

# INSPECTION REPORT

## RPS Rainer City Training

10 December 2001



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and in New Deal options. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

## 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 training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

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.

### Inadequate provision

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

- one third or more of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas and New Deal options are judged less than satisfactory, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.



## SUMMARY

### The provider

RPS Rainer City Training (RPSRCT) is a not-for-profit training organisation based in Portsmouth. In recent years the management of the organisation was transferred from Portsmouth City Council to the Royal Philanthropic Society (RPS), which is a charity dedicated to helping disadvantaged young people. RPSRCT offers a wide range of training services across six areas of learning, and includes business administration, management and professional, health, social care and public service, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, land-based provision, retailing, customer service and transportation, and a Life Skills programme. A high proportion of RPSRCT learners are disadvantaged and need additional learning and social support. There are 124 learners funded by the local learning and skills council. There is only a small number of learners in land-based provision, retailing, customer service and transportation, and these areas were not inspected.

### Overall judgement

The quality of provision on health, social care and public services is good. The quality of provision on business administration, management and professional, and hospitality, sport, leisure and travel is satisfactory. The quality of provision on Life Skills is unsatisfactory. The leadership and management of RPSRCT are satisfactory, including equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The overall quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it.

### GRADES

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	3

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

## RPS RAINIER CITY TRAINING

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

  

<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Life Skills	4

### KEY STRENGTHS

- good strategic management
- open and consultative management style
- good use of additional funding
- effective application of the equal opportunities policy
- continuous review and improvements in quality assurance
- effective use of good employers
- good integration of key skills with vocational training
- good support and guidance systems for learners

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates
- insufficient analysis and use of data
- ineffective target-setting in some areas
- insufficient planning of off-the-job training
- no sampling plan for internal verification

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider use of work-based evidence to demonstrate background knowledge
- further develop the observation system for trainers

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of six inspectors spent a total of 24 days at RPSRCT in December 2001. Inspectors had previously studied the training provider's self-assessment report and reviewed the data. They interviewed 41 learners, 21 members of RPSRCT's staff and 24 employers. They observed and graded eight off-the-job training sessions and observed seven progress reviews. They visited 31 work placements. Inspectors examined a range of documents, including 38 individual learning plans, 30 learners' files, and the organisation's plans, policies and procedures.

### Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Health, social care & public services	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Foundation programmes	0	0	3	1	1	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. RPSRCT is a not-for-profit training organisation based in Portsmouth. It has been offering training for young people in the Portsmouth area for 21 years. In 1996, the management of the organisation was transferred from Portsmouth City Council to the Royal Philanthropic Society (RPS), which is a charity dedicated to helping disadvantaged young people. The organisation merged with the Rainer Foundation in 1997, although it manages its own business independently. RPSRCT offers a wide range of training services across six areas of learning, and includes business administration, management and professional, health, social care and public service, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, land-based provision, retailing, customer service and transportation, and a Life Skills programme. A high proportion of RPSRCT's learners are disadvantaged and need additional learning and social support. Since April 2001, training has been funded by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Learning and Skills Council (LSC). There are 124 learners across the range of training programmes, including foundation and advanced modern apprentices and learners on national vocational qualifications (NVQs). Learners are placed in a range of work placements in and around the region of Portsmouth. There are six full-time managers including the executive manager, and 18 staff directly involved in the training. Five staff give administrative and financial support. RPSRCT was accredited with the Investors in People standard in 1998 and reaccredited in October 2001. The Investors in People award is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

3. RPSRCT is based in the town centre of Portsmouth and is surrounded by a number of very deprived wards. The areas of learning offered by RPSRCT reflect the current local employment trends. The rate of unemployment in Portsmouth in September 2001 was 2.1 per cent, compared with 2.9 per cent nationally. In 1999-2000, the southeast skills audit survey identified that 36.2 per cent of the population in Portsmouth have poor numeracy skills and 16.3 per cent do not have literacy basic skills. The 1991 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 2.6 per cent in Portsmouth, compared with 1.3 per cent in Hampshire and 6.2 per cent nationally. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers in Portsmouth achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 34 per cent, compared with 49.2 per cent nationally.



