

INSPECTION REPORT

Rathbone Training

09 February 2007



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Estyn

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg
A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate
For Education and Training in Wales

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

INSPECTION REPORT

Rathbone Training

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	2
Key challenges for Rathbone Training	3
Grades	3
About the inspection	5
What learners like about Rathbone Training	9
What learners think Rathbone Training could improve	9

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	10
Equality of opportunity	11
Quality improvement	13
Health, public services and care	15
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	23
Construction, planning and the built environment	27
Retail and commercial enterprise	30
Preparation for life and work	34
Business administration and law	37

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Rathbone Training is an educational charity and a company limited by guarantee. It has 70 sites and projects across Scotland, England and Wales, contracting with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Scottish Enterprise and DELLS to provide work-based learning for young people. It also contracts with Jobcentre Plus for Workstep and a range of programmes for unemployed people. Its main activity is to provide learning and training support to disadvantaged people, working mainly with the unemployed to improve their quality of life. Rathbone Training works mainly with young people who have not been successful in their secondary education, those excluded from mainstream education, those in the youth justice system, and with those whose lifestyles are a barrier to learning.

2. Rathbone Training's work in Scotland, its independent living projects for young people, and its work with young people aged 14-16, were outside the scope of this inspection.

3. Rathbone Training has 62 training centres across every region of England, except the Southwest, and a further eight in Wales. There are approximately 507 learners across South Wales, from Newport to Carmarthen and Merthyr. Over 75 per cent of the 2,849 learners are either training in social care work or are on foundation programmes. There are 1,503 learners following preparation for life and work programmes, 642 learners in health and social care, 364 in retail and commercial enterprise, 92 in business administration and law, 162 learners in construction, 92 in engineering and manufacturing technologies, and five learners in information and communications technology (ICT). ICT learners were not included in this inspection due to the very low current numbers. Most learners in vocational areas are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 1 or 2 and most have additional social and/or learning needs. Very few achieved five general certificates of secondary education at grade C or above. In Wales, SkillBuild and SkillBuild Plus programmes provide key skills and NVQs at level 1.

4. In 2004-05 Rathbone Training reorganised its management structure to comprise a chief executive supported by a team of directors. This structure aligns the Rathbone Training management structure with government office regions in England. At the same time its board of trustees agreed to refocus the mission of Rathbone Training to working with young people. Since March 2005, the organisation has worked to ensure all its work is in the scope of this mission while building its capacity in relation to meeting the needs of young people aged between 14 to 25. Rathbone Training is therefore dissolving its independent living centres and recently made the decision to radically reduce its commitment to adult learning. Over this same period, the organisation has increased significantly its work supporting disengaged young people via a variety of European Social Fund (ESF) and co-financed projects. New partnerships have been developed with the Youth Justice Board, the secure youth estate and Youth Offending Teams. The Board of Trustees has prioritised growth in the numbers of young people participating in relation to youth engagement and 14-16 alternative provision to school.

5. Rathbone Training currently employs 876 people. Staff numbers have decreased since the previous inspection. Training and assessment takes place on the job or in one of 70

RATHBONE TRAINING

national training centres. Some off-the-job training is subcontracted to local colleges of further education and other training providers. The head office of Rathbone Training is in Manchester.

6. Rathbone Training has contracts with regional LSC's, Jobcentre Plus, Scottish Enterprise and DELLS. Rathbone Training has a variety of other contracts with local authorities, Youth Offending Teams and Connexions Partnerships. Cumbria LSC is the lead LSC.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 3

7. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** More specifically, leadership and management are good as are the arrangements for equality of opportunity. Arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory. The learning provision in retail and commercial enterprise and in health, public services and care, is good. The learning provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies, construction, planning and the built environment, and preparation for life and work, is satisfactory. Provision in business administration and law is inadequate.

8. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** Self-assessment has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Staff and the centres themselves are now more involved in detailed critical analysis and review against set standards. Local self-assessment reports contribute to regional reports and to the national report. Reports are moderated and used together with quarterly quality reviews to form local quality improvement plans. The provider produces a separate self-assessment report and improvement plan for the provision in Wales. These identify the challenges that are specific to Wales, for example, the insufficient learning materials in Welsh, and the Welsh Assembly Government's priority for sustainable development.

9. Self-assessment and quality improvement are identified as core processes in Rathbone Training's strategic planning. The governance arrangements ensure that trustees are involved in the process. The current self-assessment plan is written well and broadly accurate although in two programme areas grades differ to those awarded by the inspection team.

10. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** Rathbone Training has raised achievement levels since the previous inspection for most the learners and carried out a range of effective actions to improve the learners' experience. Overall framework success rates for apprentices have improved over the previous three years and many more learners are now completing frameworks. More learners are progressing to positive outcomes in foundation programmes than was the case at the previous inspection, and more learners are achieving basic skills, key skills, and other qualifications. However, in a few areas success rates have not improved, for example, business administration. In some other areas there remains some unsatisfactory performance, particularly with regard to advanced apprenticeships.

11. The design and content of programmes has improved in some cases. Investment is being made in staff training and development with a much more strategic approach now being taken. The process for managing subcontracted provision and some partnership arrangements which was previously a weakness is now satisfactory.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR RATHBONE TRAINING:

- further develop the use of the management information system
- improve aspects of quality assurance
- maintain the good levels of learner support
- continue to improve success rates, particularly for advanced apprentices
- improve the quality and effectiveness of progress reviews
- improve learning resources available in construction and social care
- improve teaching for learners on preparation for life and work programmes

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Grades awarded at inspection

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		3

Health, public services and care			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Social care			
Apprenticeships for young people	63	3	
Train to Gain	65	3	
Early years			
Apprenticeships for young people	403	2	
Other government-funded provision	111	2	

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Engineering			
Apprenticeships for young people	55	3	
Motor vehicle			
Apprenticeships for young people	29	2	

Construction, planning and the built environment			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Construction crafts			
Apprenticeships for young people	162	3	
Other government-funded provision	61	3	

RATHBONE TRAINING

Retail and commercial enterprise		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Retailing and wholesaling</i>		2
Apprenticeships for young people	364	2
Other government-funded provision	55	3

Preparation for life and work		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>		3
Other government-funded provision	280	2
Entry to Employment	1,223	3

Business administration and law		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Administration</i>		4
Apprenticeships for young people	92	4

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

12. The inspection covered the provider's leadership and management and provision in: engineering and manufacturing technologies; construction, planning and the built environment; business administration and law; retailing and commercial enterprise; health, public services and care; and preparation for life and work.

13. The provision in ICT was not inspected during this inspection due to low learner numbers. Judgements about this programme are included in the leadership and management section.

14. Rathbone Training provides preparation for life and work programmes to 1,503 learners, 280 of whom are in Wales. It also provides work-based learning for 1,341 young people in: health, social care and public services; retail and commercial enterprise; business administration and law; construction, planning and the built environment; and engineering and manufacturing technologies. In Wales, SkillBuild Plus programmes provide key skills and NVQs at level 1.

Number of inspectors	23
Number of inspection days	107
Number of learners interviewed	375
Number of staff interviewed	177
Number of employers interviewed	77
Number of subcontractors interviewed	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	80
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	15
Number of visits	1

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic management
- strong governance
- very effective partnership working
- highly effective strategies to widen participation
- particularly effective actions to raise achievement levels and improve learners' experience

Weaknesses

- underdeveloped resources in some centres
- inadequate use of management information to manage performance at some centres
- unsatisfactory aspects of quality assurance

Health, public services and care

Social care

Strengths

- good development of learners' professional care skills
- very flexible and well-planned assessment
- effective induction

Weaknesses

- poor overall success rates for advanced apprentices
- insufficient resources to support learning for most learners
- poor collection and use of learner and employer feedback

Early years

Strengths

- good development of learners' knowledge and skills
- good off-the-job training
- good learner support
- particularly effective assessment planning

Weaknesses

- poor overall success rates for advanced apprentices
- weak review process
- insufficient collection and use of feedback

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Strengths

- good success rates for motor vehicle apprentices
- good teamwork with employers to provide learner support
- highly effective assessment for motor vehicle apprentices
- good monitoring of learners' progress and achievement for motor vehicle apprentices

Weaknesses

- poor monitoring of progress for engineering learners
- insufficient target-setting for most learners
- ineffective progress reviews for engineering learners
- no planning of internal verification for engineering apprentices

Construction, planning and the built environment

Strengths

- improving success rates
- good work placements
- good support for learners from training advisers and employers

Weaknesses

- slow learner progress
- weak progress reviews
- underdeveloped quality assurance arrangements

Retail and commercial enterprise

Strengths

- good progression for learners in England
- good on- and off-the-job training
- particularly good learner support
- good individual support for literacy and numeracy
- particularly effective staff teamwork

Weaknesses

- low apprenticeship success rates

Preparation for life and work

Strengths

- good development of learners' personal and employability skills
- very good progression by learners in Wales
- good programmes to match learners' needs
- very good personal support
- good promotion of equality and diversity
- good accommodation and resources

Weaknesses

- inadequate teaching
- insufficient sharing of good practice
- insufficient use of data to manage performance and aid improvement

