

Milltech Training Limited

Partial reinspection report

Unique reference number: 53388

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Type of provider: Independent Learning Provider

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Introduction

Milltech Training Ltd (Milltech) was inspected in March 2011 where overall effectiveness was graded satisfactory. Business, administration and law was graded satisfactory and engineering, transportation operations and maintenance was graded inadequate. This partial reinspection focuses on the inadequate engineering provision alongside an additional set of generic themes.

The outcome of the reinspection is as follows:

| Subject area | Original grade | Reinspection grade |
|--|----------------|--------------------|
| Engineering, transportation operations and maintenance | 4 | 3 |

Context

Milltech is a private training company based in Sunderland. The North East Skills Funding Agency funds all of the company's provision. Milltech provides apprenticeship training in business administration, engineering and education and training. It also provides foundation training for another local training provider.

In engineering, there are currently 46 apprentices, of which 11 are advanced apprentices. Qualifications include vehicle maintenance and repair, vehicle body and paint operations, vehicle fitting and vehicle parts at intermediate and advanced levels. Apprentices attend off-the-job training once a week.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. In 20010/11, overall success rates improved significantly from a low rate to a point just below the national average. Outcomes for apprentices aged 16 to 18 improved by eight percentage points over this period.
- Outcomes for advanced apprentices are good; they have improved each year over the last three years and are now significantly above the national rate. The rate at which learners complete their programmes within agreed timeframes is satisfactory and is above the national average. Current learners are making good progress.
- Learners develop good practical skills and employers appreciate their improved self-confidence when dealing with customers. They enjoy their training programmes and their portfolios are of a satisfactory standard.
- Attendance rates are satisfactory. Milltech has successfully improved engineering attendance rates over the last two years. The introduction of bonus payments for good attendance and the support work with smaller employers have worked well. However, for a small number of learners and employers poor attendance is still a problem.

- Milltech and employers prioritise learners' health, safety and well-being well. During learning sessions, tutors promote and carefully monitor learners' awareness and understanding of safe working practices. At work, tutors discuss with learners aspects of safety and well-being during each progress review.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors have worked hard to improve lesson planning to ensure it links more effectively to the qualification requirements and the assessment planning process. Tutors use a variety of methods in their teaching. However, more work is required to ensure tutors use all the learning and information technology resources available to make lessons more interesting and interactive.
- Learners' progress reviews are satisfactory. Reviews focus well on setting challenging targets for learners to achieve. Assessment planning closely aligns to the target-setting process and there is sufficient assessment activity taking place to ensure learners progress well.
- The range and types of programmes available meet the needs of learners and employers satisfactorily. New employers receive a clear briefing to ensure they are aware of their role and responsibilities. Through this work, employers are increasingly aware of the need to support learners who may want to progress from intermediate to advanced levels.
- Milltech's recently appointed employer placement manager has improved communications with employers to benefit learners. Employers value Milltech's professional approach to training and they appreciate the support their learners receive.
- Learners receive satisfactory information, advice and guidance to help them make an informed decision about their choice of programme. They receive good support to help them find a placement that meets their needs and those of their employers. Support processes to help learners achieve their qualifications have improved well since the last inspection and are now satisfactory.
- Milltech's arrangements to monitor learner progress are good. Learners at risk of not achieving are quickly identified and appropriate interventions are considered and applied where possible. These arrangements are fully established and are a key feature of learners' improved progress and outcomes since the last inspection.
- The ineffective verification and assessment practices identified at the last inspection are now satisfactory. A range of effective changes now ensures that all aspects of the assessment and verification process are robust and well coordinated. Additional work is now needed to develop the use of video and other recorded evidence in order to provide a more diverse evidence base for assessment purposes.

What does Milltech need to do to improve further?

- Build on the current work to improve outcomes for learners, particularly the success rates for intermediate apprentices, by maintaining a sharp focus on meeting the awarding body's qualification requirements during learning

sessions, through close monitoring of individual progress, and through fast and effective support interventions when learners underperform.