### **Work-based learning for young people**

4. RPSRCT has a strong commitment to equal opportunities. A high proportion of learners in work-based learning are disadvantaged and require additional learning and social support. Learners are recruited throughout the year and the provider's open access policy means that some challenging young people are offered the opportunity to carry out training. The quality of education and training is good. There is a very effective range of support and guidance for learners. There is effective assessment of key and basic skills, and key skills are an integral part of the vocational training. Learners are well matched to a range of good employers and are well supported in their work placements. In most areas regular progress reviews are used as a basis for assessment and progress planning. Retention and achievement rates are low in all areas of learning. RPSRCT has introduced a number of measures and targets to improve performance, but it is too early to assess their impact.

### **Life Skills**

5. Learners on the Life Skills programme benefit from effective support and guidance. There are good working relationships with external bodies and an effective programme of occupational awareness which allows learners to make informed choices about their future. However, the training is inadequate. There is insufficient use of initial assessment, and the monitoring and recording of learning targets and progress is inadequate. There is poor achievement of targets on individual learning plans, and retention rates are poor. There are few opportunities to celebrate achievement, and the standard of learners' work is low. There have been a number of recent staff changes in this training programme. Although trainers have effective support and guidance skills, they have no formal training or teaching qualifications.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

6. RPSRCT is accountable to its parent company, RPS Rainer, but is responsible for its own management. Six full-time managers manage the LSC contract and training programmes funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), the Millennium Commission, and the Commission for Racial Equality. Eighteen staff are directly involved in the contract and five staff give administrative and finance support. Twelve of the staff are qualified assessors and seven are qualified internal verifiers. Off-the-job training takes place at the training centre in Portsmouth. RPSRCT has policies and procedures for equality of opportunity and quality assurance. In 1998, RPSRCT was accredited with the Investors in People standard and was successful in its re-accreditation in October 2001. The self-assessment report used for the inspection was the fourth produced by RPSRCT and was updated in July 2001.

### STRENGTHS

- good strategic management
- open and consultative management style
- good staff development and appraisal
- effective application of the equal opportunities policy
- continuous review and improvements in quality assurance

### WEAKNESSES

- no measurable targets for retention and achievement rates
- insufficient analysis and use of data
- no internal verification sampling plan

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further development of the trainer observation system
- better arrangements for staff cover

7. RPSRCT has a clear strategic direction. A review of the business plan, early in 2001, resulted in a service plan which details the objectives of the organisation. Members of staff are aware of the objectives in the plan, which were shared with staff at a corporate development day in April 2001. All staff work enthusiastically to achieve the objectives which form an integral part of the staff appraisal and development system. The objectives are also clearly linked to the self-assessment report. The management team has regular weekly meetings which focus on quality assurance, performance monitoring, self-assessment and development planning. Financial monitoring is systematically carried out each month. After scrutiny by the management team, the reports are submitted to, and approved by, RPS Rainer.

8. There is an open and consultative management style which leads to good internal communication. Regular staff meetings and strong informal contact ensure that members of staff are well informed about the organisation's progress and that staff are able to contribute ideas and suggestions. The minutes from management team meetings are routinely passed to all members of staff. Team meetings are held regularly to a published schedule and concentrate on individual learners and other specific problems. All members of staff have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and work to a clear management framework. These strengths were recognised in the self-assessment report.

9. Support for staff is good and they are able to participate in a wide range of training and development activities. There is a structured training programme which enables staff to achieve appropriate key skills qualifications, and this has resulted in key skills training becoming an integral part of the NVQ programme. All managers have achieved, or are working towards, NVQs in management. There is an effective staff appraisal system. Members of staff negotiate targets which meet the service plan objectives and their own development needs. Members of staff confirm that they find the process helpful and supportive. There is a comprehensive system for the induction of new staff. During the probationary period, regular meetings take place to review progress, identify any individual needs, and set short-term goals.