Business administration and law

Strengths

- good development of learners' personal and employability skills
- good learner support

Weaknesses

- low overall success rates
- weak short-term target-setting
- insufficient reinforcement of equal opportunities during progress reviews

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT RATHBONE TRAINING:

- well-organised training
- very friendly relaxed training advisers
- individual support
- good work placements
- frequent assessor visits
- assessors' occupational knowledge
- 'that they get the best out of me and I get the best out of them'
- meeting new people
- 'helped me find a job'
- close to home
- 'building my confidence'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK RATHBONE TRAINING COULD IMPROVE:

- 'don't make people have their picture taken'
- not doing the same work again and again
- more enrichment activities
- the number of higher-level courses
- the size of some training rooms
- the common room and refreshment facilities
- the standard of the computers
- the pay conditions

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good strategic management
- strong governance
- very effective partnership working
- highly effective strategies to widen participation
- particularly effective actions to raise achievement levels and improve learners' experience

Weaknesses

- underdeveloped resources in some centres
- inadequate use of management information to manage performance at some centres
- unsatisfactory aspects of quality assurance

15. Strategic management is good and gives a clear focus for the leaders and staff in the organisation on the experience of the learner and how it can be improved. The strategy is based on good analysis of the organisation's role in work-based learning, and the context and needs of young people, along with broader policy developments in education and training both nationally and locally. Significant changes over the past three years to the structure and focus of the organisation's work have been managed effectively and this is still the case. The leadership has achieved a good balance between corporate direction and sustaining local initiative. There are clear priorities supported by measurable targets that are communicated effectively within the organisation. There is strong alignment between the overall vision for the organisation and the actions of managers and staff who are involved and are committed to the strategy. There is much good teamwork among staff locally and some very effective leadership and management.

16. There is strong governance and management and financial control systems are highly effective. Governance is based on sound principles and policies. Board members have highly appropriate experience and expertise and there is a very good selection and succession planning process to maintain the strength of the board. Trustees make a strong contribution to planning and strategic development. The finance and audit subcommittee is particularly effective and makes a good contribution to the good financial control process. The board is very much involved in the self-assessment process and performance management.

17. Rathbone Training makes many very good contributions towards partnerships locally, regionally and nationally, and partnership working is particularly effective. Working together with other partners is a central part of the provider's strategy. Young people benefit from some very good local partnerships developed by Rathbone Training. For example, at one local centre, a network of local businesses and other organisations works with Rathbone Training to provide materials, expertise and support, for a project where

learners restore bicycles and send them to young people in Africa. At many centres, youth agencies and other local services work closely with Rathbone Training's staff to provide and improve learning opportunities, advice, and guidance. Rathbone Training is also very much involved in a range of neighbourhood initiatives and other community-based activities, such as family learning.

18. The corporate management systems and procedures of the organisations are satisfactory. Contract management is effective. Staff, recruitment, selection, induction, training, and development are satisfactory, as are communications. The organisation has a suitable strategy and policy for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language training which in the main is working well. There is a clear staffing strategy and plan in place for appropriate staff development.

19. Although the performance of the organisation in terms of outcomes has improved, and the capacity to provide young people with relevant learning experiences that lead to good outcomes has risen, there remain some aspects of underperformance. The rate of progression from Entry to Employment (E2E) is inconsistent across the country with some poor performance in some areas. Some apprenticeship success rates are not sufficiently improving and advanced apprenticeship rates are generally poor. Although the overall rate of achievement of qualifications is increasing, a large number of young people still leave with no qualifications.

20. General operational management practices at centre level are satisfactory. Management information reports are available, but are often not used sufficiently well to manage performance. There is not enough use of management information to measure and improve performance. For example, some centres were unable to produce clear data on attendance trends.

21. Resources to support the range of learning programmes are generally fit for purpose. However, it was identified that there were underdeveloped resources in some centres including not enough specialist facilities for skills learning for some learners, and appropriate learning materials either not being available or not used.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

22. Rathbone Training has been successful in widening participation and engaging disadvantaged learners. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report and was a strength at the previous inspection. It is effective in meeting the needs of young people at risk of exclusion who are excluded, or disengaged, from mainstream education and training. Over 90 per cent of learners are judged to have additional learning and/or additional social needs. Seventy-one per cent of learners have such additional needs. Rathbone Training uses effective partnerships at strategic and local levels to lobby government and re-engage young people, many of whom were excluded from school or left with no formal qualifications into training. It also specifically targets young offenders, many of whom are under intensive supervision and surveillance orders, or anti-social behaviour orders. Most centres employ successful strategies to recruit people with multiple barriers to learning. Rathbone Training is represented on numerous national and regional committees. For example, it is represented on a national committee for the Youth Justices Board and worked closely with the Youth Justice Board in developing an appropriate curriculum including behavioural management sessions. In some regions there are particularly good initiatives with criminal justice agencies to ensure that

RATHBONE TRAINING

ex-offenders have access to training in secure and safe surroundings. The provider has also worked closely with Parenting UK and Surestart at some centres to train staff to work better with parents and support them in attracting young persons into education and training.

23. Rathbone Training's staff provide very good pastoral support and guidance to help learners overcome barriers to learning and gain practical and personal skills for employment. Many staff have relevant qualifications and experience in counselling and working with vulnerable people. A range of specialist counselling and advice is readily available to learners from external support agencies, who visit centres regularly to give advice and guidance. Learners are often provided with free transport, clothing, and personal protective equipment.

24. In Wales, the provider identifies those learners with Welsh language needs when they begin their programme. Generally, all centres in Wales are promoting the Welsh culture. Learners often use modern Welsh themes as a focus when developing their communication skills. In Carmarthen, Rathbone Training is using its link with the Welsh Assembly Government's language and play project to raise learners' awareness of the use of Welsh language within childcare vocational training. All Welsh centres have attained a Basic Skills quality mark. However, at present the company does not do enough to promote the Welsh language in its marketing and external promotional materials. There are not yet enough bilingual learning resources available to encourage learners to use and develop their Welsh language skills.

25. Rathbone Training has a suitable range of equality and diversity policies and procedures. Most centres have a suggestion box that is well used by learners. Rathbone Training receives few complaints from learners. Any complaints received are satisfactorily resolved at centre level and reported to the head office through management meetings. Most learners have a good understanding of how to register their concerns and of equality and diversity. Some centres have poor access for learners with restricted mobility, but alternative arrangements can be made where necessary. Rathbone Training has carried out a comprehensive disability audit at each centre and has action plans in place to make necessary adjustments.

26. Rathbone Training has recently reviewed its marketing literature and positive images of a wide range of learners are now used in all marketing materials including the website. At the time of the previous inspection, a range of promotional materials was available in other languages including Welsh and other community languages. This is no longer the case. Since rebranding last year, Rathbone Training has focused initially in producing marketing materials in English. It now plans to introduce literature in Welsh but is still considering a strategy for producing literature in other community languages. Cultural differences are celebrated through events and displays. There is appropriate sensitive awareness of religious practices and a useful calendar to celebrate diversity that provides details of many religious festivals and their origins.

27. Equality of opportunity is promoted well to learners on E2E programmes. Equal opportunities is covered well in staff and learners' inductions by discussion, activities, and a video, and learners have an appropriate understanding and recall of the topics raised. However, equal opportunities is not sufficiently reinforced at other times on some programmes, and is not sufficiently covered during progress reviews.

28. Rathbone Training collects data on learners' ethnicity and gender to meet its contractual obligations, but little effort is made to analyse or use this information for decision-making. There is good participation by minority ethnic groups in general and, in some parts of the country, Rathbone Training is highly effective in engaging young people from a wide range of groups that reflect the characteristics of the immediate community. However, no work has been carried out to analyse effectively which other groups are not participating or to take specific action to attract under-represented groups. A senior manager has been appointed to develop and lead a whole organisation strategy for equality and diversity. A national working group has been established, chaired by the chief executive, and containing representatives from each area, to guide this process. An action plan has very recently been established, but it is too early to judge its effectiveness. In Wales there is insufficient use of statistics in equal opportunities monitoring. For example, there is no monitoring of the number of learners who have had bilingual or Welsh compulsory education. The under-representation from minority ethnic groups at some centres was identified in the self-assessment report.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

29. Rathbone Training has raised overall achievement levels since the previous inspection for most of the learners and has carried out a range of effective actions to improve learners' experience. Overall success rates for apprentices have improved over the previous three years and many more learners are completing their frameworks. More learners are progressing to positive outcomes in foundations programmes than was the case at the last inspection and more learners are achieving basic skills, key skills and other qualifications. However, in a few areas, success rates have not improved. For example, business administration, which has been identified by Rathbone Training, and is subject to an appropriate improvement plan. In some other areas there remains some unsatisfactory performance particularly on advanced apprenticeship programmes. In some cases sufficient resources are still not available to learners, for example, social care and construction.

30. Rathbone Training has carried out a range of effective actions to improve the learners' experience. These actions include investment in infrastructure to improve overall facilities and resources. The design and content of the learning programmes has improved in some cases. Investment is being made in staff training and development with a much more strategic approach being taken. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this measure. The process for managing subcontracted provision and some partnership arrangements is now satisfactory. Agreements specify expectation well and regular reviews and quality monitoring takes place.