- Improve teaching and learning through more planned and routine use of the available learning resources to meet learners' needs. Make learning more interesting and interactive through ensuring learners access the computer suite in the training centre.
- Maintain the activities to improve learners' attendance rates at training sessions through further developing initiatives like the current effective use of a financial bonus for attendance, and through securing greater commitment from employers to ensure all learners have the time off from work for the training they need.
- Improve assessment and verification practices further. Ensure that the quality of subcontracted work is monitored closely to ensure it meets awarding body requirements; develop new ways of providing a more diverse range of evidence for assessment purposes, including the use of new technologies, video and other recording techniques.

Additional Themes

Inspectors explored the following themes as part of this reinspection.

What progress has been made to improve outcomes for learners? In particular, outcomes for engineering apprentices.

Reasonable progress

Since the last inspection, Milltech has improved outcomes, retention, attendance and progress rates for current learners. The matching of learners' skills with employers' needs is much improved. The proportion of learners leaving early has reduced significantly in the current year. The weekly tracking and monitoring of learner progress is highly effective in identifying learners at risk of underperforming and initiating support. Staff use data effectively to inform learners of their progress. Current motor vehicle learners are making good progress. Whilst there are still pockets of low attendance, over the last six months attendance rates have averaged at around 85%, which is significantly higher than at the last inspection.

Overall success rates across all programmes increased by 19 percentage points in 2010/11. Success rates for learners on advanced motor vehicle programmes are high. Success rates for business administration courses are very high. However, on intermediate motor vehicle programmes, whilst overall success rates improved to a satisfactory level, they remain just below the national average. A small number of foundation learners have good progression into positive outcomes. Current foundation learners achieve qualifications in personal and social development, safety and employability skills well. However, success rates on functional skills in mathematics and English are low.

What progress has been made to improve the quality of teaching and learning to benefit learners?**Reasonable progress**

At the last inspection, teaching, training and learning were judged to be satisfactory. Milltech has made reasonable progress to bring about improvement. A cross-company approach to developing learning resources is promoting the sharing of good practice and discussion about activities to engage learners. In motor vehicle, tutors have a more structured approach to planning sessions to make better use of the workplace and remote garage facility for demonstrations and assessment. The range of teaching and learning resources in motor vehicle has increased to include interactive CD ROMs, workbooks, practical task sheets and virtual learning support materials. However, staff make insufficient use of these resources to improve learning opportunities.

On the management programme, a satisfactory range of learning resources has been developed and integrated within the technical certificate framework. A more interactive learning approach is promoted effectively across business administration programmes.

In foundation learning, an additional tutor has been appointed recently. A smart board has been fitted in the teaching room and new functional skills' learning resources have been purchased but the range of interactive resources is under developed. Session plans have been reviewed but identified revisions have not yet been completed.

What progress has been made to improve the self-assessment and other quality-improvement activities?**Reasonable progress**

At the last inspection, this area was judged satisfactory. Milltech has developed an effective range of appropriate performance targets to monitor progress and drive improvement across the business. However, a minority of targets are not sufficiently specific or quantified. Milltech promotes continuous improvement satisfactorily through its monthly meetings with individual subject area teams, where they carefully monitor improvement targets. The link between the subject area self-assessment process and the targets set within the quality improvement plan is much improved and is now a strong feature of continuous improvement. Use of data to support monitoring and target-setting is good. Senior managers ensure that tutors and assessors are closely involved in the self-assessment process.

Milltech has made reasonable progress in developing quality improvement systems, including the observation process. A recent quality improvement review clarifies the purpose of quality activities and staff responsibilities. Milltech is developing quality criteria and identifying expected quality standards. It has an improved focus on developing tutors' skills, using staff training to share good practice and to agree

required standards. A learning champion supports this area of development. Tutors make satisfactory use of feedback routinely collected from learners to improve the provision.

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