10. Retention and achievement rates are low in all of the occupational areas. This was identified in the self-assessment report. RPSRCT recruits a high proportion of learners with additional learning needs and there are good examples of measures being introduced to support and encourage learners. Targets for retention rates have been set for the organisation as a whole, but no individual targets have been set for the occupational areas. Members of staff do not have clear targets for the assessment of learners' achievements.

## Equality of opportunity

## Contributory grade 2

11. RPSRCT has a comprehensive policy on equal opportunities and an effective system to monitor its application. The senior managers meet every month to monitor the application of the policy. Equal opportunities is discussed regularly in staff meetings and detailed minutes are produced. Detailed information on equal opportunities is included in the induction. Details of the training providers' and the employers' responsibilities are included in a handbook which is given to all work-placement providers. Learners' understanding of equal opportunities is tested through questionnaires which are completed as part of the progress review process. Promotional literature and other documents are evaluated by the quality assurance manager. Recently, RPSRCT has revised its promotional literature and has ensured that positive images of under-represented groups are included in leaflets. Learners with mobility problems are currently unable to enter the training centre, but building alterations will take place during 2002. Until a new lift has been fitted, alternative premises are used for learners with mobility difficulties. Appropriate work placements are used to ensure that learners acquire all aspects of practical skills training. Records of the application and use of the equal opportunities procedures, together with any action taken, are maintained by the company. All RPSRCT's staff attend equal opportunity training programmes. Consultants have previously been contracted to evaluate the policy and its application.

12. The complaints and appeals procedures are effective, detailed and fully understood by the learners, staff and employers. The company records and carefully monitors all complaints and appeals, together with any action which is recommended or taken. Examples of the procedures and actions taken were made available to inspectors.

13. RPSRCT is developing a strategy to enable staff absence to be effectively covered. The current arrangements usually ensure that learners' work remains unaffected by short-term staff absence. However, long-term absence has led to some learners being prevented from completing their training programme within the expected timescale.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 3**

14. There are a number of well-established quality assurance procedures which cover the key elements of the training process. Feedback from learners forms an integral part of the arrangements and is collected after induction, midway through the learning programme, and on leaving. Regular feedback is also collected from employers. When individual responses identify areas for improvement, prompt action is taken. However, less effective use is made of the overall results of feedback. Until recently, there has been little evaluation of information at this level. The strategy to reduce the number of early leavers is not adequately assisted by this type of data.

15. The quality assurance arrangements are subject to continuous review and improvement, and internal audits contribute to this process. Recently, a new framework has been introduced to clarify the links between the different parts of the system. The quality assurance arrangements include a system for judging and recording the performance of trainers. This involves each trainer being observed by a member of the management team at least once each year. The system has gradually been refined and made more objective through the introduction of clear criteria and a grading system. This system is effective, but fails to detail specific action points for the individuals. The internal verification system is also an integral part of the overall quality assurance system. The system is thorough and has been standardised for use across each individual area of learning. The system involves the regular sampling of learners' work and the activities of assessors. However, the system has not been introduced in hospitality as yet. No internal verification sampling plans are available.

16. The self-assessment report is clear, concise and easy to follow. Action plans are included, but many of these actions fail to identify specific target dates. The staff are all fully aware of the content and were involved in its development. However, inspectors were unable to agree with some of the judgements and found additional strengths and weaknesses.

