

Milltech Training Ltd

Reinspection monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 53388

Name of lead inspector: June Cramman HMI

Last day of inspection: 20 October 2011

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Victoria House
Toward Road
Sunderland
Tyne and Wear
SR1 2QF

Telephone number: 0191 510 0414

FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Milltech Training Ltd (Milltech) is a private training company founded in 1983. In March 2006 two directors purchased Milltech, with the managing director taking responsibility for the running of the company. He is now supported by a quality improvement manager, a centre coordinator, eight trainer/assessors and seven administrators. Milltech was based in a grade 2 listed building in Sunderland city centre but moved to new, more modern and accessible, premises soon after the last inspection. The North East Skills Funding Agency funds all of the company's provision.

At the last inspection in March 2011, overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, outcomes for learners, quality of provision, and leadership and management were all graded satisfactory. Business, administration and law was graded satisfactory and transportation operations and maintenance was graded inadequate. This report focuses on the themes explored during the monitoring visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

How much progress has Milltech made to ensure self-assessment and other quality improvement processes make and sustain improvements?	Reasonable progress
---	----------------------------

At the previous inspection, Milltech's capacity to make and sustain improvements was satisfactory. The self-assessment process was satisfactory. Since the inspection, Milltech has utilised an external consultant to train staff in self-assessment and has devised a process which allows staff to contribute meaningfully to the self-assessment report. Milltech is changing the systems for collecting and analysing feedback from learners and employers to obtain more useful information for self-assessment and quality improvement. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these developments. Since the inspection, good use has been made of an action plan to manage improvements. Staff regularly review progress in meeting the plan's clear and measurable targets. The quality manual was out of date at the time of the previous inspection. It is now being updated but it is not clear how it will contribute significantly to raising the quality of the provision. The new internal verifier has made substantial improvements to the standard of learners' portfolios in motor vehicle engineering and has introduced effective sampling of the portfolios throughout the assessment period. The internal verifier and the assessors have a better shared understanding of the requirements of the awarding body.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has Milltech made to improve outcomes for learners, particularly motor vehicle learners?

Reasonable progress

Since the last inspection, at which Milltech's learner outcomes were judged satisfactory, the provider has made reasonable progress in improving them further. Comparing current data to data from the same time period in the previous year, Milltech has increased overall success rates by nine percentage points. All age groups show a similar improvement. In vehicle maintenance and repair, overall rates have improved satisfactorily, and in paint and body have improved substantially. However, success rates of intermediate learners remain slightly below last year's national average, although they have improved by 11 percentage points. Train to Gain success rates remain high but have dipped slightly in the current year. Foundation learners' progression rates are satisfactory.

Learners continue to gain good personal and workplace skills. Milltech has introduced a number of strategies to improve outcomes including re-structuring the staffing to meet learners' needs more effectively, improved recruitment and initial assessment processes, improved tracking and monitoring of progress, and increased recruitment of bigger, more stable employers. While some strategies are having a recognisable impact on provision, others may not have an impact for some time.

Quality of provision

What progress has Milltech made to improve learners' attendance at off-the-job training and to ensure employers support their training and achievement?

Reasonable progress

At the time of the previous inspection, attendance at the off-the-job training sessions by motor vehicle engineering learners was poor. Too many employers asked their learners to stay at work rather than attend the training centre one day each week. This adversely affected the learners' progress. Milltech now closely monitors the attendance of motor vehicle engineering learners, which has improved substantially to above 80%. Communication between trainers and employers has improved. Managers analyse the reasons for poor attendance at an individual level. Milltech informs employers of their obligation to ensure that learners attend off-the-job training regularly. Staff visit employers frequently and explain clearly how absence affects learners' progress. If an employer claims they cannot spare an apprentice for a day each week, this is used as an opportunity to suggest the employer takes on another apprentice. If learners miss a session, a pack of learning materials is emailed to them together with an assessment sheet which they have to submit to demonstrate their learning. Learners are given a small cash reward if they achieve a full attendance record each term.

How much progress has Milltech made to improve the planning and delivery of teaching and learning in motor vehicle and foundation learning?**Reasonable progress**

Soon after the last inspection Milltech moved to larger premises. Staff members now work in an open plan office, which has improved the sharing of good practice in teaching and learning. A staff member gives one-to-one support and development to motor vehicle and foundation learning colleagues. Staff are currently reviewing materials, schemes of work and session plans. Observations of teaching and learning in both areas show improvements, for example in the use of more activities and more varied methods, though some issues still remain.

An external consultant has been working with motor vehicle staff to improve provision. Milltech has restructured staff roles, giving individual staff responsibility for both theory teaching and workplace assessments. Learners and employers now have useful timetables of off-the-job learning and a better understanding of the programme. Learners are well aware of their progress.

The foundation learning programme is now more structured. Learners follow e-portfolios that help to monitor their progress towards qualifications. Although staff complete detailed individual learner profiles, these are not yet used effectively in teaching sessions. Too many session plans still rely on learners completing worksheets and are insufficiently varied.

What progress has Milltech made to extend the range of learning resources to support teaching and learning better in management and motor vehicle programmes?**Reasonable progress**

Significantly, the provider has now made the move to different premises. This building was completely remodelled to meet Milltech's needs specifically. Most of the training rooms are equipped with smartboards, are newly furnished and are generally light and airy. Learners now have a separate common room that they value highly.

Motor vehicle learners have access to a small workshop as well as a commercial car workshop in another area of town. However, they do not have their own workshop. Tutors use commercial automotive materials in conjunction with their own hand-outs. The hand-outs are clearly presented with good use of coloured illustrations.

As well as the generic resources brought to the programme through the move to improved premises, Milltech has been working on resource packs for both management and team leader learners. These packs bring together existing paper-based materials and hyperlinks to interesting websites to allow learners to supplement any central teaching and learning. However, these have not yet been piloted with learners.

Leadership and management

What progress have managers made to set ambitious and challenging performance targets which monitor progress and drive improvement at all levels of the business?	Significant progress
--	-----------------------------

At the time of the previous inspection, learners' progress reviews were ineffective in motor vehicle engineering. Target setting was underdeveloped and managers did not use data sufficiently well to set targets at all levels of the business. Staff performance management has greatly improved since the inspection. Managers use the management information system very effectively to set targets, to monitor the progress of learners and to review the performance of individual members of staff and teams. They hold weekly meetings to discuss the progress of individual learners. Learners making slow progress are easily identified, the reasons for their slow progress are analysed and action is agreed. Staff have clear targets for the proportion of learners that are making at least satisfactory progress.

Milltech has improved the setting of targets for learners at their progress reviews. Staff and learners agree clear objectives and they are recorded appropriately. Some of the target setting is very good and identifies specific jobs that the learner is expected to complete alongside carefully considered timescales. Milltech is in the process of developing a business plan involving all staff. The plan incorporates targets for the development of the company as a whole.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk