

# Midland Group Training Services

## Not for profit organisation

<b>Inspection dates</b>		<b>18–22 November 2013</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding-1
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- Most learners achieve their qualifications by the planned date and gain technical and vocational skills that are well above the level required to attain their award.
- Good teaching and learning, along with excellent partnerships and collaboration with employers, enable learners to produce work of a high standard to allow the large majority of them to progress to higher levels of education and training.
- Staff and employers carefully design learning programmes with a wide and relevant range of additional qualifications to meet the needs of each learner and those of their employers.
- Leaders and managers create a training environment in which learners benefit from an excellent range of industrial standard equipment.
- The board of trustees makes a valuable contribution to Midland Group Training Services (MGTS) through its careful scrutiny of performance and advice on strategic direction. Learners benefit from the very good insight of trustees into employers' and industry's requirements in curriculum development.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough teaching and learning is outstanding.
- Staff do not use initial assessment sufficiently to plan appropriate support for learners early in their programmes.
- Teachers, trainers and managers do not promote equality and diversity enough in sessions, lessons, reviews and staff training.
- Managers do not focus sufficiently on raising the standard of teaching, through robust and specific target setting for improvements following observations and performance management for teaching and learning in staff reviews.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - ensuring that more teaching staff gain good teaching skills through managers using, observations to identify good practice and staff development needs to share with all staff
  - focusing the observation of teaching and learning on learners, the progress they make and the extent to which teaching staff challenge learners to achieve their potential in each session
  - giving clear actions and targets, by which teachers, instructors and assessors can improve and so that managers can monitor their progress through performance reviews.
- Ensure that initial assessment is robust and prompt by staff identifying quickly learners' needs and putting in place the appropriate support early, especially for those learners needing to use mathematics and English at higher levels.
- Improve the promotion of equality and diversity by ensuring all staff have regular training and teachers, instructors and assessors identify ways of promoting a good understanding of equalities issues in lessons and reviews.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. Overall and timely success rates are high, but trends over the past three years are inconsistent. Success rates for the first cohort of business apprentices who completed in 2012/13 are very high. Success rates for engineering apprentices and advanced apprentices overall are high, but for those aged 19 and over they were low in 2010/11. They remained low in this age group for intermediate apprentices in 2011/12. MGTS data for 2012/13 show most rates have improved substantially.
- A large majority of learners achieved high grades in BTEC advanced-level qualifications in 2012/13. Almost all learners attend regularly and are punctual. Managers monitor attendance well. They display weekly colour-coded charts of the attendance of all learners at the entrance to the workshops. All learners whose attendance falls below 95% are highlighted, but this applies to only a very few learners each week.
- Learners use the very good quality engineering resources well to achieve skills at a level that is above the standard required by their qualifications. A range of carefully selected additional qualifications meets the needs of individual learners and their employers are important part of each learner's programme. All learners who take the additional qualifications and training opportunities achieve them.
- Managers use data effectively to identify outcomes for different groups of learners. Success rates for women, learners from minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties are high, and in line with other learners, although numbers in these groups are low.
- Learners gain excellent employability skills. Staff ensure that learners' behaviour is mature and standards of workshop practice meet the highest requirements of industry. Success rates for key and functional skills are high. Most learners take the qualification in information and communications technology (ICT), and already have appropriate GCSE grades in English and mathematics. Engineering learners develop mathematics to higher levels as part of their programmes.
- Rates of progression to further qualifications are high. Most intermediate-level apprentices continue to advanced-level programmes. Over two thirds of learners have progressed from

advanced apprenticeships to higher national qualifications during their four-year apprenticeship, with two of these completing the higher qualification within the four years.