Good Practice
<i>The training provider has purchased a software programme for the translation of English into Bengali and Chinese, which, after English, are the most widely spoken languages in the area.</i>

## AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	15	3

17. There are 15 learners. One is an advanced modern apprentice, 11 are foundation modern apprentices and three are following other work-based learning for young people. A small number of learners have additional learning and social needs. NVQs at levels 1 to 3 are offered with key skills at the appropriate level. Learners are recruited throughout the year and are usually referred from the careers service, although some learners are recommended to RPSRCT by friends. All learners are invited for an interview. Advanced modern apprentices receive a one-day induction at the training centre. Other learners have a five-day induction at the training centre covering rights and responsibilities, health and safety and equality of opportunity. Diagnostic assessment for key and basic skills is part of the initial assessment, and results are used to identify the level of the NVQ and key skills. One advanced and two foundation apprentices are employed. Progress reviews are carried out initially at four weeks and then subsequently every 12 weeks. Learners who have additional support needs are reviewed every four weeks. Learners attend the training centre every week for half a day, to cover the NVQ, key skills and background knowledge. One member of staff carries out the training and assessment, and a part-time staff member is the internal verifier.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started			2		16		25		12
Still in training			0	0	0	0	3	12	8	67
FMA framework completed			1	50	6	38	10	40	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			2	100	9	56	10	40	0	0
Left without completing the framework			1	50	7	44	12	48	3	25

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)										
	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started			4		1		2			
Still in training			0	0	0	0	1	50		
AMA framework completed			2	50	1	100	0	0		
NVQ level 2 completed			4	100	0	0	0	0		
NVQ level 3 completed			2	50	1	100	0	0		

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training										
	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started			43		18		11		3	
Still in training			0	0	0	0	0	0	3	100
Individual learning plan completed			22	51	14	78	4	36	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan			21	49	4	22	7	64	0	0
NVQ level 1 completed			3	7	10	56	3	27	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			18	42	3	17	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed			2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0

## STRENGTHS

- extensive initial assessment for key skills
- effective use of good employers
- good support from additional funding

## WEAKNESSES

- low achievement and retention rates
- ineffective target-setting for NVQs
- insufficient planning of training

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider use of work-based evidence to demonstrate background knowledge

18. There is extensive initial assessment of key skills and one member of staff is responsible for this. Learners benefit from a two-stage initial assessment process. At the interview stage, learners carry out an assessment which accurately identifies the level of NVQ and training programme to be followed. The second stage takes place during induction and looks more closely at the wider key skills, which includes IT and communication skills such as learning and working styles. Key skills are an integral part of the training programmes and assessment. Results from assessment are used as a basis for progress reviews. When additional support is needed, further assessment is carried out in basic skills.

19. Learners are well matched to a range of good employers. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. There is a range of employers covering the private and public sectors, including national organisations and smaller local companies. Employers are supportive and offer a good range of administrative experience. They encourage and help learners to develop skills during on-the-job training and through external courses. Job roles match the requirements of qualifications and learners are able to collect good work-based evidence. Portfolios include a wide range of evidence which clearly demonstrates the learners' ability to work at the appropriate level. Key skills evidence is also generated from workplace activities. A wide range of assessment methods are evident in learners' portfolios. Employers give witness testimonies and authenticate evidence which is produced in the workplace. There are detailed and extensive observations of learners' work activities and, assignments and questioning are used to demonstrate background knowledge, although this aspect of work does not use enough work-based evidence. Detailed records of internal verification are maintained, but the sampling is not structured.

20. Good use is made of funding from other sources to give valuable additional support to learners. All learners on level 1 NVQ training programmes now work towards additional qualifications in key skills, which gives the training programme parity with foundation and modern apprenticeships. This helps learners to develop wider skills and aids progression to higher-level courses. The funding has been used for a specialist employment worker, who makes additional visits to learners in need of additional support. For example, to help the learner find accommodation. The work has now been extended to foundation and modern apprentices as a result of further funding. Another source of additional funding allows learners to make use of the mentoring service, which offers additional skills support to learners in areas such as mathematics. This strength was not identified in the self-assessment report.

21. The achievement and retention rates are low for learners following foundation and modern apprenticeship frameworks. Over the past three years, only 17 of the 43 learners starting training as foundation modern apprentices completed the framework. Twenty learners left early without achieving any qualifications. In the same period, seven learners started training as advanced modern apprentices, but only three completed the framework. Two learners left early without any qualifications and two gained a level 2 NVQ. Results for NVQ training are better. Seventy-two learners started



training and 36 achieved the targets on their individual learning plans.