31. Self-assessment has improved since the previous inspection. Staff and centres are now more involved in detailed critical analysis and review against set standards. Local self-assessment reports contribute to regional reports and to the national report. Reports are moderated and used together with quarterly quality reviews to form local quality improvement plans. The provider produces a separate self-assessment report and improvement plan for its provision in Wales. These identify the challenges that are specific to Wales, such as the insufficient learning materials in Welsh and the Welsh Assembly Government's priority for sustainable development. Self-assessment and quality improvement is identified as a core process in Rathbone Training's strategic planning. The governance arrangements ensure that trustees are involved in the process. The current

RATHBONE TRAINING

self-assessment plan is well written and broadly accurate, although in two programme areas grades differ to those given by inspectors. Strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors during the inspection were mostly identified in the self-assessment report. However, the self-assessment process in health, public services and care does not take sufficient account of the views of learners, employers or staff. Weaknesses identified by inspectors in the self-assessment report for this area were not identified, although inspectors were able to confirm most of the strengths.

32. Internal verification is satisfactorily carried out in most cases. However, in construction, this is not the case, and in engineering, there is insufficient planning of internal verification.

33. The quality improvement process for teaching and learning is relatively new. It now operates across all the provision with standard criteria. Staff training has taken place for observation, but is yet to cover all the relevant staff. Links to formal staff appraisal and staff development are not fully developed although recent improvements have begun to tackle this. In some cases, observations focus on teaching and training rather than learning. However, observations of teaching and learning are used well in some cases, particularly as a means of improving subcontracted provision and where Rathbone Training manages E2E.

34. Good practice is shared in many areas of learning, but is not sufficiently shared in health, public services and care. In foundation programmes not enough good practice is shared across the regions. Some sharing of good practice has been successful in improving provision. For example, in the case of the project to provide skills for life as part of the vocational curriculum, curriculum materials for promoting equal opportunities and in the centre managers' workshop. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language.

35. Some aspects of the quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory/ Areas where practices do not meet the standards set by the organisation are not adequately identified. The application of audit and monitoring processes on key learner processes, such as progress reviews and target-setting, are inconsistent. They have failed to identify and rectify poor practice within programmes and across regions. Inspectors found key weaknesses in progress reviews and in target-setting. The collection of learner and employer feedback in health, public services and care is not operating to standard procedures, although in many other cases this is satisfactory. Progress reviews and target-setting were identified as weaknesses at the previous inspection and were found to be weaknesses during this inspection. Work to rectify this has not been fully effective. However, not all reviews are weak and most learners experience satisfactory or better progress reviews and target-setting. Aspects of quality assurance were judged to be key weaknesses in construction and in health, public services and care. In construction, new procedures have been introduced to ensure a consistent approach to assessment and internal verification. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these new procedures. At one centre in Wales, internal verification is unsatisfactory on construction programmes. However, at another centre the new arrangements are now effective. In health, public services and care, insufficient focus is given to employer and learner feedback.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, public services and care

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Social care		3
Apprenticeships for young people	63	3
Train to Gain	65	3
Early years		2
Apprenticeships for young people	403	2
Other government-funded provision	111	2

36. In total, there are 531 learners in England and 111 learners in Wales on programmes in health, public services and care. There are 403 learners in England on early years programmes. Of these, 326 are apprentices and 77 are advanced apprentices. Learners are either on work placement or are employed in nurseries or schools. All learners are interviewed by qualified members of the team. Learners complete an assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs during the interview process. Specialist support is organised for those learners identified as requiring additional support. Induction takes place, either in groups or on an individual basis, and either in the workplace or at one of the training centres. Assessment is carried out by qualified training advisers and takes place in the workplace. In Wales there are an additional 111 learners. All are on a preparation for work in the care sector NVQ at level 1. This programme provides learners with good opportunities to develop an understanding of important basic care and childcare principles.

37. Rathbone Training currently has 128 learners taking qualifications in social care. Of these, 55 learners are working towards an apprenticeship and eight towards an advanced apprenticeship. Sixty-five learners are on Train to Gain programmes. All learners are employed. Learners work in a variety of care settings including nursing and care homes and residential facilities involved in providing independent living support and care. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is 19 per cent, and 6 per cent of learners are men. All learners receive training in their place of work. NVQ assessment is carried out in the workplace by Rathbone Training assessors.

Social care

Strengths

- good development of learners' professional care skills
- very flexible and well-planned assessment
- effective induction

Weaknesses

- poor overall success rates for advanced apprentices
- insufficient resources to support learning for most learners

RATHBONE TRAINING

- poor collection and use of learner and employer feedback

Achievement and standards

38. Development of learners' professional skills, confidence and general self-confidence is good. Learners have recently developed a better understanding of knowledge in care settings despite working in care for a number of years, particularly on the Train to Gain programme. For the younger learners on apprenticeships, their social care skills and confidence is improving. Good standards of work is produced in portfolios.

39. Overall success rates on apprenticeship programmes are satisfactory at 50 per cent for 2005-06 which is above the national average of 38 per cent. Apprenticeship programmes have seen a steady increase over the last three years from 11 per cent in 2003-04 to 22 per cent in 2004-05. Timely success rates for the same period have also seen a steady improvement. NVQ-only success rates have seen a steady decline over the last three years from 60 per cent to 49 per cent. However, the NVQ success rate within the apprenticeship framework has seen a corresponding increase from 22 per cent to 72 per cent for 2005-06.

40. Success rates for advanced apprentices are poor. From 8 per cent in 2003-04, this fell to zero per cent in 2004-05. In 2005-06 the rate increased to 11 per cent. However, this is well below the national average of 29 per cent.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	13	31	47	8	25
		timely	11	18	31	0	17
	2004-05	overall	10	20	43	0	19
		timely	10	20	31	0	13
	2005-06	overall	9	67	49	11	29
		timely	9	67	34	11	18
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	18	22	39	11	15
		timely	19	21	16	11	5
	2004-05	overall	23	57	38	22	19
		timely	23	39	18	4	9
	2005-06	overall	46	72	49	50	38
		timely	47	55	24	34	18
NVQ training for young people	2003-04	overall	84	60	49	0	0
		timely	78	51	32	0	0
	2004-05	overall	83	55	53	0	0
		timely	77	34	33	0	0
	2005-06	overall	49	49	65	0	0
		timely	48	44	46	0	0

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk).

The quality of provision

41. Assessment is flexible and well planned. Learners develop their skills well and make good progress. Learners on care programmes are on target to achieve their NVQ and complete their frameworks. Assessors visit learners very regularly, in some cases weekly. Assessment tasks are varied and well supported by work packs prepared by assessors to develop background knowledge. Assessors visit learners at weekends and in the evenings. Learners clearly understand their assessment tasks and what they should prepare. Good feedback is given to learners after assessment. Regular 12-weekly progress reviews are held with learners and feedback is given to employers. However, employers are not routinely involved in the reviews. Employers sign the recorded feedback sheets and a copy is kept on an employer file supplied by Rathbone Training.

42. The induction process is very effective. It is delivered in the workplace to suit the learner and their own pace of learning. It covers all the appropriate areas including health and safety, equal opportunities, appeals and complaints and the apprenticeship and NVQ programme. Learners recall the induction very well. It is a very effective way to start the learners on their programme.

43. The care programme meets learners' and employers' needs. A recent Train 2 Gain contract ensures older experienced learners in care can gain appropriate qualifications and develop their skills.

44. Learners on care programmes are provided with satisfactory guidance and support. All learners are employed and recruitment to the programme is through their employers. While most learners are currently on level 2 NVQ programmes, many learners aim to progress to at least a level 3 NVQ. At present there are not enough opportunities for learners to progress on care programmes.

45. Additional learning support is satisfactory. All learners have an initial assessment and, if necessary, this is followed by a further diagnostic assessment. In Leicester, support for literacy, numeracy and language is well tailored to meet learners' individual needs. However, in Northampton, learners are not getting the support they need. Learners with additional learning needs are not currently being supported by appropriately qualified staff. For example, one level 3 NVQ learner, who requires numeracy at level 2 to complete her apprenticeship, has been on the programme for seven months and has not yet had appropriate numeracy support needs.

46. Insufficient resources are available to support learning. Many learners do not have sufficient access to books or resources in their workplace. Learners are not supplied with NVQ texts to support their learning. Not all learners have access to the internet. When setting up the training Rathbone Training does not ensure that learners have access to workplace training materials. Some learners do have access to the internet and to wider reading and appropriate texts, but this is not consistent or available to all learners on apprenticeships or Train to Gain programmes.

Leadership and management

47. Social care programmes are satisfactorily managed. Effective team-working and good communication support the staff team. Some staff are newly in post. Staff are suitably qualified in care and staff development and appropriate appraisal provides effective

RATHBONE TRAINING

support. Managers carry out regular individual sessions each month with their staff and these are effective in monitoring learners' progress and ensuring targets are met. Staff observations occur every six months and staff receive graded feedback. This system is newly in place and it is too early to judge its effectiveness.

48. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners understand their rights and responsibilities and are confident about making complaints should they need to do so. Reinforcement of learners' understanding of equality and diversity is not consistently explored in progress reviews by assessors.

