

MIT Skills Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		10–14 February 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
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:

- The majority of apprentices successfully complete their qualifications gaining valuable work-related skills.
- Unemployed young learners receive good training and support to help prepare them for further education or employment in motor vehicle businesses or construction trades.
- Employers speak highly of the way MIT prepares young learners for employment and the skills older learners develop which contribute to the success of their businesses.
- Staff are enthusiastic, well qualified and knowledgeable. They use their experiences well to motivate learners and explain how they can apply newly-acquired knowledge and skills in different situations.
- Learners enjoy improving their English and mathematics both in functional skills sessions and through feedback from other trainers and assessors.
- Managers are ambitious for their learners and provide additional support where necessary to help them achieve.
- Strong leadership, effective management of subcontracting arrangements and good initiatives are improving the quality of most learners' experience.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not all trainers take sufficient account of learners' starting points to tailor the learning programmes and provide sufficient challenge to more able learners.
- During reviews of progress, trainers do not set specific, time-bound targets so that learners know how to improve their personal skills as well as vocational skills and knowledge.
- Trainers do not always have the confidence to explore and discuss typical equality and diversity scenarios which learners may experience whilst in their workplaces.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Refine the quality improvement system to ensure it fully addresses all aspects of the learners' journey.
- Implement, where possible, the on-line initial assessment process with all subcontractors to ensure learners' starting points for English and mathematics are accurately identified and that all staff are confident in using the resources available and supporting learners to further develop their skills.
- Ensure actions and targets set during reviews are more specific and time bound and provide learners with sufficient challenge to enhance the development their skills and knowledge.
- Encourage all staff to develop learners' understanding of how equality and diversity apply in their workplaces.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The majority of learners successfully complete their apprenticeship programmes, with high success rates in 2012/13 for overall and within the timeframes expected, especially in manufacturing and health and social care.
- MIT understands very well the variations in the data and takes appropriate action when necessary. For example, a group of older female learners failed to complete their direct learning support programme, leading to low success rates for female advanced apprenticeships in 2012/13. Working closely with the subcontractors, success rates have improved to 82% so far in 2013/14. Low success rates in the North West region link to a group of learners who were unable to complete their qualification when the agency that employed them lost a contract.
- Overall pass rates for functional skills in the current year are high. Staff now carefully monitor first-time pass rates which are over 90% for English functional skills tests in reading, writing and speaking. First-time pass rates are lower in mathematics, but the overall pass rates are over 80%.
- Over half of the study programme learners have already improved their level of English and several have now successfully completed level 2. Around three quarters of learners have improved their level of mathematics, with a third improving from entry level 2 to level 1.
- A high proportion of study programme learners have already improved their attitude, aptitude and attendance, and several are almost ready to start work experience with a local garage or construction company. Attendance is good with effective systems for monitoring and reporting non attendance and lateness to parents, carers and employers.
- All learners develop good personal and employability skills. Many employers have strong and long-standing relationships with MIT. They value the employability skills that apprentices have and the sound practical skills they acquire during their off-the-job training. Employers and parents appreciate the automatic notifications they receive about non attendance or lateness at MIT's training centre.
- MIT prepares young people particularly well to work in the motor industry. A significant minority is working on prestigious marques and vehicles where the expectations by customers are particularly high.
- Many manufacturing and hairdressing employers value improved communications skills and team working skills that learners develop throughout their programmes. Several employers have seen significant improvements and cost reductions through the effective application of lean manufacturing techniques by learners.

