



Education and Training
Inspectorate

ApprenticeshipsNI and
Training for Success Provision
in Larne Skills Development
Limited

Report of an Inspection
in November 2011

CONTENTS

Section	Page
PART ONE: SUMMARY	
1. CONTEXT	1
2. PROVISION	1
3. THE INSPECTION	2
4. MAIN FINDINGS	2
PART TWO: OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION	
5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	4
6. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING	5
7. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	7
PART THREE: PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL AREA REPORTS	
8. BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION	8
9. ENGINEERING	9
10. ESSENTIAL SKILLS	10
PART FOUR: CONCLUSION AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT	
11. CONCLUSION	12
12. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT	12
APPENDIX	

A number of quantitative terms are used in the report. In percentages, the terms correspond as follows:

More than 90%	-	almost/nearly all
75% - 90%	-	most
50% - 74%	-	a majority
30% - 49%	-	a significant minority
10% - 29%	-	a minority
Less than 10%	-	very few/a small number

All of the statistics in this report were provided by Larne Skills Development Limited.

Performance Levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate use the following performance levels in reports:

Performance Level
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

PART ONE: SUMMARY

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Larne Skills Development Limited (Larne Skills), established in 1991, is contracted by the Department for Employment and Learning (the Department) to provide training through the ApprenticeshipsNI and the Training for Success programmes. It is contracted to supply training, at level 2, in the professional and technical areas of administration, engineering, retail and warehousing and storage, across the geographical areas of Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Larne and Newtownabbey.

1.2 Larne Skills has its main premises in the Ledcom Industrial Estate in Larne, and a second smaller training centre, Ballymena Skills, in the Braid River Business Park in Ballymena. It is managed by two Directors, a centre manager, and a quality assurance manager; the organisation employs eleven tutors to deliver the training.

1.3 At the time of the inspection, a total of 20 apprentices were registered on level 2 ApprenticeshipsNI programmes; 17 of them were following an engineering apprenticeship and the remaining three a business and administration apprenticeship. A further 120 trainees were registered on a level 2 Programme-Led Apprenticeship; 106 were on an engineering programme and 14 on a business and administration programme. At the time of the inspection, there were no trainees or apprentices registered in the professional and technical areas of retail or warehousing and storage.

1.4 A minority (17%) of the apprentices and trainees hold a General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) at grade C or above, or equivalent, in English and mathematics on entry to their training programme. Of the remainder, most hold GCSE qualifications at grades D to G in English and mathematics or a level 1 essential skills qualification in literacy or numeracy. Most (85%) of the apprentices and trainees are male.

2. PROVISION

2.1 Most (85%) of the 178 apprentices and trainees recruited over the last four years are in engineering, with the remainder in business and administration. Over this period, recruitment patterns have changed significantly. In engineering, recruitment to the ApprenticeshipsNI programme has declined from 47 apprentices in 2007/08 to just eight in 2011/12. In contrast, recruitment to the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand of Training for Success has grown from 27 trainees in 2009/10 to 84 in 2011/12. Similarly, in business and administration the annual recruitment to the ApprenticeshipsNI programme has declined, from around five apprentices annually to only 1 in the 2011/12 year; while recruitment to the Programme-Led Apprenticeship has remained steady at around eleven trainees. There has been no recruitment to the professional and technical areas of retail and warehousing and storage; the organisation reports that this is due to competition from other training providers.

2.3 All of the apprentices attend Larne Skills one day each week for directed training in their professional and technical area and, where necessary, in the essential skills. They are targeting National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and technical certificates at level 2.

2.4 Trainees on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship are provided with a flexible programme of directed training to complete the appropriate NVQs, technical certificates and essential skills qualifications. At the time of the inspection, only 33% of the trainees were in work placements. The trainees with work placements attend directed training on Larne Skill's premises for just over nine hours each week, and those without work placements attend for 21 hours each week.

2.5 A significant proportion of the apprentices and trainees are currently completing level 2 essential skills qualifications in literacy (49%) and numeracy (64%), which is at a level above that required by their training framework.

3. THE INSPECTION

3.1 The Education and Training Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) carried out an inspection of the ApprenticeshipsNI and Training for Success programmes in Larne Skills in November 2011. A team of four inspectors and one associate assessor observed a total of 86 apprentices and trainees in 19 directed training sessions, and 24 in workplace visits. Discussions were held with the Directors, centre manager, quality assurance co-ordinator, tutors, apprentices and trainees, and workplace supervisors. The inspection team examined samples of the apprentices' and trainees' practical work and portfolios of evidence, personal training plans, self-evaluation report, minutes of meetings, policies and other relevant documentation.