49. Satisfactory internal verification systems are in place. Rathbone Training's system of internal verification is well established and operates across the regions. There is good sampling system in place. Issues are clearly identified with assessors and follow-up action is monitored. Portfolios of evidence are effectively internally verified and feedback is given to staff. Standardisation meetings are held regularly and actions are recorded. However, not all care staff attend regional meetings.

50. There is poor collection and use of learner and employer feedback. Quality improvement is not effectively supported through feedback. Attempts to collect learners' views are made through a series of questionnaires. However, some of the questions do not encourage appropriate responses to plan improvements. The response rate for the questionnaires is very low at about 2 per cent for care programmes over the last year. Questionnaires are sent to learners on completion of the programme. There are few other opportunities for current learners to provide written feedback or for the staff team to use feedback to make improvements. Feedback from the questionnaire is poorly evaluated and aspects for attention for social care learners are not specifically identified. Feedback from the questionnaires is not routinely shared with assessors. Employers' views are not routinely collected and employers have little opportunity to influence the development of the programme.

51. The self-assessment process in care does not make sufficient use of feedback from learners, employers or staff. Inspectors identified weaknesses not outlined in the self-assessment report but confirmed most of the strengths.

Early years

Strengths

- good development of learners' knowledge and skills
- good off-the-job training
- good learner support
- particularly effective assessment planning

Weaknesses

- poor overall success rates for advanced apprentices
- weak review process
- insufficient collection and use of feedback

Achievement and standards

52. Learners develop good knowledge and skills. Their professional skills are highly appropriate to the demanding environments in which they work. These skills are supported by a sound level of background knowledge that learners make the best use of to improve their practice. Learners gain good teamworking skills and confidence in their abilities. Many learners enter the apprenticeship programme with very low achievements from school. Employers are able to identify learners' improved knowledge and skills. Nurseries and schools support well the development of learners' skills. All learners on the programme in Wales benefit from work-placement experience that helps them to develop appropriate vocational skills. Work placements are matched well to learners' needs and promote their personal, social and learning skills. All learners benefit from the good support offered by workplace supervisors and training advisers in primary schools and nurseries.

53. Overall success rates for apprentices are satisfactory and show an improving trend from 4 per cent in 2003-04, to 20 per cent in 2004-05, and 51 per cent in 2005-06. This improving trend is continuing in the current year with many learners successfully achieving their qualification. Most of the apprentices still in learning are making satisfactory or better progress. In Wales, all learners make good progress with their key skills. Key skills are taught alongside the NVQ activities and are relevant to the context in which the learners work.

54. NVQ overall success rates are satisfactory, but the last three years show there is a declining trend from 65 per cent in 2003-04, to 55 per cent in 2004-05, and 48 per cent for 2005-06. Lack of funding contributed towards the decline in NVQ success rates from 2004-05. All of the learners transferred to the apprenticeship programme, and Rathbone Training no longer provides NVQ programmes in early years.

55. Overall success rates for advanced apprentices are poor. For the past three years they have remained at zero per cent. Rathbone Training has taken a decision not to offer advanced apprenticeships at the current time.

RATHBONE TRAINING

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate	
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	20	60	55	0	27	
		timely	21	48	31	0	15	
	2004-05	overall	24	63	49	0	11	
		timely	23	57	26	0	35	
	2005-06	overall	19	68	55	0	35	
		timely	19	63	25	0	15	
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	25	68	49	4	21	
		timely	27	52	20	4	7	
	2004-05	overall	65	55	53	20	36	
		timely	63	43	22	11	15	
	2005-06	overall	380	60	63	51	55	
		timely	389	45	33	37	29	
	NVQ training for young people	2003-04	overall	351	65	48	0	0
			timely	365	46	35	0	0
2004-05		overall	532	55	33	0	0	
		timely	509	49	59	0	0	
2005-06		overall	167	48	59	0	0	
		timely	162	37	32	0	0	

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk).

The quality of provision

56. Off-the job training is good. It is well structured and learners have timetables of what topics are covered each week. Dates for completion of written work are clearly identified. Learners and assessors tell employers what training is taking place. Employers provide workplace activities to help learners apply their background knowledge. Training sessions held at centres are interesting and effective. They are well planned and aims and objectives are clearly set and communicated to learners. A variety of methods are used well to meet set objectives. Trainers design and provide some very effective tasks. For example, one trainer designed an activity during which learners match each of the principles and values of childcare to examples of how these would be applied in practice. Trainers use questioning well to assess learners' understanding. Sessions are very well linked to the workplace. In one session, learners gave a range of examples of children's development linking these to various theories of child development. Learners make relevant contributions to learning sessions and most complete tasks successfully. Trainers do not always have extension tasks available when needed. Learning and understanding are checked frequently. The principles and values of childcare are taught well and applied by learners in the workplace, but are not supported by relevant work-based assessments. Equal opportunities concepts are satisfactorily incorporated into training sessions. Learners' have a sound understanding of diversity and apply this in their work with children. In Wales off-the-job training sessions are planned well. Learners use a range of good resources including journals, textbooks, and handouts, to support their learning.

Generally, they develop good teamwork and planning skills. Training advisers do not always use a sufficiently wide range of teaching and learning strategies.

57. Support for learners is good. Appropriate pastoral support is provided well. Training advisers understand their learners' needs and have a good awareness of their varying cultural needs. They are easily contactable and readily available to learners. Assessors ensure that assessments can be carried out at times to meet learners' and employers' needs. Staff are skilled at matching learners to appropriate placements. Employers provide good support and encouragement. There is initial assessment of basic skills for every new learner. Learners receive their results and support is given quickly. No learner starts their key skills training and assessment until they have achieved an appropriate level of basic skills. There is ongoing work to integrate basic skills and key skills into the vocational training. This is well developed in literacy but in the very early stages for numeracy. Learning support tutors in training sessions work effectively to improve learners' basic skills and enhance learning of the vocational subjects.

58. Training is supported well by a good range of resources. Accommodation is good and well maintained. Rooms contain very attractive display work produced by learners. The displays reflect and support their learning. Each centre has a specialist room for learners to develop their knowledge and skills in various messy play activities for children. Text books are used effectively by learners. Whiteboards and flipcharts are used well. Information learning technology is rarely used as a learning tool. However, computers available at each centre are used regularly and most learners have good word-processing skills. Work placements also provide access to a computer and have relevant books and journals available to learners. In Wales a number of the centres are located in older buildings. Training staff make the best use of the accommodation for off-the-job training. All staff and learners work well to celebrate learners' success and achievement.

59. Assessment planning is particularly effective. Learners are thoroughly prepared for their observations. Advisers check through the assessment plan with a learner immediately before assessments takes place. The rest of assessment practice is satisfactory. Direct observations are recorded in detail and carefully matched to the national standards. There is little use of oral questioning. However, some assessors use questioning well to assess learners' understanding. Feedback after observations is good. Written work is signed and dated by assessors and knowledge evidence is accurately identified in most cases. Written feedback is generally not given to learners. Some assessors do not sufficiently encourage the use of a variety of evidence collecting methods. In Wales, most learners' portfolios are well presented and many learners use ICT to improve the presentation of their work. Training advisers do not always provide learners with sufficiently detailed feedback on their written work.

60. Provision at entry level and level 2 meet the needs of learners and employers. The E2E programme is very effective in preparing learners for progression to an apprenticeship in childcare. Many entry learners progress to such a programme. A significant number of successful apprentices want to progress to advanced apprenticeships with Rathbone Training. However, there is currently no provision to meet this need. Once learners have achieved their apprenticeship a significant proportion enter employment in childcare at the school or nursery in which they trained. In Wales there are not enough progression opportunities. The provider does not offer level 2 training in care or childcare.

61. The review process in England is weak. Progress review paperwork is not well detailed. Equal opportunities and health and safety are not always discussed at review, and learners' understanding is not analysed. Learners' new workplace skills and knowledge are often not reviewed. The involvement of employers in the review process is not consistent. A significant number of progress reviews do not include employer comments. Some progress reviews are carried out in the centres and employers are not able to attend. There is no overall record of learners' progress. Action-planning and target-setting is consistently good. There are some examples of good overall progress reviews at some centres. The review process in Wales is thorough and consistent. Training advisers review learners' progress every four weeks. Learners, workplace supervisors, and training advisers make an important contribution to the review process, including the setting of targets. In some centres key skills advisers contribute to the review process.

Leadership and management

62. A number of actions have been introduced to improve both overall success rates and the quality of provision. For example, key skills and technical certificates are now delivered earlier in the programme and are more relevant to the occupational area. There is closer monitoring of learner progress, more individualised support for learners, and more effective performance management of staff. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of some of these initiatives. Communication between staff is good. There are regular team meetings where staff are updated and information and good practice is shared. An internal observation scheme to cover teaching and learning is used well and is linked to the staff appraisal scheme. There is a clear focus on staff development and training. Staff are encouraged to carry out a range of professional development activities. Internal verification practices are satisfactory and meet awarding body standards. The sampling system is thorough in many centres and standardisation meetings are held to ensure consistency. However, there are pockets of inconsistency, mainly in feedback to assessors, which is sometimes descriptive rather than evaluative. The management information system is used effectively by managers to monitor learner and staff performance.

