



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Training for Success and
ApprenticeshipsNI Provision in
Bryson FutureSkills

Report of an Inspection
in December 2018



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



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1. Context

Bryson FutureSkills (Bryson) is a provider of vocational training and employment programmes. It is one of six social business units within the wider Bryson Charitable Group. Bryson is led by a director and three senior managers who are supported by a team of 16 tutors, two learning support officers, two development officers, a counsellor and a team of administrative staff.

Bryson provides professional and technical training under the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes¹ on behalf of the Department for the Economy (Department). Most of the young people recruited by the organisation live in the top 20% most deprived super output areas of Northern Ireland, with very high levels of educational underachievement.²

At the time of the inspection, 139 trainees and 10 apprentices were registered across the professional and technical areas of: business administration; children's care, learning and development (CCLD); construction; hair and beauty; information technology (IT) services; playwork; and retail. The delivery of the construction and playwork provision is sub-contracted to two separate supplier organisations in the greater Belfast area. With the exception of construction, which is delivered in the sub-contractor's premises, all of the professional and technical and essential skills training for the Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI provision is delivered in Bryson's training facility located in Belfast city centre.

Most of the trainees and apprentices present with multiple barriers to learning and/or a wide and complex range of personal and social problems and mental health issues. Almost one-half (48%) of the trainees have been identified as having a disability and a further 40% of them with additional learning support needs. None of the trainees, and only a few of the apprentices, entered their programme with four or more GSCE passes at grades A* to C or equivalent, including English and mathematics. At the time of the inspection, 54% of the trainees were in a suitable work-experience placement, although the organisation reports that 62% of them had been in a placement at some stage during their training.

2. Views of trainees and apprentices

As part of the evaluation of Bryson's arrangements for care, guidance and support and for safeguarding young people and adults at risk, the majority (55%) of the trainees and apprentices took the opportunity to complete a questionnaire prior to the inspection; a small number of them provided additional written comments.

The returns show that most (85%) of the trainees and apprentices who responded were positive about their learning experiences in Bryson and that it caters well for their needs. Almost all of the respondents (93%) report that they: received accurate information about their choice of courses; found their induction programme useful; are well-supported by the tutors; are given good feedback on how to improve; and feel safe and secure in the organisation.

In addition, inspectors met a focus group of trainees and apprentices from across the training provision. All of them reported that they enjoyed their courses, that the Bryson staff are very supportive, care about their progress and help them to achieve to their full potential.

¹ Programme registration data provided by the organisation at the time of the inspection is included in the Appendix of this report.

² Based on the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) NI Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 (NIMDM 2017)

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interest of all learners, the inspection linked internal and external approaches to evaluate the:

- outcomes for learners;
- quality of provision; and
- effectiveness of the leadership and management.

4. Overall summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Outcomes for learners	Good
Quality of provision	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Overall quality of the programmes inspected		
Training for Success	93%	Good
ApprenticeshipsNI ³	7%	N/A

Overall quality of the professional and technical areas inspected ⁴ and the essential skills provision	
Business administration	Good
Children's care, learning and development	Very good
Construction	Important areas for improvement
Essential skills	Good
Playwork	Good
Retail	Important areas for improvement

KEY FINDINGS

Strengths

- The good standards of work attained by a majority of the trainees and apprentices along with the progressive development of their personal skills and capabilities to support them to overcome barriers to learning that are often complex and challenging.

³ Due to the small numbers on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, no performance level was awarded.

⁴ A representative sample of professional and technical areas, agreed with the organisation, was selected for inspection.

- The quality of the learning, teaching and training which was good or better in 81% of the sessions observed.
- The good retention (68%) and the very good achievement (81%) rates attained by the trainees, despite their significant challenges and very low levels of prior attainment.
- The clear commitment, at all levels across the organisation, to its core social values and responsibility to provide training programmes that enable young people, particularly those with barriers to learning, to access and succeed in suitable education and training.
- The strong ethos of providing well-targeted care and welfare to ensure that the trainees and apprentices are provided with a safe, caring and supportive learning environment that is appropriate to meeting their individual needs.
- The well-considered investment in the deployment of a range of diversely skilled staff in order to support effectively the complex learning and other needs of the trainees.
- The good quality of the provision in the professional and technical areas of business administration, playwork and in the essential skills and the very good provision in CCLD.

