qualifications during their first year. Across the essential skills, the trainees and apprentices achieve well; to date, all the trainees and apprentices who have completed their essential skills under the revised assessments have achieved the targeted qualifications.
- The provision for health and social care provision has improved but much remains to be done; the provision now has important areas for improvement. There has been a change in staffing and in the delivery model for the professional and technical qualification. The organisation has completed appropriately a comprehensive mapping exercise across the old and new professional and technical standards to meet the revised qualification requirements, and improved the provision for those apprentices who require essential skills training, to ensure that they start their essential skills in a timely manner.

The **leadership and management** remains an important area for improvement.

- As a result of the merger in April 2019, there have been significant changes to the management structure and processes in the organisation. These remain at an early stage of development and embedding. The evidence shows that the organisation is beginning to make headway in addressing some of the key issues evident across the provision and that the work of the strategic leadership team is beginning to have a positive impact. Much remains to be done, however, in particular to embed effective leadership and management practices, continue to improve the quality of the professional and technical provision and to increase the outcomes attained by the trainees and apprentices. Consequently, the quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and action to promote improvement continue to have important areas for improvement.

- The management and reporting arrangements, including those for governance, have been improved since the merger in April 2019. The revised arrangements now provide a clear plan for better strategic and curricular leadership, and reflect a shared ambition across the newly merged organisation to bring about and sustain improvement. As a consequence of the timing of the merger, many of the planned improvements remain at an early stage and the impact of the improvement actions have yet to be realised sufficiently.
- The organisation has invested significantly in staffing and accommodation, including appropriate continuous professional development of staff to support them to deal more effectively with those trainees who present with complex social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- The new leadership and management team has undertaken a review of the quality improvement planning process, including recent work on a quality improvement cycle and the implementation of more regular staff meetings; as a result, the process has been strengthened and the tutors have started to more effectively engage in the self-evaluation and quality improvement planning process. This early work needs to be built upon. The organisation needs to implement more fully the revised quality improvement cycle and processes and to better involve staff in more focused target-setting and action planning to ensure the quality improvement plan brings about the required, sustainable improvement across the work of the organisation, at all levels.

The revised performance levels are listed in the table below:

| Curriculum Area | Revised Performance Levels |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Construction | Important areas for improvement |
| Essential skills | Good |
| Health and social care | Important areas for improvement |

Overall Effectiveness

Springvale Learning Limited needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all of the trainees and apprentices.

The follow-up inspection has identified the following areas for improvement:

- continue to improve the quality and effectiveness of the provision for construction and health and social care;
- further refine and embed the quality improvement planning process to plan more effectively for sustained improvement, particularly the more effective tracking and monitoring of progress across the professional and technical areas and the essential skills; and
- improve further the retention and progression rates on the Training for Success programme, and the retention rate on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.

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

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