63. The national self-assessment report combines the strengths and weaknesses for social care and early years. However, it does not identify all of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

64. There is insufficient collection and use of feedback. Evaluative comments from learners and employers are not used effectively to improve the quality of provision or aid action-planning and decision-making. Some questionnaires do not encourage helpful responses, and response rates have been low. The views of employers are not regularly requested, and so there is little opportunity for employers to formally influence how the programme develops.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Engineering Apprenticeships for young people	55	3
Motor vehicle Apprenticeships for young people	29	2

65. Engineering advanced apprenticeships are provided in Cumbria at the Elms Learning centre. Learners are recruited to work-based learning programmes directly from schools and colleges or through potential employers. At the start of their programmes, learners complete an induction. They then attend the training centre for the first year of off-the-job training at the Elms centre where they study for a level 2 NVQ in performing engineering operations and also complete their key skills qualification. The delivery of the technical certificate is subcontracted to a local college where the learners attend for one day and one night a week. After achieving their level 2 qualifications, learners continue their technical training at the college and their on-the-job training in the workplace where they study for an NVQ at level 3. Currently there are 55 advanced apprentices studying for their level 3 NVQs in engineering production, technical services, and engineering maintenance.

66. Motor vehicle apprenticeships are provided at the Wigan, Bolton, Bury, Bradford and Walker offices of Rathbone Training. Learners generally progress onto the motor vehicle apprenticeships from E2E. There are 25 apprentices studying for their level 2 NVQ in vehicle fitting and four studying for their level 2 NVQ in body and paint. Learners complete their level 1 key skills in their first year and aim to complete their level 2 NVQ within 16 months of starting the programme. Most learners who join the programme have additional learning and support needs and begin the programme unemployed. They gain jobs during the course of their apprenticeship. Thirty-one per cent of those learners on the apprenticeship programme have additional learning needs, 24 per cent have additional social needs, and 14 per cent have both.

67. All learners are assessed regularly in the workplace by training advisers. Progress reviews are carried out by training assessors for the advanced apprentices and by the apprenticeship mentor for the apprentices.

Strengths

- good success rates for motor vehicle apprentices
- good teamwork with employers to provide learner support
- highly effective assessment for motor vehicle apprentices
- good monitoring of learners' progress and achievement for motor vehicle apprentices

Weaknesses

- poor monitoring of progress for engineering learners
- insufficient target-setting for most learners

RATHBONE TRAINING

- ineffective progress reviews for engineering learners
- no planning of internal verification for engineering apprentices

Achievement and standards

68. Success rates for the motor vehicle apprenticeships are good. Although In 2004-05 there was no achievement, in 2005-06 62 per cent of the apprentices achieved their qualification, which is 12 per cent above the national framework rate. For 2006-07, success rates for motor vehicle apprentices is currently at 38 per cent but many learners are still in learning. The progress monitoring system shows that all learners are on target to complete by their set date.

69. Achievement for engineering advanced apprentices is satisfactory. Success rates for 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06 are 69, 43 and 51 per cent, respectively, compared with the national average for the same periods of 51, 51, and 53 per cent. Current learners are making satisfactory progress.

70. Learners' portfolios of evidence are satisfactory. Portfolios are structured well with satisfactory written evidence for each specific task within the NVQ unit. They contain an appropriate range of diverse evidence to meet NVQ requirements.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	13	69	57	69	47
		timely	22	0	34	0	27
	2004-05	overall	30	47	56	43	47
		timely	47	0	33	0	26
	2005-06	overall	37	65	55	51	49
		timely	24	0	34	0	30
Apprenticeships	2004-05	overall	2	100	52	0	42
		timely	3	67	26	0	19
	2005-06	overall	30	63	57	60	51
		timely	31	45	37	42	32
NVQ training for young people	2003-04	overall	53	55	47	0	0
		timely	53	40	32	0	0
	2004-05	overall	35	49	57	0	0
		timely	32	34	38	0	0
	2005-06	overall	36	28	58	0	0
		timely	36	28	38	0	0

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk).

The quality of provision

71. Employers, training advisers and apprentice mentors work well together to provide good learner support. Learners are sufficiently confident to discuss relevant issues with

employers, advisers and mentors. Learners work under the close supervision of experienced technicians, who have good practical and technical knowledge, and actively assist them with their NVQ. One learner who had been made redundant was reinstated with the intervention of a training adviser. One learner has been helped to achieve his NVQ well past his targeted completion date after his portfolio was lost while moving home. This work has been carried out unfunded. Employers support and encourage learners to achieve higher levels of further education and also provide opportunities for learners to advance their careers into more technical or supervisory roles. Apprentices who are on training allowances are often taken into employment after their period of training. Learners who are on the apprenticeship programmes and are not currently employed are often given additional money by the work-placement provider to supplement their training allowance. One learner who was having to leave the programme early due to the withdrawal of the training allowance received good support from his training advisers, mentor and workplace supervisor to ensure that he attained his qualification early, before leaving the work placement. Learners progress and many gain supervisory or technical positions. Advanced apprentices gain good levels of practical and social skills in their first year of off-the-job training. This adequately prepares them for the workplace.

72. Assessment of learners' work is highly effective, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Assessments are planned in a timely manner and are carried out thoroughly. Assessment planning is thorough and flexible. It ensures that it covers all of the scope for the particular NVQ units being assessed. Assessments are well recorded and monitored through the progress monitoring system. The assessment confirms learners' competence and progress within the NVQ. Learners receive good, positive feedback from their assessor after the assessment.

73. There is a good system in place to monitor the progress and achievement of motor vehicle apprentices, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. This system uses a green, amber, red traffic light system to effectively record progress. Where progress is not as expected any problems are quickly identified. For those learners who are not progressing well, an individual action plan is produced to overcome the problem. Learners keep a copy of their progress sheet in their portfolios. The progress chart is updated on a monthly basis and the results are reported to the centre managers to help them manage learners' progress.

74. The progress of engineering advanced apprentices is not sufficiently monitored. This weakness was partially identified in the self-assessment report. Learners' progress is not recorded. There is insufficient recorded evidence of what NVQ units learners are currently working towards or their progress. Learners' portfolios do not sufficiently identify their progress and rely too much on cross-referencing the work to the NVQ candidate book to analyse progress. Learners are not able to easily identify their own progress. Employers have insufficient knowledge of learners' progress and consequently find it difficult to plan the on-the-job training to match the NVQ requirements.

75. Target-setting is weak. There is no consistency in the setting or recording of targets at progress reviews, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. In some progress reviews observed during the inspection good, specific and measurable targets were set but in most progress reviews, targets are too general.

RATHBONE TRAINING

76. Progress reviews for engineering advanced apprentices focus on pastoral issues with no relevant targets set. Individual learning plans are not reviewed or referred to. They have not been updated with regard to the level 3 NVQ units that are being studied and do not record their associated target completion dates. There are no on-the-job training plans for engineering learners in their second or third year of their training. The record of the review does not contain up-to-date information and there is no evidence that any actions have been reviewed for completion. The progress review process does not reinforce equality of opportunity or workplace health and safety.

77. Resources at the engineering advanced apprentice training centre are satisfactory for the number of learners attending and the qualification being delivered. The apprenticeship programme for the motor vehicle qualification makes good use of interactive computer software to deliver the background knowledge.

78. Key skills are delivered in a systematic manner and scheduled so that they are completed at the start of the programme. Key skill portfolios are satisfactory and include the use of naturally occurring NVQ evidence where possible.

79. All learners complete an initial assessment that identifies their learning needs. Learners placed directly by their employers also complete the initial assessment process when they attend their induction and, if any issues are identified, these are immediately discussed with their employer. Skills for life assessments are carried out in a planned and structured way.

Leadership and management

80. Management of the apprentice programme for motor vehicle is good with an appropriate focus on improving success rates. There is good networking with the assessors and centre managers in motor vehicle. However, there is insufficient sharing of good practice between the motor vehicle and engineering managers or assessors.

81. The self-assessment report identified all of the strengths and most of the weaknesses found by inspectors.

82. Internal verification is carried out and meets the needs of the company and the NVQ awarding body. However, there is no planning of internal verification on the engineering advanced apprenticeship. There is evidence that random sampling of NVQ units by the internal verifiers is taking place. However, there is no overall plan or record to identify if all NVQ units being studied have been assessed. There is no check to establish if all of the NVQ units and all of the learners have received internal verification. There are no records available to demonstrate that internal verification of assessors and the assessment process has taken place. There are only infrequent assessor and internal verifier standardisation meetings and the associated minutes are poor with no specific actions.

Construction, planning and the built environment**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Construction crafts		3
Apprenticeships for young people	162	3
Other government-funded provision	61	3

83. In England and Wales there are 162 learners on construction programmes. There are 101 apprentices of whom three are in Cumbria, 17 in London, 80 in the Northeast, and one in Yorkshire. Sixty-one learners are on SkillBuild Plus programmes in Wales that lead to an NVQ at level 1 in construction. Four learners are women and four are from minority ethnic groups. Two learners are aged over 19 and the rest are aged 16-18.