Areas for improvement

- Address the shortcomings in the construction and retail provision which have important areas for improvement.
- Extend the links and partnerships to include a wider range of employers in order to increase the work placement rates for the trainees and the low recruitment to the ApprenticeshipsNI programme.
- Develop further the quality of the action planning process to ensure that the actions for improvement are sharper and include more measureable targets that are evaluated robustly in order to sustain continued improvement.

5. Outcomes for learners

The majority of the trainees and apprentices are motivated, demonstrate good standards of behaviour and, over time, develop well their personal, social and employability skills to support them to overcome their barriers to learning and progression. While most of them engage to good effect in the directed training sessions, a small number of the trainees display challenging behaviours; consequently, these trainees make overly slow progress in the development of their occupational skills. During the inspection, a significant minority of trainees display variable patterns of attendance and the overall attendance rate of the trainees at directed training was too low (61%). The organisation needs to review the strategies for monitoring and addressing attendance and behaviour in order to maintain and improve the outcomes attained.

The standards of work attained by a majority of the trainees and apprentices are good across the professional and technical areas inspected. In business administration, the trainees and apprentices carry out a range of administration duties in the workplace, including typing, filing, dealing with customers, making travel bookings, placing and tracking orders, managing facilities, handling cash and making bank lodgements. In playwork, the trainees are developing well a good understanding of the principles and practice of effective playwork across a range of settings for children and young people. In retail, while the small number of trainees in a work-experience placement are engaged in relevant merchandising and stock control activities, for the majority of trainees who are not in a retail work placement their occupational and employability skills are underdeveloped.

In construction, the overall standards of the trainees' work are much too variable; only a significant minority of them are developing their professional and technical skills at an appropriate pace. In trowel occupations, the trainees are able to explain the function and placement of wall ties in cavity walls and in wood occupations they know the most common types of fire extinguishers and the correct type to be used for the relevant class of potential fire. There is a need, however, to improve attendance and the level of engagement by a majority of the construction trainees in directed training in order to address the overly slow progress they are making in the development of their occupational skills. In CCLD, the trainees are developing well their understanding of the physical development of children from birth to one-year old and how to meet their needs effectively. In order to ensure that all of the CCLD trainees make consistently good progress, the links between the directed and workplace training need to be strengthened further to include the use of a dedicated mentor for each trainee, with a clear focus on the development of relevant occupational skills through more focused short-term target-setting.

The majority of the trainees and apprentices display good standards of written work in their portfolios of evidence. Across most of the professional and technical areas, however, more attention needs to be paid to marking for improvement and the provision of individualised, focused feedback to the trainees and apprentices to support further improvement. The majority of the trainees and apprentices demonstrate good oral communication skills; they are confident when answering questions in class and taking part in discussions. Most of the trainees who are in relevant work placements develop their oral communication skills to good effect and are able to communicate appropriately using the language of the professional and technical area. The majority of the recently recruited trainees in trowel occupations, however, are reticent communicators and struggle to use language appropriately across a range of settings and audiences.

In the essential skills, most of the trainees in numeracy engage well in their work and are able to use appropriate numerical operations to solve a range of problems. The standards of the trainees' oral responses are good and while their written work is more variable, it is mainly good. The trainees have good opportunities to complete extended written tasks that are well aligned to their interests. In information communication technology (ICT), the trainees use well a good range of software to create useful resources and guidance information for their professional and technical area; in CCLD, for example, they are able to research and understand information related to common illnesses in children.