22. Reviews of progress are carried out within set timescales, but they are not effective in setting targets for NVQ achievement. They mostly focus on developing competences for key skills and do not set short-term targets for the achievement of individual units. The employers are not always actively involved. Individual learning plans do not show ongoing achievement and overall targets. Learners are made aware of the work they must carry out through regular reviews, but reviews do not include specific feedback on achievement of units. Evidence is not always shown in learners' portfolios to indicate how much progress has been made. Learners collect good evidence across the units, but final assessment takes place towards the end of the training programme. As a result, early leavers do not gain accreditation for individual units.

23. Planning of off-the-job training does not take into account the learners' activities at work. Learners attend a set programme of training which is not sufficiently tailored to meet individual needs. For example, learners with additional support needs do not have their own programmes of learning. Employers are not informed about the contents of the off-the-job training activities.

#### Good Practice

*Learners achieve certificates in health and safety during induction and off-the-job training. They work through an interactive computer programme which covers aspects of health and safety such as the use of VDUs, general office safety, manual handling and fire safety.*

**Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	23	3

24. There are 23 learners in this occupational area. There is one advanced modern apprentice in sport and recreation, seven foundation modern apprentices in sport and recreation and five foundation modern apprentices in catering. There are eight NVQ learners in catering and two in sport and recreation. The advanced modern apprentice is in full-time employment and all other learners are in work placements. The training provider has well-equipped training facilities for off-the-job training in catering as well as a realistic work experience facility. Off-the-job training in sport and recreation takes place in well-equipped rooms and there are adequate information technology (IT) facilities. Learners also make use of some of the work placement facilities, such as swimming pools, for specific training activities. All staff and learners are fully introduced to, and conversant with, RPSRCT's policies. There are currently two members of staff responsible for sport and recreation and three responsible for catering. All are appropriately qualified. There is a separate line manager for the sport and recreation modern apprenticeship and the NVQ programme. Additional funding from the ESF allows the inclusion of key skills in the NVQ programme. There are regular staff meetings. One trainer, who is also an assessor, manages a consortium on sport and recreation, through which employers are kept informed of developments within this area of learning. There is also good staff involvement in national initiatives in relation to the further development of modern apprentice frameworks.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started					16		24		13
Still in training					0	0	4	17	8	62
FMA framework completed					1	6	3	12	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					8	50	4	17	0	0
Left without completing the framework					2	12	17	71	0	0

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started					3		1		1
Still in training					0	0	0	0	1	100
AMA framework completed					2	67	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed					0	0	0	0	0	0
Left without completing the framework					1	33	0	0	0	0

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started			25		11		11		9
Still in training			0	0	0	0	2	18	8	89
Individual learning plan completed			12	48	5	45	3	27	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan			13	52	6	55	6	55	1	11
NVQ level 1 completed			5	20	0	0	3	27	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			7	28	5	45	0	0	0	0

## STRENGTHS

- good networking system for employers
- effective off-the-job training
- good support and guidance systems for learners

## WEAKNESSES

- weak monitoring of on-the-job training in sport and recreation
- poor retention and achievement rates

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better recording of internal verification in learners' portfolios

25. The good relationship between RPSRCT's staff, employers and placement managers enhances the work placement experience for learners. A local consortium of sport and recreation placements meets every quarter and is a good forum for sharing occupational information and good practice. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Some placements have a long history of involvement with RPSRCT, and one in particular has a good reputation for employing the learners. A large proportion of these learners have now progressed into middle management positions. Work placements for catering are positive and supportive of the needs of the learners placed with them.

26. The off-job-training programme for sport and recreation is well structured and covers the NVO, the key skills and other components of the framework. The key skills are an integral part of the vocational training and are well managed. Learners in catering work placements have one day each fortnight for off-the-job training at a local training kitchen. It is a realistic workplace environment which enables learners to manage the transition to the workplace more effectively.