84. Most learners are referred by Connexions or Careers Wales, and some by the probation service. Most learners have progressed from either an E2E programme or SkillBuild Plus. Off-the-job training takes place at the Rathbone Training centres. Many construction learners progress from E2E programmes. Most learners have an initial period in the learning centre workshops to prepare them for work placement.

Strengths

- improving success rates
- good work placements
- good support for learners from training advisers and employers

Weaknesses

- slow learner progress
- weak progress reviews
- underdeveloped quality assurance arrangements

Achievement and standards

85. Success rates are improving. In 2003-04 success rates were poor at 20 per cent. At the previous inspection poor success rates were identified as a key weakness. These have now risen to 48 per cent and are now satisfactory. Key skills delivery has improved. There is better staff stability and improved pastoral support. However, some learners make slow progress towards achieving their NVQ. Twelve learners on level 1 NVQ courses have been on programme for over one year. Many learners are not achieving the milestone dates stated in their individual learning plans. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners develop a wide range of workplace skills.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	0	0	0	0	0
		timely	1	0	37	0	17
	2004-05	overall	0	0	0	0	0
		timely	1	0	33	0	23
	2005-06	overall	1	0	63	0	51
		timely	0	0	0	0	0
Apprenticeships	2004-05	overall	4	25	53	25	39
		timely	7	14	19	14	14
	2005-06	overall	71	51	61	48	55
		timely	82	26	32	23	28
NVQ training for young people	2003-04	overall	45	20	24	0	0
		timely	46	7	16	0	0
	2004-05	overall	46	33	46	0	0
		timely	45	11	23	0	0
	2005-06	overall	9	44	52	0	0
		timely	5	40	32	0	0

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk).

The quality of provision

86. Teaching and learning in classrooms and workshops is satisfactory. Appropriate attention is given to health and safety at the centres and at the workplace. Tutors use a variety of strategies to maintain learners' interest such as good use of interactive learning resources. There are good working relationships between tutors and learners that contributes to good class discipline. Learners on level 1 NVQ programmes have progress reviews in their work placement every month and apprentices every 12 weeks.

87. Work placements are good. Learners are placed with small building contractors. Training advisers work well to match the work-placement provider to the needs and interests of learners. Some learners have progressed through government training schemes. Workplace supervisors are prepared to spend time with the learners to help them develop their skills through a wide range of activities that in many cases go beyond the requirements of their NVQ. This support helps learners prepare them for employment with general builders. For example, learners develop specific paint application techniques and good customer care skills. Many employers employ learners after they have completed their programme. For example, one learner progressed from an E2E programme through an apprenticeship and is now employed as a workplace supervisor with a contractor.

88. There is particularly good support for learners from employers and training advisers. This key strength was identified at the previous inspection and has been maintained. Learners receive an appropriate initial assessment for literacy and numeracy. Where

needs are identified they are met. Training advisers, in addition to progress reviews, often make additional visits to the learner on site, often weekly dependent on the individual needs of the learner. One learner was provided with good support through referral to a drug misuse programme to ensure he achieved his NVQ. There are very good and effective informal communications between training advisers, employers and learners. If any issues arise they are dealt with quickly and effectively. For example, a work-placement provider identified that because of changing work patterns he could not now provide the range of work needed by a learner to achieve his NVQ. All parties assisted in the transfer of the learner to another work-placement provider.

89. Learners' success is celebrated well and includes awards presented to learners. Competitions are used well to ensure learners understand, for example, health and safety issues in the workplace. There is wide recognition of learner achievement in the learning centres with good displays of their work on noticeboards. A roll of honour board is displayed in many classrooms promoting learner achievement. Learners from the regions have been put forward for the Rathbone Training national achievement awards event.

90. Progress reviews are weak. Targets are poor. Too few targets relate to the development of workplace skills. Equality and diversity are not discussed adequately with learners and employers. At one work placement, inappropriate images were displayed on the wall of a workshop. These were quickly dealt with by training advisers. Individual learning plans are not always updated during progress reviews.

Leadership and management

91. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff have appropriate training and assessor qualifications and good relative industrial experience. Some staff hold teaching qualifications. There is an ongoing programme of assessor and verifier development. Managers carry out staff observations and action plan further development according to the needs of the organisation. Managers hold regular meetings with staff and internal verifiers have recently introduced regular standardisation meetings.

92. Quality assurance arrangements are underdeveloped. Following recent staff changes and changing roles, new procedures have been introduced to ensure a consistent approach to assessment and internal verification. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these new procedures. At one learning centre in Wales internal verification is unsatisfactory. There is currently a tariff of some sanctions imposed on the centre by the awarding body and there have been no observations of assessors by the internal verifier. At another centre the new arrangements are effective. For example, the internal verifier stopped an observed assessment when it was deemed to be inappropriate.

93. Learning resources and accommodation are not of a consistent standard. For example, at one centre hand tools are poor. There are no training rigs for stairs, flooring or roofing to adequately meet the training needs of learners on the wood occupations apprenticeship.

Retail and commercial enterprise**Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Retailing and wholesaling</i>		2
Apprenticeships for young people	364	2
Other government-funded provision	55	3

94. There are 178 learners on the retail and commercial enterprise programmes. At the time of inspection there were 178 apprentices: 137 in retail, 33 in catering and eight in warehousing. Sixty-five per cent of apprentices have additional needs identified at the start of their programme. Twenty per cent have additional learning needs, 12 per cent have additional social needs, and 28 per cent have additional learning and social needs. Seventy learners are on Train to Gain programmes, 44 are on retail programmes and 26 on catering programmes. There were 116 hairdressing learners on the level 1 SkillBuild Plus programme in Wales who were not inspected.

95. There are 61 learners on retail SkillBuild Plus programmes. All learners are on work placement in retail organisations. Learners in Wales are typically located in large retail supermarkets, DIY and gardening stores. Most training takes place in the workplace, although training advisers provide individual training and coaching in local training centres. Learners attend off-the-job training for background knowledge, key, and basic skills.

Strengths

- good progression for learners in England
- good on- and off-the-job training
- particularly good learner support
- good individual support for literacy and numeracy
- particularly effective staff teamwork

Weaknesses

- low apprenticeship success rates

Achievement and standards

96. Apprenticeship success rates are low. In 2004-05 achievement was 6 per cent rising to 32 per cent in 2005-06. This is below the national average.

97. Learners are making good progress towards their qualification aims. In one centre in the North 87 per cent of retail apprentices have achieved their apprenticeship to date. The current achievement rate for apprentices for 2006-07 is 44 per cent with many learners still in learning. One warehousing apprentice has recently completed his full framework six months ahead of his targeted end date. Key skills training and assessment is now introduced early in the learning programme. Technical certificate achievement is good. Rathbone Training provides learners with individual NVQ unit certificates to acknowledge ongoing achievement. Key skills pass rates are consistently high in Wales. However, level 1 NVQ pass rates in Wales have fallen to 25 per cent in 2006, with only

45 per cent of learners progressing onto further training or employment.

98. The standard of learners' work is good. Portfolios are organised well and learners' written work is adequately presented. All learners have appropriate knowledge and understanding to maintain a healthy and safe work environment. They have good records of attendance and timekeeping.

99. Slow progress has been identified as an issue by Rathbone Training. There is a good system to identify learners at risk of failing. These learners are given additional learning support. In 2006-07 the rate of unit achievement has improved. Most learners are now at an appropriate stage in their qualifications for the time they have spent on the programme.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	8	38	45	13	32
		timely	8	25	24	0	18
	2004-05	overall	18	22	45	6	35
		timely	19	21	29	3	23
	2005-06	overall	198	44	54	32	50
		timely	208	27	37	19	34
NVQ training for young people	2003-04	overall	301	47	40	0	0
		timely	320	35	29	0	0
	2004-05	overall	299	43	50	0	0
		timely	277	32	34	0	0
	2005-06	overall	164	39	54	0	0
		timely	156	33	37	0	0

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk).

The quality of provision

100. On- and off-the-job training is good. Training sessions are planned well with objectives clearly explained to learners. Learners show good levels of interest and motivation throughout their training sessions. There is an effective system to identify individual learning needs. In most centres a well-qualified adviser assesses learners' needs. Learning materials are good. Good on-the-job training develops learners' knowledge of company retail systems and procedures. There are particularly good resources for delivering the retail technical certificate in the Northwest. In Wales, some individual learning plans have the same end dates for NVQ units that do not allow learners to plan and assess their progress. Assessment practice is satisfactory. There are close links with employers. In hospitality, menus are altered to help learners cover all the requirements of their NVQ. SkillBuild Plus learners are provided with good work placements. Retail workplace supervisors understand what is required of them to help learners complete their frameworks. In Wales, there are no retail progression routes on to level 2 or 3 apprenticeship programmes. All learners achieve additional key skills, including working

RATHBONE TRAINING

with others and improving own learning and performance.

101. Learning support is good. Training advisers provide frequent workplace learning support. Many learners are visited each week. Learners are able to contact their adviser by telephone. Training advisers make additional visits and guide and support learners through their programme. Staff ensure that parents and guardians agree to support the attendance of each learner. Learners who experience particular issues at work are provided with support to resolve these with their employer. One learner who was repeatedly late for work was able to change their working pattern. Training advisers regularly monitor vacancies in their area to advise their learners of potential vacancies. When interviews are secured, individual coaching on interview skills is often provided. Training advisers provide learners with transport to interviews if necessary. Appropriate clothing can also be provided.