Most of the trainees and apprentices are developing well their wider skills and dispositions for learning. In business administration, the employers report that the apprentices are being given more responsibility to undertake tasks and work independently in the workplace; they are able to work on their own and competently on a range of tasks and are building their confidence in answering the telephone, dealing with customers and using software packages to complete a range of administration tasks. In CCLD, most of the trainees are developing well their wider employability skills and are engaging well in a range of classroom-based activities which impacts well on their self-confidence and the development of a stronger disposition to learning

and development. In playwork, most of the trainees are improving steadily their ability to engage positively in group learning tasks; a key enabler to building the trainees' wider skills and capabilities are the supportive work placements and the high flexibility and responsive pastoral support provided by the staff. The playwork employers report that with encouragement and mentoring support, the trainees build their self-confidence and are increasingly able to take responsibility for a range of work roles with minimum supervision. In wood occupations, the trainees are developing well their personal and social skills and, over time, are growing in confidence. A majority of the new trainees in trowel occupations, along with the trainees in retail, however, are making slow progress in the development of their personal, social and employability skills. In trowel occupations, they are reluctant learners and lack sufficient capacity to take responsibility for their own learning, behaviour and progression.

Overall, most (81%) of the trainees and apprentices who are retained and complete their training programmes achieve their targeted qualifications. Over the last three years, the overall achievement rate on the Training for Success programme is very good (81%) and on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme it is good (80%). Over the same period, the retention rates for the Training for Success (68%) and ApprenticeshipsNI (78%) programme are good. On the Training for Success programme, the progression rate to employment or further education or training is an important area for improvement (64%).

The outcomes attained by the trainees and apprentices in the essential skills are a particular strength. Over the last three years, the average overall achievement rates in literacy, numeracy and ICT are high at 90%, 92% and 97% respectively. The trainees and apprentices attained well at levels 1 and 2 in the revised assessment arrangements. In both literacy and numeracy, just under one-fifth (18%) of the trainees and apprentices progress across more than one level in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.

6. Quality of provision

The curriculum provides the trainees and apprentices with a broad and balanced range of professional and technical programmes which are economically relevant and well-matched to their interests and aspirations, particularly for those trainees with low levels of prior achievement. Appropriate planning is in place to expand further the curriculum offer, particularly in the professional and technical area of health and social care.

The quality of the learning, teaching and training observed ranged from very good to significant areas for improvement and was good overall; it was good or better in most (81%) of the sessions observed and very good in just over one-quarter (26%) of them. The most effective practice is characterised by: high levels of personal support for the trainees and apprentices; a good range of active teaching strategies that engage the trainees and apprentices through appropriately differentiated activities; good use of information and learning technology (ILT) to enhance the learning; and effective assessment of learning. In the less effective practice, in just under one-fifth of the sessions observed, the tutors use only a limited range of learning and teaching strategies, there is insufficient differentiation in learning and behaviour management strategies are not well enough developed, all of which result in low levels of trainee engagement and slow progress in their learning.

Overall, the quality of the the trainees' and apprentices' personal training plans is good. The plans are used appropriately to record the trainees' and apprentices' prior achievements and additional learning support needs. There is a need, however, to record trainee milestone achievements more consistently. The monitoring reviews are detailed and informative, contain good input from employers and set progressive targets for improvement.

The care and welfare impacts positively on the learning, teaching and outcomes for the trainees and apprentices. A strong ethos of care and welfare is embedded soundly across all of the work of the organisation in order to provide a safe, caring and supportive learning environment. A key strength of the Training for Success provision is the strong emphasis on meeting the wide range of challenging care and welfare needs of the trainees and apprentices through the provision of high levels of support. The staff are well aware of the trainees' and apprentices' individual needs and associated barriers to learning and work hard, with good effect, to provide good, well-tailored support and guidance for them. Bryson provides additional practical support for trainees where necessary, including the provision of breakfast and lunch and have introduced a range of approaches and incentives to promote positive behaviour. All of the trainees and apprentices interviewed reported that the staff were approachable, encouraging and proactive in supporting them. In most of the directed training sessions observed, almost all of the trainees and apprentices develop positive and productive working relationships with their tutors.