3.2 The arrangements for the inspection of care, guidance and support and the safeguarding of vulnerable groups includes the opportunity for apprentices and trainees to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings by the inspection team with groups of apprentices and trainees across the areas of learning. One hundred questionnaires were issued to the apprentices and trainees, 86 (86%) of which were returned to the Inspectorate and six contained additional written comments. The returns show that the apprentices and trainees consider their experiences in Larne Skills to be good. In particular, they appreciate the good support they receive from staff, and the good match between the workplace training and their target qualifications. The Inspectorate has reported the outcomes of the questionnaires and the discussions held with apprentices and trainees to the Directors and senior managers.

4. MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 In areas inspected, the quality of the training and pastoral care provided by Larne Skills Development Limited is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, and in training and learning which need to be addressed if the needs of all the apprentices and trainees are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on Larne Skills's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

4.2 The main strengths are the:

- good quality of the provision in the areas of learning of business and administration and essential skills;
- very good links and partnerships with a wide range of employers, that are managed effectively to provide trainees with relevant workplace learning and employment opportunities;
- appropriate action taken by the Directors and senior managers in addressing the areas for improvement identified in recent external audits and inspections;
- good or better quality of most of the directed training sessions observed;

- good or better quality of most of the work-based training for the apprentices and for those trainees in work placements; and
- outstanding achievement rate for those apprentices and trainees who complete their training programme.

4.3 The main areas for improvement are the:

- inadequate planning to provide well-designed programmes in the specialist area of engineering to meet the individual needs of trainees and apprentices;
- inadequate quality of the training accommodation in Ballymena, which adversely affects a minority of the engineering apprentices and trainees;
- inadequate careers education, information advice and guidance provision, to promote all of the available progression opportunities open to apprentices and trainees; and
- unsatisfactory retention rates for the Programme-Led Apprenticeship programme.

4.4 Table of Performance Levels

Overall performance level	Satisfactory
Contributory performance levels	
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory
Quality of Provision for Learning	Satisfactory
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory
Areas of Learning	
Business and Administration	Good
Engineering	Satisfactory
Essential Skills	Good

PART TWO: OVERALL QUALITY OF PROVISION

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 Overall, the quality of the leadership and management is satisfactory. In response to external inspections and audits, which took place during 2010/11, the Directors and senior managers have recently implemented a satisfactory 83-point organisational development plan to bring about improvement in key areas. These appropriately include: operational management; staffing levels and qualifications; health and safety arrangements; programme administration; careers education and guidance; workplace training; tracking and monitoring of apprentices' and trainees' progress; and self-evaluation. At the time of the inspection, many of the improvements were at an early stage of implementation, and as a result their impact on the quality of the apprentices' and trainees' learning experiences has not yet been realised fully.

5.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Directors and the senior managers have been reviewed recently, and as a result, the management functions across all aspects of the training provision are now well-defined. The Directors and senior managers meet regularly to review progress against the targets set within the organisational development plan. At the time of the inspection, good progress had been achieved in many areas. These include the recruitment of new specialist tutors, the implementation of a structured professional review and development programme for engineering tutors, the introduction of revised trainee induction arrangements, and the more robust tracking and recording of apprentices' and trainees' progress and achievements.

5.3 The quality of the self-evaluation process is satisfactory. While all of the staff contribute to the self-evaluation process, the evaluations are overly descriptive and take insufficient account of key performance indicators, particularly the undue variations in trainee retention rates. As a result, there is only a limited match between the organisation's self-evaluation report and the findings of the inspection.

5.4 The staffing arrangements are satisfactory. All of the essential skills and business and administration tutors hold appropriate level 4 qualifications, or higher. In engineering, only a minority of the tutors hold suitable qualifications at level 4 or above. The remaining tutors are not well enough formally qualified, and it is appropriate that they are currently upgrading their formal qualifications in line with their industry experience and expertise.

5.5 The quality of the accommodation ranges from good to inadequate, and is just satisfactory overall. The premises in Larne are clean, bright and spacious, with a good range of specialist facilities. The engineering workshops are well-maintained with a suitable range of engineering equipment. The recent upgrade of computers significantly improves the apprentices' and trainees' access to, and use of, the Internet and appropriate software, for example, word-processing, spreadsheet, database, engineering drawing software, and a limited range of online learning resources. The accommodation in Ballymena is mostly inadequate; the workshop, classrooms and social areas are cramped. In particular, it is a concern that all of the health and safety risks previously identified within the engineering workshop have not been fully addressed through the organisation's recently revised and implemented health and safety arrangements.