102. Individual support for literacy and numeracy is good. Individual learning needs are accurately identified and learners have access to effective additional support throughout their programme. Literacy and numeracy needs are well met with additional basic skills support provided at the learning centres. Learners have good personal support to help them complete their programme, including access to specialist support services such as counselling.

103. Rathbone Training's staff work particularly well as a team. There are regular staff meetings and staff use frequent informal contacts to ensure that other staff are kept up to date on learners' progress and other issues. Some centres have specialist progress review staff. Some good internal verifiers provide additional support to training advisers. At one centre a team building social evening was planned effectively to ensure all staff could attend.

104. Many learners progressed from E2E to apprenticeships. Work placements are well matched to learners' needs. Work tasters are organised with local employers in appropriate occupational areas. An established network of employers provides good work placements and many learners secure jobs with these employers. There is early achievement of technical certificates, key skills and NVQ units. All learners develop relevant practical work skills. For some learners with additional needs the provider has a network of employers that provide sheltered work placements. One learner who was initially placed in a charity shop is now the assistant shop manager and has achieved her full framework.

105. Progress reviews are conducted on a monthly basis. The provider recently introduced new review forms. In most centres the reviews and review records were good. However, in some centres, progress reviews are not carried out well. Not all employers are fully involved in the reviews although they do make comments on the review forms. In one region a dedicated reviewer carries out progress reviews across all occupational areas.

Leadership and management

106. Formal and informal communications are effective. Retail training advisers are appropriately qualified and have a wide range of current commercial experience. Staff meetings are held regularly and recorded actions are monitored. Staff are kept up to date with programme changes through good links with awarding bodies. Key skills training and

assessment resources are very good. In one region, retail technical certificate resources were of a particularly high standard. The internal verification process is satisfactory. Internal verifier reports on assessor performance have clear action points. Equality and diversity are adequately promoted. However, there is insufficient monitoring in the workplace in Wales.

107. The self-assessment report is satisfactory. It identified most of the key strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. However, the declining NVQ pass rates in Wales was not identified.

Preparation for life and work**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>		3
Other government-funded provision	280	2
Entry to Employment	1,223	3

108. There are 1,223 learners on E2E programmes in England and 280 learners on a similar programme called SkillBuild Plus in Wales. The programmes are designed to help young people progress into work, further education and/or training, and much of the curriculum focuses on improving self-confidence and preparing for employment. Many of the learners have significant barriers to learning.

109. Most learners are referred by personal advisers in Connexions in England and Careers Wales in Wales. Some learners contact the provider direct while others are referred by a number of external agencies. The programmes are managed regionally, within five divisions, each with a regional manager. Individual centres are managed by centre managers supported by a team of training advisers and specialist literacy and numeracy staff.

Strengths

- good development of learners' personal and employability skills
- very good progression by learners in Wales
- good programmes to match learners' needs
- very good personal support
- good promotion of equality and diversity
- good accommodation and resources

Weaknesses

- inadequate teaching
- insufficient sharing of good practice
- insufficient use of data to manage performance and aid improvement

Achievement and standards

110. Learners develop good personal and employability skills. They are more confident when presenting themselves for interview and engaging with employers and workplace supervisors. Learners work better as a team to complete tasks successfully. They negotiate well group roles and responsibilities. Punctuality is enforced well. Learners develop good working relationships with their peers, tutors, and work-placement colleagues. They understand the kinds of behaviour and language acceptable to use in employment. Learners develop good practical skills in many sessions, such as bricklaying, cooking, and telephone techniques.

111. Progression in England is satisfactory. However, there has been little improvement in progression overall. Of the 3,294 learners who started in 2005-06, 44 per cent

progressed to employment or further education/training, and 5 per cent are still in learning. In 2004-05, 44 per cent of learners progressed and in 2003-04 only 39 per cent progressed. Additionally the rates of progression varied substantially between centres with no identifiable trend or pattern.

112. In Wales, progression rates are very good. Approximately 74 per cent of learners went into further education, training or gained a job.

113. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. All training advisers work well to ensure learners present their work well. All learners have good portfolios of evidence. These files are well organised.

The quality of provision

114. The programmes meet learners' needs and career aims. The curriculum covers a wide range of skills and knowledge relevant to their needs. Topics include independent living, citizenship, interview skills, first aid, and research into jobs and local businesses. There are good work placements in most areas to help learners develop and practise new skills. Work placements are available on a flexible basis. Learners can attend work tasters at an appropriate time. However, in some centres learners do not have access to a good range of placements or tasters. Learning activities at the training centres in Wales are planned well. Learners are prepared well for their work placement and are appropriately supported by provider staff. Links with employers are good at most centres. Individual learning timetables are negotiated with learners from a range of options. Learners can gain additional qualifications in literacy, numeracy, key skills, and a certificate in preparing for employment. Centres have forums to help learners discuss their views. In one centre, the forum is designing a questionnaire to collect feedback from learners while they are on the programme.

115. Staff provide very good personal support for learners. Staff work closely with specialist external agencies to provide support with issues such as drug misuse, housing, parenting, and sexual health. Provider staff frequently take an active role in relevant networks and partnerships. In some centres, outreach workers are appointed to improve learner attendance. Staff develop good working relationships with learners. Induction is satisfactory and clearly covers all aspects of the programmes.

116. Progress reviews are generally satisfactory. The identification of learners' individual aims follows induction and initial assessment reviews. However, many key objectives are concerned with the achievement of qualifications only, and do not focus enough on the identified barriers to progress.

117. Overall, teaching is inadequate. Fifteen per cent of teaching and learning was judged to be unsatisfactory, 47 per cent as satisfactory and 38 per cent as good or better. In many learning sessions learners are not provided with adequate learning activities. In weaker learning sessions there is insufficient differentiation. Activities do not meet individual learners' needs. Learners are not able to work at their own pace or to their own targets. A poor range of teaching methods is used in some learning sessions. There is too much use of tutor explanations and the completion of worksheets. Group work is poorly structured. Spelling on handouts and display are not always correct and there is some inappropriate use of capital letters. The language needs of learners are not always met. In the better learning sessions, all the resources needed are identified and available. There is

good use made of learning activities and tutors provide relevant innovative learning materials. Good use is made of team teaching in some learning sessions. Learners are encouraged to ask questions and tutors ensure that learners are able to take a full and active part in the learning. Some tutors make particularly good use of practical activities that combine team-building, the preparation of food, and numeracy.

Leadership and management

118. Equality and diversity are promoted well. Staff have very good working relationships with learners. Equality and diversity is established well in learning sessions and progress reviews. Learners effectively debate controversial issues. Posters and displays celebrate diversity and raise awareness. Learners in Wales celebrate the culture of their country in displays of modern Welsh themes. Learning centres promote the Welsh language. Staff understand the cultural background of learners and arrange activities accordingly.

119. Accommodation and resources are good in most centres. Most centres are decorated, and maintained well. There are wall displays of learners' work to celebrate their achievement. Interactive whiteboards are being introduced into centres and some good use is being made of them. Computers are up to date and are used to access the internet, produce curriculum vitae, develop literacy skills, and carry out projects. However, bilingual learning and promotional materials are not available in Wales.

120. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Learners' experiences differ between centres as does the content of the programmes. For example, ICT training and qualifications are not available to learners at some centres. In some centres learners do not have access to a good range of work experience. At some centres learners go on a work placement as soon as they are ready. At other centres learners have to wait a long time before they can go on a work placement. The teaching and learning is not consistent across the centres. Observations of teaching and learning are more effective in some centres than others. Some observers comment on teaching rather than learning.

121. Many learning centres make insufficient use of data to analyse trends and bring about improvements. Whilst the provider's management information systems are comprehensive, centre managers do not routinely use the system to identify current performance. The results of initial assessments of literacy and numeracy are not sufficiently analysed to identify trends and plan appropriate resources. There is not enough analysis of the progress of specific groups of young people.

122. The local self-assessment process is inclusive and accurately represented the strengths and weaknesses of the centre. The national report identified most of the key strengths, but did not identify weaknesses, particularly those related to teaching and learning.

Business administration and law**Grade 4**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Administration Apprenticeships for young people	92	4 4

123. There are 10 advanced apprentices and 82 apprentices on business administration programmes. Half of these are on work placements. Training takes place in 13 training centres. Seventy-two per cent of business administration learners are women and 15 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Fifteen per cent have a declared disability.

124. Learners are mainly recruited through referral from Connexions, by word of mouth, or direct application. They work in a range of areas including distribution, finance, primary and secondary schools, and the charity and voluntary sector. Learners are able to join the apprenticeship programme at any time of the year.

125. Learners are initially assessed for literacy and numeracy skills before starting their programme. Currently 42 per cent of learners are receiving numeracy and/or literacy support. All learners attend an induction at the provider's premises. Business administration learners can attend off-the-job training for one day each week at a training centre. Off-the-job training includes support for key skills development and technical certificate training. On-the-job training is provided by employers. Learners can take short, externally certificated courses in health and safety and first aid.