The systems in place for the identification of individual learner support needs are well-embedded. Effective internal counselling support, drop-in and mentoring services are provided for those trainees and apprentices who require additional support for personal, social and emotional issues. The organisation has developed effective partnership links with a range of external support organisations and agencies to provide additional support for learners on a wide range of personal, social, financial and educational issues. There is a need, however, for the organisation to raise further the expectations and aspirations for all of the trainees and apprentices to promote progression across the provision and further raise outcomes attained.

The trainees are provided with a broad and well-targeted programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance. Through established links with local post-primary schools, the organisation provides prospective trainees with access to open days and other careers information in order to support well-informed decision-making when progressing to work-based training. At the commencement of their training, the trainees are encouraged appropriately to sample a range of professional and technical areas and, on occasion, are given the opportunity to sample and are signposted to more relevant professional and technical provision with other training providers. A taught employability programme, delivered by the learning support officers, prepares the majority of the trainees well for the world work; through the sensitive and persistent development of their interpersonal skills, interview skills and techniques and the development of their curriculum vitae, the trainees progressively develop, from a low base, their self-confidence and ambition to succeed.

The development officers work diligently to secure suitable work placements for the trainees, including short periods of sampling to increase their understanding of various work roles. While a majority (62%) of the trainees have benefited from a work-experience placement where they progress well in developing their employability skills, a significant minority make slower progress in developing their readiness for the world of work, particularly in customer-facing roles. In retail, for example, the overall work-experience placement rate is especially low (33%) and needs to be addressed, particularly to ensure that the year two trainees are provided urgently with an appropriate work-experience placement. While a limited number of relevant guest speakers and industry visits are arranged, a more consistent and systematic approach is needed to ensure that all trainees are able to develop a clearer understanding of the possible progression pathways available to them.

7. Leadership and management

The director and senior management team have extensive experience in the work-based training sector, which is used well to ensure the curriculum and associated care and support arrangements meet the needs of the trainees and apprentices. They are dedicated and demonstrate a clear commitment to the provision of a high level of service to address the very challenging needs of the trainees and apprentices through a range of learner-centred training programmes. This commitment is based on the key values of social inclusion and a strong sense of social responsibility. The quality of the strategic leadership in the organisation is very good; management are well supported by the chair and the board of Bryson, as well as the wider Bryson Charitable Group board.

The roles and responsibilities of staff in the organisation are clearly defined. Bryson has invested appropriately in workforce development to ensure that a wide range of diversely skilled staff are employed and deployed as an integral component of the overall staffing complement, including valuable input from the learning mentors, the development officers and a counsellor. This supports well the organisation's aim of providing a wraparound service to address the growing needs of trainees presenting with complex learning difficulties and the ever increasing social and emotional challenges faced by them, many of whom have previously disengaged from education and progressed to Bryson with very low levels of prior attainment.

Well-established links with feeder schools in the greater Belfast area and participation in regional strategic fora are helping to build strong connections to support the training provision. While good links and partnerships have been developed with a wide range of external stakeholders, engagement with employers needs to be further strengthened in order to: continue to improve work placement rates; consolidate further the links between the directed and workplace training in order to better develop the trainees' and apprentices' occupationally-relevant skills; and set more ambitious targets in the strategic plan to expand and develop the narrow range of ApprenticeshipsNI programmes and registrations, which have been persistently low over the last four years.

The quality of the accommodation is mostly good. The organisation's city centre location is a well-maintained learning environment with bright, clean, welcoming classrooms which are well-equipped to support learning, teaching and training. The quality of the accommodation for construction, in the sub-contractor's premises, requires improvement to ensure that the teaching, training and social areas are clean, orderly and create an engaging learning and working environment for the trainees and apprentices.