- Managers do not collect data on learners who gain promotions or extra responsibility, although anecdotal evidence suggests this is frequent. Most learners progress well within their companies. For example over a number of years, 31 of 60 apprentices who trained with one company remained with them and four of the 31 now have employment as company directors. Companies often provide funding and support for apprentices to study for part-time degrees after completing Higher National Certificates.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good which reflects the good outcomes. Learners enjoy learning, and most are well motivated by enthusiastic teachers and assessors and supportive employers to complete their qualification to a high standard in the planned timescale. Assessors arrange their time to suit learners and employers' needs, including visits to night shifts. Most teaching and learning is good, but too little is outstanding.
- Managers design the programmes well. Learners gain a very good understanding of the underlying principles and techniques of the subject areas, so that they can transfer their skills to other specialisms within their chosen career. Most employers are closely involved with constructing specific elements of their learners' programmes which they create individually from a range of additional training opportunities. They support learners well throughout their studies.
- Staff have good vocational qualifications and experience. They are enthusiastic, and learners benefit from the support and motivation they provide. Most lessons are good, but too many lack sufficient challenge and pace to ensure that learners, many of whom enter employment with good qualifications, receive sufficient stretch to achieve to their full potential. Managers recognise that all staff would benefit from more sharing of good practice among themselves.
- Initial assessment identifies adequately learners' functional skill development needs. However, staff do not use the results promptly enough to enable tutors to plan effective support for learners at an early stage of the programme. Although teachers are aware of learners' specific learning needs, such as dyslexia, they do not have group profiles to support them in planning activities to meet the needs of these learners.
- Teachers, instructors and assessors give regular and detailed feedback that includes advice to learners on how they can improve, both in practical and theory sessions. Staff track learners' progress against their detailed individual learning plans very well. Assessors visit engineering learners frequently in their workplaces, but most business apprentices do not have workplace assessment until several months into their apprenticeship. Assessors set good long-term targets, but often short-term targets are not sufficiently specific and focused to help learners make rapid progress.
- Most learners enter the programme with English and mathematics qualifications equal to functional skills level 2. The majority complete functional skills qualification in ICT. Engineering apprentices develop higher-level mathematics through the BTEC programme. Business apprentices have good feedback on the way they communicate in presentations. All learners receive good feedback on their written work to help them improve their grammar and spelling.
- Information, advice and guidance adequately ensure that all learners understand the programmes they are on, and the way the elements of their programme are constructed to meet the needs of their qualification along with those of their employer. Staff advise learners well about their progress, and possible qualifications to take to continue their studies. The provider's staff leave advice and guidance on future career opportunities to employers' staff.
- The promotion of equality and diversity on the business management programmes is good, but has a lower priority on engineering programmes. Managers have substantive plans for a

comprehensive training programme to raise the awareness of staff and learners, but promotion of equality and diversity in engineering lessons and reviews is minimal.

<b>Engineering</b>	Good
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	

- Good teaching, learning and assessment enable apprentices to make good progress and achieve well. Success rates are high on the vast majority of courses in 2012/13 and most learners' progress to higher-level courses. Apprentices develop excellent practical skills and gain a thorough understanding of key theoretical concepts.
- Teachers have very good vocational knowledge and use their skills and experience effectively to motivate and support learners to achieve. They have high but realistic expectations and set demanding standards. Learners often produce work of a standard that is well above what the awarding body requires and the level of course.
- Managers have developed a range of very good training programmes. They plan these programmes for on and off-the-job very well to meet the needs of learners, their employers and the requirements of the qualifications.
- Teaching in practical lessons is very good. Apprentices use good engineering tools and machining equipment competently and confidently. They produce engineering test pieces to very high standards in both bench fitting and milling. Teachers and instructors give good coaching to help learners achieve these standards. Some milling test pieces need to be made to fine tolerances that are well above assessment criteria. Most apprentices achieve these standards.
- Theory teaching is good. Teachers engage and motivate learners. They plan well, but too few sessions have sufficient pace and challenge to stretch learners to their full potential. Teaching materials are of a high standard and teachers make good use of interactive learning technology and visual aids to help learners deepen their knowledge and understanding. Teachers assess learning well in sessions.
- Assessment is good. Learners benefit from assessors' use both of direct observations and witness testimonies. Assessors give good, clear written and oral feedback following observations, and learners understand what they have to do to improve. Learners' portfolios are comprehensive and contain a diverse range of relevant evidence.
- Resources to support teaching and learning are outstanding. Engineering workshops are extremely well equipped and replicate an authentic workplace environment. Resources include very good systems for the analysis and testing of hydraulics, pneumatics rigs, electrical engineering control panels, and rapid prototyping.
- Reviews of apprentice's progress are good, and take place every 12 weeks although staff visit apprentices in the workplace every month. They set challenging long-term targets, but too many short-term targets are insufficiently specific and demanding. Employers are fully involved in ensuring that apprentices complete their programmes successfully and on time.
- Initial assessment is thorough. Apprentices mostly receive good advice guidance and support from employers, teachers and assessors. Staff provide very good care, support and guidance. Apprentices receive comprehensive pre-course information and the induction programme is thorough and places particular emphasis on safety.
- The development of apprentices' English and mathematics skills is good. Most apprentices have good GCSE grades at entry, and staff further develop their English and mathematics during the programme. All learners take a higher level of mathematics than they require for BTEC qualifications. Staff correct learners' English routinely and give constructive feedback on their written work. They provide additional help for those requiring numeracy and literacy support.