5.6 The quality of the links and partnerships with local employers, schools and the sector skills council are very good. The Directors have established effective links with a wide range of employers across the contract areas, which are managed well to provide very good workplace training and employment opportunities for the apprentices and trainees across the professional and technical areas. There are also good links with schools and these are used well by Larne Skills to regularly promote work-based training to potential school leavers at school careers conventions.

6. QUALITY OF PROVISION FOR LEARNING

6.1 The quality of the provision for learning varies from good to satisfactory, and is satisfactory overall. For most of the apprentices and trainees, their training programmes provide them with good opportunities to gain appropriate qualifications in line with their career aspirations and employment opportunities. For a minority of the trainees and apprentices, their training programme is not matched well enough to their work-based learning and/or future progression opportunities.

6.2 In business and administration, the programme of units is matched well to all of the apprentices' work-based training and most of the trainees' work placements.

6.3 Most of the engineering apprentices and trainees are following a mechanical engineering programme with an appropriate range of units that are matched well to their work-based training or employment opportunities. For the remaining minority, within the specialist areas of engineering maintenance or electrotechnical services (electrical installation), the programme of units is mostly inadequate. In particular, it is inappropriate that apprentices and trainees currently with workplace training in electrical installation are registered with Larne Skills. However, Larne Skills is not contracted by the Department, nor registered with an awarding body, to provide the appropriate level 2 qualifications in electrotechnical services.

6.4 The quality of the apprentices' and trainees' personal training plans is satisfactory. Through appropriate initial assessment of the apprentices' and trainees' essential skills training needs, the plans contain individualised planning to address any weaknesses in their essential skills. The assessment of, and planning for, any additional learning support or specialist training needs for the apprentices and trainees is, however, mostly inadequate. The personal training plans contain insufficient information relating to any barriers to learning or how these will be addressed through internal or external support.

6.5 The monitoring and reviewing of apprentices' and trainees' progress and achievements is satisfactory. Although the recently revised tracking arrangements for monitoring progress and achievements in directed training are effective, the involvement of employers in evaluating the apprentices' or trainees' progress in the workplace is underdeveloped.

6.6 The quality of the directed training is mostly good. Most of the apprentices and trainees are provided with a well-balanced range of practical workshop training and theory sessions to develop both their practical occupational skills and the knowledge and understanding of the principles relating to their professional and technical area. The majority (78%) of the directed training is good or better; in these training sessions the activities are well-planned, providing the apprentices and trainees with appropriately challenging learning tasks. The tutors use a good range of training approaches to support effective learning

including practical demonstrations and tasks using industry standard equipment, effective use of questioning, digital presentations and ICT, and one-to-one support. In the remainder (22%) of the directed training sessions, the quality of the training and learning is satisfactory; the pace of work is overly slow and, on occasion, the practical training takes insufficient account of health and safety risks.

6.7 The quality of the workplace training is mostly very good. For most of the apprentices, and for those trainees with work placements, there are very good opportunities for them to develop and apply relevant occupational skills and transferable skills in an industry setting. For those trainees without work placements, Larne Skills provides them with satisfactory opportunities to consolidate their practical craft skills through the fabrication and welding of engineering artefacts, such as gates, railings and trailers for external customers.

6.8 Assessment arrangements in business and administration and the essential skills are good. The assessments are well-planned, particularly on the NVQ programme where the trainees demonstrate effectively their occupational competences. Marking for improvement is used to good effect by the tutors, and internal verification arrangements are applied systematically. In engineering, the assessment arrangements are variable. A minority of the apprentices and trainees inappropriately use detailed exemplars, which overly directs them in the completion of their NVQ assessments. In addition, the apprentices' and trainees' evidence of work completed within the workplace is not used well enough to record the development of their occupational skills.

6.9 The quality of the care, guidance and support provided for the apprentices and trainees is satisfactory. They receive a good induction which provides them with an appropriate overview of their training programme, and of the resources and support services available to them. There is, however, only limited information and guidance provided to them on the specialist options within their professional and technical area. There is good signposting of contact details for support staff across the organisation; the trainees and apprentices receive a handbook with key information and an appropriate emphasis on health and safety. There is a supportive and inclusive ethos in the directed training sessions with good opportunities for the apprentices and trainees to develop relationships that promote mutual respect, tolerance and understanding.