Appropriate channels of communication are evident between management and staff at all levels. While there is effective co-ordination across the majority of the professional and technical areas and the essential skills provision, the senior managers need to address the shortcomings in the quality of the provision in the professional and technical areas of retail and construction. In retail, there is an urgent need to extend the employer base to better prioritise and place a greater emphasis on providing more timely opportunities for the trainees, particularly the second year trainees, to engage in meaningful retail work placement experiences. The organisation also needs to address the over use of placements within the voluntary and community sectors to better support the trainees with relevant work-experience placement and employment opportunities within the retail sector.

In most professional and technical areas, there is effective tracking of the progress of the achievements of the trainees and apprentices by the tutors. In CCLD, for example, the comprehensive and coherent tracking of all aspects of the trainees' achievements is used to very good effect to provide them with timely, regular and well-informed progress updates. In construction, however, there is a need to fully and rigorously implement, as a matter of

urgency, holistic tracking across all of the programmes to ensure consistent and effective monitoring of the progress of the trainees and apprentices. Overall, the organisation needs to develop further the centralised data systems in order to support more consistently the tracking and monitoring of the progress the trainees and apprentices are making in their learning and the achievement of their targeted or full-framework qualifications.

The organisation's overall self-evaluation and quality improvement planning processes are good. They include the use of a wide range of information, including session observations and feedback from external stakeholders to inform the self-evaluation report. There is a need, however, to strengthen the action planning process to ensure that the actions taken to address the key areas for improvement are sharper, and include more specific and measurable targets that are evaluated robustly in order to sustain improvement. In addition, at course-team level across the provision, particularly in retail, there is a need to refine further the quality improvement planning process to evaluate more rigorously and identify clearly and succinctly those specific actions needed to bring about ongoing and sustained improvement in the quality of the provision at this level.

8. Safeguarding

On the basis of the evidence provided during the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding young people and adults at risk reflect current legislation and practice.

9. Overall effectiveness

Bryson FutureSkills demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the trainees and apprentices. There are areas for improvement that the organisation has demonstrated the capacity to address.

The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

Programme registrations

Table 1 - Current registrations by programme

Programme	Numbers of registrations	% of total registrations
ApprenticeshipsNI Level 2	*	4%
ApprenticeshipsNI Level 3	*	3%
Training for Success Skills for Your Life	36	24%
Training for Success Skills for Work (Strand 1)	82	55%
Training for Success Skills for Work (Strand 2)	21	14%

* Less than 5

Table 2 - Current registrations by professional and technical area

Professional and technical area	Number of trainees	% of total registrations
Business administration	12	8%
Children's care, learning and development	21	14%
Construction	39	26%
Hair & beauty	5	3%
IT & ICT Services	12	8%
Playwork	16	11%
Retail	34	23%
Professional and technical area	Number of apprentices	% of total registrations
Business administration	6	4%
Children's care, learning and development	*	1%
Construction	*	1%

* Less than 5

Table 3 - Qualifications of current trainees/apprentices on entry to their programme

Programme	Training for Success (%)	Apprenticeships NI (%)
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C including English and mathematics	0%	13%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-C	0%	13%
(%) of learners with GCSE English or equivalent at Grades A*-C	12%	75%
(%) of learners with GCSE mathematics or equivalent at Grades A*-C	8%	36%
(%) of learners with 4 or more GCSEs or equivalent at Grades A*-G	3%	36%
(%) of learners with no prior level 1 or level 2 qualifications	40%	40%

B. Inspection methodology and evidence base

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website www.etini.gov.uk.

Eight ETI inspectors observed 114 apprentices and trainees in 27 directed training sessions. They visited 12 trainees and apprentices in their workplace and interviewed 59 of them in focus group meetings and training sessions. Discussions were held with 25 employers/supervisors in the workplace. Samples of the trainees' and apprentices' work and personal training plans, and tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans were examined. The organisation's quality improvement plan and other relevant documentation were also scrutinised.

C. Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and on leadership and management.

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the organisation:

The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

Key Performance Indicators and Definitions	
Retention	The percentage of enrolments measured over the full duration of their programme.
Achievement	The percentage of participants who completed their targeted individual outcomes.
Progression	The percentage of successful completers who achieved positive progression.

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