- Staff do not promote equality and diversity sufficiently. In most lessons and progress reviews, staff missed opportunities to integrate and promote equality. Only occasionally did any promotion of this area take place.

## Business Management

### Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this is reflected in consistently high success rates. The vast majority of learners progress in line with their agreed goals. Staff have high expectations of learners and provide teaching and a very high level of support to enable learners to meet those expectations. Nearly all learners are well motivated, enjoy learning and gain valuable new skills and knowledge.
- Learners acquire good technical knowledge about team leading and management and apply these very effectively at work. One learner, new to the role of supervisor, gained significantly in knowledge and confidence in carrying out appraisals while another learned how to manage better his team by understanding different theories of motivation. Learners work at a high standard and conduct independent research and analysis. However, teachers give too little encouragement for learners to progress to higher levels of functional skills.
- Teachers plan and provide learning sessions well, using a variety of methods that engage and stimulate learners. Learners benefit greatly from the many opportunities to learn from their peers and acquire new ideas about solving problems and managing people. Teachers place a strong emphasis on providing learners with a good understanding of the concepts of management and keeping them abreast of legislation. Learners have insufficient access to MGTS learning resources outside the teaching sessions.
- Learners understand their progress adequately from sufficient and timely reviews and the vast majority are clear about the work they need to do to complete their qualifications. They receive frequent, detailed and encouraging feedback on their theory assignments. In a few instances, teachers and assessors do not challenge learners sufficiently to make sure they make expected progress.
- Teachers' assessment of learners' work-based competence is integral to their marking of theory assignments. However, staff do not give these assessments sufficient priority in the early stages of the programme. Assessors do not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to gather evidence from their workplace, such as using technology for recording discussions.
- The vast majority of learners receive appropriate learning and support for English, mathematics and ICT that matches their needs well. A specialist teacher provides training in ICT and this is very effective in giving learners new skills and confidence. Learners improve their English and mathematics using independent study and achieve good results in the external tests. A small minority of learners require greater identification of their needs and more structured specialist support.
- Initial assessment of learners' starting points is broadly effective. Employers are closely involved in referring the vast majority of learners to courses. Trainers use exercises very effectively to develop learners' self-awareness including their learning and team-working styles. Staff work very effectively to negotiate course content with each employer. However, they place insufficient emphasis on initial assessment of learners' prior knowledge and competences for the work-based qualification.
- Information, advice and guidance are adequate overall. They are strong in terms of staff giving learners and employers a good understanding of the programmes including the nature of assignments and importance of functional skills. As a result, learners confidently access

additional support from tutors and learning resources on the internet. However, staff do not provide enough information and advice about progression routes.

- Learners' participate in regular reviews of their progress and trainers encourage them to reflect carefully on their accomplishments. While employers are highly supportive and responsive to learners' requests, too few participate in the training at the individual level.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity effectively and learners achieve a sound knowledge of key issues arising in the workplace, such as bullying or sexual stereotyping. Trainers include these important aspects in the teaching and make them relevant to learners' work roles and responsibilities through the frequent use of group discussions.