6.10 The careers education, information, advice and guidance provision is mostly inadequate. The wide range of links with employers is mostly managed well to provide the apprentices and trainees with access to appropriate workplace learning and an understanding of employment and progression opportunities. The quality of pre-entry career guidance is, however, unduly variable. A minority of the trainees are not sufficiently aware of all of the training and progression options available to them, particularly for those with electrical installation work placements. Although there is a wide range of planned industrial visits for the trainees to relevant companies, there is limited provision to develop the apprentices' and trainees' personal career planning, and to provide them with impartial information, advice and guidance to help them make informed choices, particularly with regard to progression to level 3 apprenticeships or further education.

6.11 The current arrangements for safeguarding are unsatisfactory and do not comply sufficiently with the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007. In particular, Larne Skills has not completed the appropriate checks for members of staff recruited prior to 2011, who work in regulated positions. There is also a need to update the safeguarding and pastoral care policies to reflect fully the current legislation and to share their safeguarding arrangements in an appropriate format with employers and relevant parents or guardians.

7. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

7.1 The quality of achievements and standards vary across the areas inspected from satisfactory to good, and are satisfactory overall.

7.2 In business and administration and in engineering the standards of work for most of the apprentices, and most of those trainees with work placements, are at least good, and are mostly very good. They develop a good range of occupational skills, which they can apply competently and safely in the workplace. They are able to complete a broad range of occupational tasks with minimal supervision at an appropriate pace and to an acceptable industry standard. In business and administration, these tasks include filing, making appointments, dealing with customers and clients, and processing orders for a wide range of products. In engineering, the tasks include manufacturing and fabricating metal components and assemblies using industry standard processes and techniques, and diagnosing and repairing faults in electrical and mechanical machinery.

7.3 For those trainees currently not in work placements, or for the small number with work placements not matched well to their directed training, the standards of their work are mostly satisfactory. In directed training they develop a satisfactory range of basic occupational skills, and a knowledge and understanding of the principles and occupational competencies relating to their professional and technical area. In engineering, for example, the trainees develop suitable practical occupational skills in fabrication and welding, which prepares them well for further training or employment.

7.4 Most of the apprentices and trainees are well-motivated and confident, and develop effective working relationships with their tutors. In particular, those with work placements are also able to communicate confidently with supervisors and customers, and are able to work on their own or within a team to complete routine tasks or time-bound projects.

7.5 The standards of most of the apprentices' and trainees' information and communication technology (ICT), literacy and numeracy skills are good. They are able to use the internet and proprietary software for word-processing and computer-aided drawing, which enhances the quality of their work. The apprentices and trainees, particularly those in engineering, are able to carry out the basic arithmetic functions to solve mathematical problems relating to their professional and technical area. The standards of the apprentices' and trainees' literacy skills are mostly good, particularly their verbal communication skills. They are, for example, able to receive instructions from their supervisors and are able to negotiate effectively with customers and colleagues. The engineering apprentices and trainees are also able to read and interpret engineering drawings and diagrams accurately. A minority, however, demonstrate a limited ability to write independently with accurate spelling and grammar.

7.6 Over the period 2007/08 to 2010/11, of the 106 trainees who started the Programme–Led Apprenticeship programme, 16 completed the programme and all of them gained the full award; 33 of them are still on the programme. These figures represent an unsatisfactory retention rate of 46% and an outstanding achievement rate of 100%, for those who are retained. The progression rate to relevant employment, for those who successfully complete their training, is very good at 88%. It is however, a concern that none of the trainees who have completed their programme have progressed to level 3 apprenticeships.

7.7 Over the same period, of the 165 apprentices who started the ApprenticeshipsNI programme, 99 of them completed the programme and 98 of them gained the full award; eleven are still on the programme. These figures represent a satisfactory retention rate of 67% and an outstanding achievement rate of 99%. Over the past year, the progression rate to level 3 apprenticeships is inadequate.

PART THREE: PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL AREA REPORTS

8. BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION

MAIN FINDINGS

8.1 In business and administration, the quality of training provided by Larne Skills is good.

8.2 The provision in this area is small. At the time of the inspection, there were 16 trainees registered on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand and three apprentices on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme. All of the apprentices progressed from the Programme-Led Apprenticeship provision and four of the trainees progressed from the Skills for Work programme.