27. All learners receive a good induction to RPSRCT's systems and policies. They are allocated a learning and employment co-ordinator who manages the learner support system. All learners receive comprehensive support for key skills and portfolio development during progress review visits each month. Quarterly targets are discussed and they are then broken down into achievable monthly targets. This process enables staff and learners to monitor progress more easily. Personal and social support are also given at these sessions.

28. Retention rates are poor. In 2000-01, the NVO programme in catering had an early leavers rate of 62 per cent. In the same year, 57 per cent of the foundation modern apprentices in catering left without completing the framework and only one of them

achieved the NVQ. In 1999-2000, 62 per cent of foundation modern apprentices in sport and recreation left early, although 75 per cent had achieved the level 2 NVQ. Low numbers of advanced modern apprentices in sport and recreation make statistical analysis difficult, but retention and achievement rates in this area are poor. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

29. The standard of on-the-job training varies between work placements. It is recognised that work placements will have individual policies on staff training, but the range varies from highly structured training programmes and training events, to others which have no structure. Currently, there are no systems in place to identify or monitor the potential on-the-job training opportunities in work placements.

30. Internal verification does take place and is recorded in a central file. However, there is no record of internal verification in assessment planning documents and no evidence in learners' portfolios that assessments have been verified.

**Health, social care & public services****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	35	2

31. There are 35 learners in health, social care and public services. Thirteen are advanced modern apprentices working towards the level 3 NVQ in care or childcare. Twelve are foundation modern apprentices working towards the level 2 NVQ in care or childcare, and 10 learners are working towards units of NVQs in care or childcare and key skills at level 1. Thirteen of the learners have additional learning or social needs. All advanced modern apprentices are employed and the foundation modern apprentices are placed with employers. Care learners gain employment after six months, and those in childcare are employed on achievement of their NVQ, according to local authority policy. All of the NVQ learners have additional needs and are placed with employers who can offer relevant support.

32. Advanced modern apprentices receive induction individually in the workplace, and foundation modern apprentices and NVQ learners receive a five-day induction at the training providers' sites. The induction includes initial assessment and sessions on health and safety, equal opportunities and policies and procedures, as well as an introduction to the relevant NVQ and key skills. Training for learners in care and key skills takes place on one day each month at the training providers' sites. Learners who are working towards units of NVQs and level 1 key skills attend training in both subjects for one day each week. All training sessions are followed by portfolio-building sessions. Additional qualifications in first aid, moving and handling, and basic food hygiene are also offered. The training for modern apprentices covers two academic terms, and for NVQ learners, over one academic year, on a rolling programme. Learners can join the training programme at any time of the year.

33. RPSRCT's staff assess all learners in the workplace. Learners are visited regularly and most of the evidence which is presented in the portfolio is from everyday work. Currently, one member of staff is responsible for the training and assessment of all care learners. A vacancy for another trainer/assessor has recently been filled and the appointee will start in January 2002.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started					12		19		11
Still in training					0	0	4	21	8	73
FMA framework completed					3	25	8	42	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed					5	42	0	0	0	0
Left without completing the framework					4	33	7	37	3	27

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started			4		6		8		9
Still in training			0	0	1	17	4	44	8	100
AMA framework completed			1	25	3	50	2	25	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			2	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed			0	0	1	17	0	0	0	0
Left without completing the framework			1	25	1	17	2	25	0	0

NVQ Training										
NVQ Training	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number that started			34		14		13		10
Still in training			0	0	0	0	2	20	8	100
Individual learning plan completed			18	53	7	50	4	31	0	0
Left without completing individual learning plan			16	47	7	50	7	54	2	100
NVQ level 1 completed			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## STRENGTHS

- imaginative level 1 programme
- good observation evidence
- good work placements

## WEAKNESSES

- poor retention rates for NVQ learners and foundation modern apprentices

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater involvement in the logging of evidence by learners
- better recording of workplace induction and practical skills for new learners

34. The training programme is imaginatively designed for learners at level 1 of the NVQ. As there is no level 1 NVQ in care or childcare, learners work towards four units at level 2 of these qualifications, and key skills at level 1. All learners at level 1 have additional social or learning needs which are clearly recorded, and extra support is given for the off-the-job training and in the workplace. Learners are placed with supportive work placements, where their progress is reviewed each month and realistic targets are set.

