

# Martec Training

## Focused monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 53259

**Name of lead inspector:** Beverley Barlow HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 15 August 2012

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

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## FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

### Context and focus of visit

Martec Training based in Newcastle-under-Lyme was established in 1982 as the training company for Marson Garages (Wolstanton) Ltd. Martec now subcontracts its apprentice training in engineering and business administration to Newcastle-under-Lyme College. It has its own contract with the Skills Funding Agency to provide Foundation Learning to 169 learners. It offers learning programmes, which focus on the motor industry and Foundation Learning, to students aged 14 to 16 that mainstream schools have excluded.

At its previous inspection in August 2010, inspectors judged Martec's overall effectiveness and all aspects of the provision to be good with the exception of equality and diversity that they judged satisfactory. The two subject areas inspected, engineering and employability training, were judged good. The provision for students aged 14 to 16, inspected by Ofsted as an independent school in February 2012, is judged as good.

Most learners are from the Newcastle-under-Lyme or Stoke-on-Trent areas in Staffordshire. Most learners have specific personal needs and most have not participated in education or training for several years. Within the local area employment in the traditional industries of ceramics and mining has declined for several years and unemployment is higher than the national average. Around a fifth of the working population do not have an intermediate-level qualification. The proportion of young people leaving school with five or more GCSE grades A\* to C is below the national rate.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

**What progress has Martec made to improve the rigour of self-assessment and audits to cover all aspects of the learners' programme and raise standards?**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the last inspection, Martec has undergone considerable change and transition. The organisation appointed a new principal in October 2011 and has implemented many significant changes, including a new management structure that has improved communications and staff accountability. A large proportion of staff are new, including specialist functional skills tutors. The organisation has established a senior operations team to improve standards and monitor progress against quality improvement action plans. The principal's quarterly reports to the executive board focus more on meeting contractual funding targets and not enough attention is given to the quality of provision and learners' outcomes.

The self-assessment process has improved and it is inclusive. Regular audits ensure contract compliance and greater consistency in using new standardised paperwork. Staff have a sound understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Learning programme and improvements needed across the organisation. The self-assessment report now focuses more on learners' achievements including qualification success rates and their progression to positive destinations. However, aspects of the report remain overly descriptive and it is not always clear what evidence the provider is using to arrive at the judgements. The use of data by managers, following the implementation of a new management information system in April 2012, is more robust. However, managers recognise that the use of data needs to be more efficient to enable prompt intervention. The improvements identified in the self-assessment report concur with those found by inspectors.

### **Outcomes for learners**

**What progress has the organisation made in improving Foundation Learning learners' outcomes and their opportunities to gain additional qualifications?**

**Reasonable progress**

Learners enjoy their learning and the personal support they receive from their tutors. They make good progress in improving their social and personal development. All learners on Foundation Learning now complete literacy, numeracy and information technology qualifications as an integrated aspect of their programme. Success rates are high in English and mathematics but too few learners pass their information technology qualification. Learners gain in confidence and self-esteem that helps them to progress to relevant training and/or employment. Most learners achieve a relevant vocational qualification in motor vehicle engineering at entry or foundation level.

Staff monitor attendance closely and it is high. The majority of learners attend regularly and are punctual to lessons at the start and throughout the day. A minority of learners have poor attendance despite the significant support from staff.

A well organised two-week work experience placement is available to all foundation learners. Just over half of learners have benefited from a work placement this year. The preparation of learners at the training centre is thorough and staff support them very well before they complete their placement. A broad range of companies provides a good variety of opportunities for learners to gain workplace skills and experiences. A significant minority of learners have gained employment and apprenticeships with the companies with whom they have completed work placements.

## Quality of provision

**What progress has Martec made in improving the rigour of internal lesson observations and ensuring that all learners receive sufficient challenge in lessons?**

**Insufficient progress**

At the last inspection the observation of teaching and learning process required improvement particularly around plans to moderate lesson observations, ensuring managers followed up actions for improvement and that observations took place of all aspects of the learners' programme. Martec has made insufficient progress in resolving this area for improvement. The provider observes all tutors every six months and plans are at an advanced stage to ensure that observation of newly appointed tutors takes place more frequently. Martec has re-designed the methods of recording observations and records have improved. However, the moderation of lesson observations is not adequate, and attention during observations is insufficient to what learning has taken place and how staff use different activities to take account of different learning needs to challenge all learners. The provider observes most aspects of the learners' programme but the process does not yet include learners' reviews. Managers and staff do not always identify actions for improvements and the monitoring of follow up actions is not sufficient.

**What progress has the provider made in setting targets that are more specific for learners?**

**Reasonable progress**

Martec is making reasonable progress in ensuring that the setting of targets for learners is more specific and this has improved since the last inspection. The provider has improved individual learning plans and the system to review learners' progress. Individual learning plans are now more detailed and there is a standardised approach for their completion. Revision takes place promptly when learners' plans change. The provider has revised the review process and it now includes the recognising and recording of prior achievement. Discussion of personal development and aspects of equality and diversity takes place, but the recording of these areas is not always in sufficient detail to measure and monitor learners' progress for the next review. A minority of specific learning objectives to assist learners in achieving their qualification and raising their aspiration of what to do next when they complete the Foundation Learning programme are not measurable and do not have target completion dates.

## **Leadership and management**

**What progress has the provider made in implementing more specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound targets for individual staff to meet challenging strategic objectives?** **Reasonable progress**

Staff are highly committed to learners and their success. They feel supported by managers and morale is high. Of the 10 staff providing Foundation Learning programmes, eight are new in the last year. Managers have reviewed the performance of all staff and each has an action plan of what they need to achieve in the forthcoming year. Although these plans focus on the achievement of their learners and improving the quality of learning, by ensuring schemes of work and suitable assessment methods are in place, they are not always specific enough. The targets set for learners' success and progression rates are not always sufficiently ambitious. Whilst managers do observe learning sessions it is not clear how these inform staff performance review or personal development to raise standards. Staff targets do not always link closely to the organisation's strategic priorities and quality improvement plan.

**What progress has Martec made to improve the promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum and in the workplace?** **Significant progress**

Martec is making significant progress in improving the promotion of equality and diversity during lessons and in the workplace. The provider has appointed a specialist practitioner and established an equality and diversity action group to oversee the implementation and impact of these strategies. All staff have received recent and frequent training which has greatly improved levels of understanding. Learning materials that promote equality and diversity in the workplace are innovative, of a high standard and are easily accessible for all staff to use. The majority of lesson plans inspectors reviewed during the monitoring visit cover equality and diversity. The provider is making very good progress in attracting females to its programmes who are under-represented in the motor vehicle sector. The Foundation Learning programme has benefitted from the recent introduction of an innovative programme to attract young mothers to learning who have expressed an interest in working in the sector. Other initiatives to increase learners' understanding of diversity include a planned overseas visit to Africa.

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