8.3 The quality of the leadership and management of the business and administration provision is satisfactory. While the trainees have good opportunities to develop their occupational skills through their directed training, the timetabling arrangements are incoherent. As a result, trainees with existing level 2 literacy and numeracy qualifications unnecessarily attend essential skills training. All of the apprentices and the majority of the trainees are in appropriate work placements. The remainder of the trainees have poor opportunities to develop occupational skills. The training accommodation and ICT facilities are good. The range of specialist equipment is, however, limited. The tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced to deliver training.

8.4 The quality of the provision for learning is good. Induction arrangements are robust and effective. Although the personal training plans are satisfactory, they fail to address adequately the trainees' work-readiness. Involvement of employers in monitoring the apprentices' and trainees' progress is limited. The directed training is good; most training sessions are well-planned, including the effective use of practical office-based activities. There are, however, too few opportunities for the apprentices and trainees to use spreadsheets, e-mail, and electronic diaries in their directed training. The quality of the work-based training for all of the apprentices and the trainees is good or better; most are very good. Assessment arrangements are well-planned, particularly for the NVQ. Marking for improvement is used to good effect and internal verification is rigorous.

8.5 Standards and achievements are good. The apprentices and the majority of the trainees attain good or better standards of work. Most show high levels of motivation, and have significantly enhanced their occupational and employability skills. The quality of their portfolios of evidence is of a high standard with good use of product evidence and well-considered responses to their underpinning knowledge questions. The standards of work for those trainees who are not in a work placement, and for those in inappropriate work settings, are inadequate; their oral responses are reticent and they have only a basic knowledge and understanding of business and administration. Attendance at directed training is overly variable. Over the past four years, retention on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand is inadequate at 52% and achievement is outstanding at 100%, for those who are retained. Retention on the ApprenticeshipsNI provision is good at 79% and achievement is outstanding at 100%.

Outcomes: Averages over the period 2007/08 to 2010/11

Strand	Numbers registered who completed four weeks training	Retention rate %	Achievement rate %	Progression rate to further training or employment for those who achieved their full award %
Programme-Led Apprenticeship	21	52%	100%	100%
ApprenticeshipsNI	19	79%	100%	100%

9. ENGINEERING

MAIN FINDINGS

9.1 In engineering, the quality of training provided by Larne Skills is satisfactory.

9.2 While recruitment to the ApprenticeshipsNI programme has declined over the last four years, recruitment to the Programme-Led Apprenticeship has grown significantly. At the time of the inspection, there were 17 apprentices and 106 trainees following a level 2 programme, comprising performing engineering operations NVQ, a diploma in engineering and essential skills at level 1, or level 2 if appropriate. Only 27% of the trainees are in work placements.

9.3 The quality of the leadership and management of the engineering provision is satisfactory. For most of the apprentices and trainees, mainly those following a mechanical and manufacturing engineering pathway, their training programme is matched well to their work-based training. For the remaining minority, mainly those placed or working in electrical engineering, their training programme is inadequate; insufficient time is allocated to the specialist units, and for a small number the training programme it is not matched well enough to the occupational skills they have the opportunity to develop in the workplace. It is inappropriate that a small number of the apprentices and trainees with electrical installation placements or employment are registered with Larne Skills. Larne Skills is not contracted by the Department, nor approved by an awarding body, to provide training and assessment in electrotechnical engineering (electrical installation). The quality of the workshops, classrooms and specialist equipment ranges from good on the Larne premises to inadequate on the Ballymena premises. A minority of the staff are suitably qualified to level 4 or above, and the remainder are appropriately upgrading their formal qualifications in line with their industry experience and expertise.

9.4 The quality of the provision for learning is satisfactory. Induction arrangements are mostly effective. The apprentices' and trainees' personal training plans are satisfactory, although they lack sufficient detail relating to the apprentices' and trainees' personal training needs and career planning. The directed training is mostly good; there is a good balance between workshop training to develop the apprentices' and trainees' practical occupational skills, and theory sessions to develop their knowledge and understanding of key engineering principles. Three-quarters of the directed training sessions observed were good or better. These sessions are well-planned and the apprentices and trainees respond well to a suitable range of appropriately challenging learning tasks. In the remainder, either the pace of work is

too slow, or there are undue health and safety risks while the trainees or apprentices are completing practical tasks. Assessment arrangements are mostly inadequate. While the assessments are planned and tracked well, a minority of the apprentices and trainees inappropriately rely on detailed exemplars, which over directs them in the completion of their NVQ assessments. There is also insufficient assessment of their achievements and competence within workplace.