35. Observation is the main source of evidence used, particularly for NVQ and foundation learners. Observations are extensive and written in great detail, making best use of everyday tasks. They are clearly related to the national standards and are cross-referenced to all areas of the qualification. They are also supported by witness testimony from the workplace manager. Portfolios contain a diverse range of supporting evidence, including imaginative tasks and activities which give background knowledge for NVQ and key skills. All evidence in portfolios is clearly assigned to the learner.

36. Work placements are good and are particularly supportive. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. There is a good range of work placements which are appropriate to the needs of the learners. There is a good relationship between RPSRCT and the work placements, many of whom have had a long working relationship with the training provider. RPSRCT offers support to employers, in areas such as health and safety and staff development. It has redesigned the employer's information to stress their responsibilities to the learner. Many learners progress to employment with their work placement provider.

37. Retention rates of learners on the NVQ and foundation training programmes are poor. Fifty per cent of NVQ learners leave without completing the framework. Forty



per cent of foundation modern apprentices leave without any qualification. Over the two years of the foundation programme, 40 per cent of learners have left with no qualifications and 18 per cent with level 2 NVQ. Some NVQ learners fail to maintain the standards of attendance required by employers, and new strategies have recently been introduced to try to improve learners' attendance. An early leaver strategy has been introduced, and discussion of early leavers is included at every staff meeting. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of these actions.

38. Assessment and internal verification are planned and carried out to a satisfactory standard. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Learners are visited and assessed regularly, and employers are notified in advance of these visits. Assessment is clearly planned and appropriate goals are set. Progress reviews are carried out regularly. Targets agreed with the learners are clearly recorded and employers are informed of learners' progress. Employers and learners express satisfaction with RPSRCT and most would recommend the organisation to others. Training is well planned and fulfils the needs of all learners. Learners also have the opportunity to gain extra qualifications in first aid, food handling and hygiene, and moving and handling, although most employers prefer to give their own training in moving and handling. Key skills are an integral part of training and assessment. Many learners progress through the training programmes. For example, seven of the current advanced modern apprentices were previously on the foundation programme.

#### Good Practice

*Staff who are involved in the training of key skills have recently received additional input from a mathematics teacher to enable them to teach basic application of number.*

*One advanced modern apprentice, who is going on maternity leave, has been able to complete her observation evidence and will complete the presentation of her portfolio with visits at home from the employer and RPSRCT's assessor.*

**Foundation programmes****Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Life Skills	32	4

39. The Life Skills programme is part of the Learning Gateway. It has been running since April 2000, alongside preparatory training which was closed earlier this year. RPSRCT's Life Skills programme is designed for young people between 16 and 18 who are disadvantaged or have been socially excluded and require intensive support, and young people who require help to develop career plans and need jobsearch skills and work taster opportunities. Learners can join the training programme at any time of the year and they are referred from the careers service. There are 32 learners who attend for a minimum of 16 hours each week and normally spend 24 weeks on the programme. However, they can stay longer or leave earlier if their circumstances change. The achievement of qualifications is not the primary goal. The training programme includes either a one-to-one or small group induction, carried out over a maximum of two days. Induction includes health and safety and equal opportunities procedures, RPSRCT's policies and regulations, initial assessment, and the development of an individual learning plan. The training programme consists of a core menu which includes confidence building, personal development, key and basic skills, jobsearch skills and regular progress reviews. A range of other activities is available and varies according to individual need. Activities include outdoor team projects, cookery sessions at the local youth club, basic IT courses and work tasters. There are three staff directly involved in the training and two of these are full time. The trainers have counselling and youth work experience, but none of the staff has formal teaching and/or training qualifications. There have been a number of recent staff changes, and two of the staff are new to the programme.