## The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good with many outstanding features. All of the provider's activities, with the exception of teaching and learning, pursue excellence. Managers and staff identify clear strategic priorities. Planning at this level is particularly good. Strategic objectives stem directly from the company aims and values and receive effective support from appropriate operating statements and demanding targets and key performance indicators. MGTS meets its targets consistently.
- Every learner benefits from an individually designed and innovative programme of additional learning and skills development, over and above the standard apprenticeship frameworks. Learners, employers and MGTS staff negotiate these individual programmes and each has a title of bronze, silver or gold options. Each option represents a different level of challenge for learners of differing abilities and work-related needs.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations of learners to achieve their qualifications and develop excellent engineering skills, including management and team leading in engineering contexts. Enthusiastic and highly motivated staff share these expectations.
- Monitoring the quality of and plans to raise standards for teaching and learning require improvement. Observations are not sufficiently frequent to improve teaching and learning. Feedback is informal and does not relate to the management of staff performance. The observations use a tick box approach that looks at process and teaching performance rather than learning. Managers have identified these shortcomings and are taking action to improve their arrangements for observing teaching and learning.
- The arrangements for quality management and assurance are, in the main, effective. The cycle of self-assessment activities makes good use of learners' feedback which managers collect from a variety of sources. Staff and employers' surveys give valuable information on the quality of provision. A number of formal audits of the provision accurately identify areas for improvement.
- Self-assessment is good. Staff, learners and employers contribute to the process effectively through surveys and discussion groups. The board of trustees produces its own comprehensive and detailed self-assessment report. The overall report is accurate and has a good balance of judgements and descriptive content. The quality improvement plan provides a good basis for raising standards and covers most of the areas for improvement.
- The Chief Executive and senior management team monitor staff performance robustly through a good system of performance reviews. A panel of managers conducts rigorous reviews that use a clearly focused agenda. Managers make very good use of data to assess performance. However, they focus insufficiently on teaching and learning in the performance reviews.
- Managers and staff work very well with employers to ensure the provision meets their needs. Most employers use their own specialist training facilities to provide additional off-the-job learning. Employers are overwhelmingly positive about the provision and MGTS is the first choice for engineering maintenance training for several national and international companies.

- Governance is particularly good. The board of trustees consists of eight directors who provide a strong blend of business, technical and industrial experience. Trustees give good advice on business initiatives and offer political and technical guidance on management decisions about strategic direction. The board receives very thorough and useful reports from the Chief Executive and provides appropriate scrutiny and robust challenge where necessary.
- Learners benefit from the excellent partnerships with other providers and external agencies. As a member of the National Group Training Association, MGTS shares good practice with a number of similar engineering providers. It takes part in valuable peer reviews within the network that adds to its own quality assurance arrangements.
- Accommodation, resources and equipment are outstanding. All training rooms are well appointed, comfortable and spacious. The variety of room sizes accommodates well large medium and small groups. All learners gain from outstanding specialist engineering equipment and resources. The provider continually invests in advanced technology and the latest engineering equipment. An extensive programme of commercial activities funds this investment.
- Senior managers provide excellent support and resources for staff to enable them to meet their demanding targets. In the past year, staff have identified a number of areas requiring improvement and managers have responded with significant investments by appointing additional staff, altering workshop practices and purchasing new equipment. Four teachers are currently on the course for a diploma for teaching in the lifelong learning sector.
- Learners work in an atmosphere of courtesy and mutual respect. Managers act quickly and effectively to deal with bullying or harassment. The promotion of equality and diversity in the classroom and during reviews requires improvement.
- Managers and staff ensure that learners have appropriate protection and that MGTS meets its statutory requirement for safeguarding. Staff development for safeguarding is good and managers keep a detailed register of staff including criminal record and disclosure and barring checks. Detailed policies and procedures are in place and managers review and update these regularly.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Midland Group Training Services Limited

<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b>  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Apprenticeships</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Engineering</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Business Management</b>	<b>2</b>



## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Not for profit organisation							
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+							
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	Full-time: N/A							
	Part-time: 608							
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Lee Weatherley							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	March 2008							
<b>Website address</b>	www.mgts.co.uk							
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A	1	N/A	31	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	6	64	202	165	N/A	N/A		
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A							
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N/A</li> </ul>							

## Contextual information

MGTS, founded in 1965, became a not-for-profit educational charity in 1975. It offers training to government funded learners throughout the Midlands from two training centres, the main one in Coventry, with smaller provision in Redditch. It is employer led and a board of trustees represents the interests of its 84 member companies. The Chief Executive works closely with two managers to oversee the provision. MGTS employs 33 full time staff of whom 25 are teachers, instructors and/or assessors, and 20 associate staff. It provides advanced- and intermediate-level apprenticeships in engineering, and more recently in business management and team leading for engineering companies. In addition, it offers fully funded training to many national and international companies, especially in the food industries.

## Information about this inspection

<b>Lead inspector</b>	Pauline Hawkesford AI
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Five additional inspectors, assisted by the business systems and contracts manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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