9.5 The quality of the care, guidance and support is variable. There is a supportive ethos, which is appreciated by the apprentices and trainees, particularly the very good links with local employers to provide them with good quality work placements or employment opportunities. The quality of the careers education, information, advice and guidance is inadequate; there is insufficient pre-entry advice and ongoing personal career planning to ensure the apprentices and trainees are targeting the most appropriate qualifications and planning suitable progression to level 3 apprenticeships, further education or employment.

9.6 Standards and achievements are satisfactory. Most of the apprentices and a minority of the trainees attain good or better standards of work. They develop a good range of occupational skills to a suitable industry standard. The standards of work for those trainees who are not placed in work, and for those in inappropriate work settings, are satisfactory; they develop only the minimum range of occupational and employability skills. Over the past four years, retention on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship programme is unsatisfactory at 44% and achievement is outstanding at 100% for those who are retained. Retention, over the same period, on the ApprenticeshipsNI programme is satisfactory at 65% and achievement is outstanding at 100%. It is a concern that the progression rate to level 3 apprenticeships is unsatisfactory for the last two years at 11%.

Outcomes: Averages over the period 2007/08 to 2010/11

Strand	Numbers registered who completed four weeks training	Retention rate %	Achievement rate %	Progression rate to further training or employment for those who achieved their full award %
Programme-Led Apprenticeship	86	44%	100%	75%
ApprenticeshipsNI	146	65%	100%	97%

10. ESSENTIAL SKILLS

MAIN FINDINGS

10.1 In essential skills, the quality of training provided by Larne Skills is good.

10.2 The quality of the leadership and management of the essential skills provision is satisfactory. There is flexible timetabling to support the needs of individual apprentices and trainees. The trainees and apprentices, however, receive only limited support from vocational tutors to support the development of their essential skills through marking for improvement within their vocational work. The monitoring and reviewing of the apprentices' and trainees' progress in their essential skills is mostly good. The quality of the accommodation, equipment and resources for essential skills is good. Although there are actions relating to essential skills within the organisation's overall improvement plan, the role of the essential skills tutors in the self-evaluation process is under-developed.

10.3 The quality of provision for learning is good. The quality of most of the directed training is good or better. Most tutors deploy a good range of learning activities to engage and enhance the learning experiences for the apprentices and trainees including practical activities, group work and one-to-one support. The tutors know the apprentices' and trainees' essential skills needs well and provide them with good support. The use of group learning plans to centrally record results of initial and diagnostic assessments support planning, and easily monitor the progress being made, is underdeveloped.

10.4 Achievements and standards are good. The quality of the work in the apprentices' and trainees' action based activities is good or better with clear evidence of marking for improvement. However, the quality of a minority of the engineering apprentices' and trainees' written vocational work is poor. The trainees are not able to use the writing skills they have developed in their essential skills work within a different context. The trainees are encouraged to achieve an essential skills qualification above what is required in their framework. Last year approximately 49% and 64% of the trainees achieved a level 2 qualification in literacy and numeracy respectively. Over the past four years, the average achievement rate for those who complete their programme is outstanding at 99%.

PART FOUR: CONCLUSION AND KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 In areas inspected, the quality of the training and pastoral care provided by Larne Skills Development Limited is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in leadership and management, and in training and learning which need to be addressed if the needs of all the apprentices and trainees are to be met more effectively. The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on Larne Skill's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

12. KEY PRIORITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

12.1 Larne Skills needs to update its development plan to take account of the following key priorities for development:

- to review and improve the planning of the engineering provision to provide a more coherent curriculum which is better matched to the needs of the apprentices and trainees;
- to address fully the deficiencies in the training accommodation in Ballymena;
- to provide a coherent careers education, information, advice and guidance provision to inform fully the apprentices and trainees of the available progression opportunities; and
- to implement strategies to address the unsatisfactory retention rates on the Programme-Led Apprenticeship strand of Training for Success.

Overall outcomes: Averages over the period 2007/08 to 2010/11

Strand	Numbers registered who completed four weeks training	Retention rate %	Achievement rate %	Progression rate to further training or employment for those who achieved their full award %
Programme-Led Apprenticeship	106	46%	100%	88%
ApprenticeshipsNI	165	67%	100%	97%

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The engineering workshop in the Ballymena Skills centre contains undue health and safety risks, which need to be assessed and addressed.

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