**STRENGTHS**

- effective guidance and support for learners
- good working relationships with external bodies
- effective programme of occupational awareness

**WEAKNESSES**

- insufficient use of initial assessment to support basic skills development
- insufficient monitoring and recording of targets and progress
- poor retention rates

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more opportunities to gain recognition of achievement
- better quality and range of learning materials and resources
- wider range of work tasters

40. There is effective guidance and support for learners. Staff create a secure environment based on sensitive, individual support. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Many learners have significant difficulties in their personal lives and staff offer good opportunities for learners to talk about their concerns and fears, and explore their hopes for the future. Some training sessions include exercises for confidence building and improving communication skills. A number of young parents participate in the Life Skills programme and opportunities are given for these learners to explore their personal needs in the context of planning for their future training. One full-day session each week is offered specifically for young parents, and includes a range of units on child development, health and well-being before and after pregnancy, nutrition, baby care and childcare. A number of learners are referred to RPSRCT's mentoring project which offers individual support from a trained volunteer mentor. A range of additional support measures is also offered, depending on individual needs. These include arranging for wake-up calls and collecting learners from their homes to ensure attendance. Each learner is allocated a support worker. Meetings are regular, usually every fortnight, and record slow progress with learners' personal needs.

41. The working relationships with external bodies are good and extend to the provision of guidance, support and learning opportunities. Learners are encouraged to participate in outdoor activities, youth club programmes and in a motivational programme. Staff also make referrals to counselling services and other agencies for specific support needs.

42. There is an effective programme of occupational awareness. Two employment advisers visit RPSRCT each week and attend the Life Skills training sessions on a regular basis. They work with learners to help them identify a career, offer individual support and, with RPSRCT staff, help learners make informed choices about their work plans. Life Skills' staff have developed a small range of work tasters. At the time of inspection, nine learners attend work placements which include administration, care and retail placements. Learners are well supported on their work placements and RPSRCT's staff visit and monitor learners' progress on a regular basis. Employers report that they have good, regular communication with RPSRCT and that placements are well managed. However, the range of work tasters and placements is small and currently limits work experience opportunities. This was identified in the self-assessment report.

43. An approved initial assessment is used during induction to assess the learners' basic skills needs. Results are recorded and filed with the learners' individual learning plans.

However, the results are not used to plan individual learning programmes, although many of the learners need support with key skills and basic skills. Training sessions do not adequately meet these learning needs and insufficient attention is given to making learning relevant to individual needs. Learning objectives are not clearly specified for the training sessions and learners are not well prepared to carry out activities. Lesson plans are inadequate and there is insufficient monitoring and recording of learning targets. Learners' work files are poorly organised and do not reflect a progressive range of learning activities. RPSRCT's staff do not produce written comments on learners' work and some learners are not sufficiently challenged in training sessions. The quality and range of learning materials and resources do not adequately meet the learners' needs. Diaries are kept and reviews are carried out, but they are too general and do not identify individual learning needs. They also fail to give enough information about progress. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

44. There is poor retention on the Life Skills programme. Many learners experience a range of difficulties which result in their early withdrawal from the programme. These include hospitalisation, imprisonment and the gaining of employment. However, these reasons do account for what is significantly high early leaver profile. In 2000-01, only nine of the 29 learners who started on the Life Skills programme achieved the targets on their individual learning plans. In the current year, 70 learners started on the Life Skills programme and 32 are still in training. Only seven of the 38 who left the programme achieved the targets on their individual learning plans, and nine progressed into employment or further education and/or training. RPSRCT has recently introduced closer monitoring of the retention rates, although this is not based on the analysis of retention rates in Life Skills. Gaining qualifications is not a primary goal on Life Skills programmes, but RPSRCT does not currently offer any opportunities for formal recognition of achievement.