126. Training advisers regularly visit learners to carry out assessment. Two members of staff carry out internal verification. Progress reviews are generally completed every 10 weeks with the learner and workplace supervisor.

Strengths

- good development of learners' personal and employability skills
- good learner support

Weaknesses

- low overall success rates
- weak short-term target-setting
- insufficient reinforcement of equal opportunities during progress reviews

Achievement and standards

127. Learners develop good personal and employability skills. For many learners their work-based learning programme is their first experience of employment. Rathbone Training provides very effective help to allow learners to develop a wide range of employability skills that they use effectively in the workplace. Some learners working at larger companies are able to move around departments to enable them to broaden their skills or take on greater responsibilities. Where this happens employers provide appropriate training. In some cases learners gain employment either during, or on completion of, the training. Off-the-job training provides good opportunities to enhance

RATHBONE TRAINING

or broaden computer skills. Learners quickly develop an appropriate attitude to work and their colleagues. Learners displayed confidence in dealing with new workplace tasks. For example, they can deal confidently with work colleagues and visitors after a short time in the workplace and develop sufficient confidence to work independently or collaboratively. Their self-esteem improves. Many learners have been given increased responsibility since starting their work placement. For example, one learner was able to confidently use a complicated switchboard to a high standard. This strength was not identified in the self-assessment report.

128. Rathbone Training effectively monitors attendance and punctuality at most training centres as well as in the workplace. Any identified issues are usually followed-up quickly and effectively. Learners' portfolios are suitably structured and indexed. They contain a satisfactory range of evidence much of which is sourced from the workplace. In most cases learners develop adequate skills and knowledge to allow them to cross-reference evidence to the requirements of their programme.

129. Overall success rates are low. Apprenticeship success rates in 2003-04 were below the national average and slightly above in 2004-05. In 2005-06 the success rate at 30 per cent was approximately half the comparable national average. Between 2003 and 2006 NVQ success rates have declined. The improving framework and NVQ timely success rates between 2003 and 2005 fell sharply in 2005-06. This decline followed changes to LSC contract requirements for learners that favoured framework rather than NVQ programme recruitment. A small number of the current learners are making slow progress in achieving the requirements of their programme. Some learners have significant aspects of their programme to achieve, even though they are well into their programme, or about to reach their completion date.

130. For NVQ-only courses in 2003-04 the 48 per cent NVQ success rate was significantly above the national average. However, the rates in 2004-05 and 2005-06 were low and significantly below the national average.

131. Success rates for advanced apprenticeship frameworks between 2003 and 2006 show an improving trend, but remain consistently below the national average. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. The number of advanced apprentices is small and has declined since 2003. Current learners are making at least satisfactory progress. Some centres have significantly higher success rates than others. Recent initiatives have been made to improve the overall progress of learners and include a specific focus on raising success rates in selected centres. However, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these initiatives.

132. A small number of learners are on programme for a considerable period of time before they are placed with an employer. In some centres, learners have been disadvantaged by staffing difficulties. Staff turnover and delays in appointing new staff was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate	
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	21	57	46	14	28	
		timely	23	39	30	9	18	
	2004-05	overall	13	69	47	31	32	
		timely	8	38	34	13	23	
	2005-06	overall	8	38	59	38	51	
		timely	8	13	44	13	37	
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	39	72	51	36	38	
		timely	42	33	25	10	18	
	2004-05	overall	56	55	56	45	46	
		timely	55	35	35	29	29	
	2005-06	overall	191	46	63	33	58	
		timely	198	27	44	19	41	
	NVQ training for young people	2003-04	overall	236	48	47	0	0
			timely	241	32	35	0	0
2004-05		overall	239	36	57	0	0	
		timely	224	28	43	0	0	
2005-06		overall	123	41	71	0	0	
		timely	120	35	52	0	0	

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk).

The quality of provision

133. Learners receive good support. This strength has been maintained since the previous inspection. All learners have a dedicated training adviser who visits them frequently in the workplace. Additionally good contact is maintained by telephone and at the weekly training day. Learners who need specific help with personal development are given very effective individual help. Good use is made of an introductory work-placement process to give learners a gradual introduction to office work. Rathbone Training provides timely and effective practical help for learners to gain jobs. For example, one learner who was due to attend a job interview was provided with suitable clothing. Effective referral to external specialist agencies is carried out. Rathbone Training provides effective support when learners have left the programme. Where relevant, staff work closely with learners' parents or guardians to resolve problems. Learners have adequate access to appropriate information, advice and guidance. In some areas, staff from Connexions regularly and frequently visit centres to provide help. Other links with Connexions are used effectively.

134. Initial assessment is satisfactory. There are adequate arrangements to identify and support learners with additional needs. All learners receive an appropriate initial assessment of literacy and numeracy as well as key skills. However, the process does not always ensure that all learners are placed on an appropriate level of programme. Results are appropriately recorded on individual learning plans. However, the plan is not used consistently across centres. Few advisers use the plan to monitor effectively and plan

RATHBONE TRAINING

training. Specialist staff are suitably qualified to provide support in literacy and numeracy. Support for learners with dyslexia is satisfactory. There is effective support for learners who are working towards one or more key skills as well as the technical certificate. Learners are suitably prepared for examination. Learners with relevant prior achievement are exempt from key skills training and assessment. Learners who achieve key skills at an appropriate level are generally encouraged to move on to a higher level.

135. Off-the-job training sessions are at least satisfactory. In the better sessions there is good use of question and answer to check and reinforce learners' understanding. Learners are encouraged to contribute effectively to group discussions. There is good use of a range of teaching strategies to meet individual learning styles. Written handouts are well presented. However, they are not always written using language that is readily accessible to learners. All off-the-job training is satisfactorily planned. However, there is insufficient observation of trainers to aid quality improvement. The provision of training resources has improved since the previous inspection. Rooms used for off-the-job training are appropriately maintained and fit for purpose, but standards vary between centres. Wall displays include a good range of examples of learners' work and celebrate success effectively. Displayed information includes appropriate subject identity for business administration. Training centres provide a satisfactory range of teaching aids. ICT equipment for off-the-job training is satisfactory. There is a suitable standard of computers and office equipment used by learners in the workplace.

136. Vetting arrangements before placing a learner with an employer are satisfactory. Employers provide suitable support to learners that usually includes time to carry out coursework during work time. However, employers are not always effectively involved in the training. They often have an unsatisfactory understanding of their role in providing on-the-job training or do not know that they have a training role to carry out.

137. Short-term target-setting is weak. Previous action plans are usually suitably reviewed and used to develop the content of subsequent plans. However, short-term targets recorded on the action plan are often imprecise, and do not have completion dates. Most do not contain enough detail to be helpful to learners. Short-term targets are not written in a way that ensures learners have a clear understanding of what is required of them and how they are to achieve the recorded goals. Written short-term targets often do not reflect the action that has been agreed in discussion between the training adviser and learner. Many learners do not find the target-setting process useful in clarifying actions they need to complete that contribute to achievement. Learners are not able to effectively use the targets to monitor their own progress. Some targets are not sufficiently challenging and are not used effectively to drive achievement forward. Individual learning plan targets for personal development are not written in a way that aids evaluation of progress made. Few short-term targets are agreed with employers. This weakness was not identified in the most recent self-assessment report.

Leadership and management

138. Managers have accurately identified in the self-assessment report most of the strengths and weaknesses noted at the inspection. Recent changes have been made to programme management and delivery that focuses on improving the success rate and speed of achievement. However, it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of these changes. Managers make effective use of data for target-setting through detailed monthly reports. Individual learner achievement is appropriately discussed by staff at regular

meetings. The monitoring of learners at risk of not achieving their programme by the due end date has improved. Teamworking is generally good in all centres. Most staff have an annual appraisal at which performance and development needs are identified. All staff are appropriately qualified and vocationally experienced.

139. Internal verification is satisfactory. Regular and effective meetings are held and good practice is appropriately shared. Quality assurance processes are extensive but internal audits are not fully effective in evaluating the quality of all processes considered. Learners' views are appropriately collected and used to improve the programme. However, in some centres the use of feedback has only recently been carried out. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of the contents of the self-assessment report. They all contributed to the local report that was used to produce the overall national report. Learners' views contributed to the compilation of the report. However, the views of employers were not sought. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. The grade awarded at inspection was the same as that identified in the report.

140. All learners receive regular progress reviews that include some comments from employers on their own progress. Progress reviews are the main process by which Rathbone Training reinforces and monitors learners' understanding of equality of opportunity in the workplace. However, equality of opportunity is not covered well during progress reviews. Learners' understanding of equal opportunities issues is not monitored. There is no systematic process to guide training advisers' actions in ensuring that learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is discussed during progress reviews. Internal quality audit processes have not identified this issue. Appropriate learning materials are not widely available or used. Learners know how to raise a concern they may have during their training. However, learners' understanding of how recent legislation affects them is often inadequate. Not all training staff have an adequate understanding of current equality and diversity issues and its implications in the context of the workplace. The checklist used to monitor employers' induction does not include a specific reference to equal opportunities. Some training centres have insufficient information written in community languages.