- Progression rates are good. Two fifths of motor vehicle apprentices who successfully completed last year had progressed from schools programmes or foundation learning programmes with MIT. The majority of learners who transferred from Foundation Learning programmes to the study programme have progressed to further education, employment or training.
- Almost all improving operational performance learners are agency workers in manufacturing environments. The good development of their knowledge and skills provides them with qualifications that many companies now look for when recruiting permanent staff. Learners benefit from improved confidence and opportunities for more permanent employment.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Good teaching, learning and assessment provide learners with good knowledge and skills that employers highly value. The majority of apprentices successfully complete all aspects of their apprenticeship frameworks. Learners on the study programmes are making good progress, improving their English and mathematics, and developing appropriate vocational and employability skills.
- Training sessions are carefully planned by well-qualified staff who are enthusiastic about their subject areas. They use their extensive knowledge and experiences well to motivate and inspire learners. Most are very effective at extending learners' understanding of different topics and how they apply to the different industrial and commercial environments that learners work in. Learners enjoy their learning and appreciate the supportive and helpful trainers who contribute much to the enjoyment of learning.
- MIT has well-resourced motor vehicle and construction workshops with high-quality industry standard resources. Classrooms are well appointed and tutors make good use of interactive learning technologies with learners. The subcontractor's hairdressing training salon provides learners with a good environment for practical sessions. However, insufficient resources are available for theory sessions.
- Where training takes place on employer premises, trainers ensure they have a suitable room away from the learners' normal work area with appropriate resources and good training materials to support and promote learning. One trainer made good use of a tablet to introduce various topics and demonstrate on-line resources for learners to reference.
- Training in the workplace from mentors and employers is good and effectively supports the development of learners' skills and knowledge. Learners work in a wide variety of high-quality commercial and industrial settings where they gain good skills in hairdressing, vehicle management and lean manufacturing techniques. Learners work with modern technologies in well-resourced environments.
- Trainers have a reasonable understanding of learners' starting points. MIT is starting to use an effective on-line diagnostic tool to identify learners' training needs and to provide a good range of resources to support the development of their English and mathematics. However, several subcontractors and partners continue to use old paper-based screening tools and they make little use of the information gathered to support and challenge learners. Not all trainers take full account of learners' backgrounds, experience or skills levels to influence individual training plans and appropriately challenge learners.
- Most learners and employers have a good understanding of the different components of their training programme and roughly when they will complete different stages. However, short-term actions and targets set during the review process are not always specific or time bound.
- Assessments are generally thorough and reliable with a range of assessment strategies to determine competence. Motor vehicle trainers are starting to make good use of an electronic recording system. Business improvement techniques portfolios demonstrate the effective use of lean manufacturing tools that bring about improvements to working practices and in some cases substantial cost savings. Too few clients in the hairdressing training salon reduce assessment opportunities.

- Motor vehicle learners receive good support from a specialist trainer to help develop their English and mathematics. Motor vehicle trainers are starting to provide additional support and reinforce the importance of correct spelling and grammar. Training materials used in manufacturing training sessions and by administration subcontractors are effective at ensuring learners improve their writing and speaking skills so they can pass their functional skills tests first time. However, insufficient focus is given to functional skills in hairdressing.
- All learners receive, where appropriate, good advice and guidance from trainers, assessors and employers at the start of their programmes. Trainers offer appropriate advice and guidance on progression opportunities in both MIT programmes and externally. MIT works closely with employers to provide learners with suitable placement or employment opportunities.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and learners show respect for their peers and trainers. Employers comment positively on the improved team working and communication following training. Trainers do not always reinforce equality and diversity in training sessions and insufficient use is made of industry-specific scenarios.

Manufacturing technologies

Good

Apprenticeships

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in manufacturing technologies is good. Learners make good progress and a large majority complete their programmes within the timeframes expected. Achievement of learning goals and pass rates on national tests is good.
- Teaching and learning on the business improvement techniques programme are very well structured and planned. Fedden USP, one of MIT's partners, delivers these programmes. Group activities using projects and tasks based around lean manufacturing motivate and challenge learners particularly well. The focus on improving quality or reducing wastages and costs ensures that employers quickly understand the benefits of the programme. Employers facilitate work on, and take great interest in, all activities and projects. Trainers encourage all learners to improve their own performance.
- Learners on the performing manufacturing operations programme work in a variety of manufacturing and processing environments. They develop a good understanding of industrial processes and health and safety through good, well-structured off-the-job training sessions. Learners enjoy these activities and work productively. Trainers use exercises effectively to promote better understanding of such subjects as health and safety. However, at times, trainers use non-directed questions and do not have a clear picture of the progress and understanding of the whole group.
- Trainers and work-based assessors have significant industry experience which they use very effectively to promote best commercial practice. Learners appreciate that trainers can simplify explanations by relating them to their workplace activities and industrial processes.
- Initial assessment of learners' starting points is satisfactory, although learners do not complete diagnostic tests to understand specific areas for improvement. Learners are aware of the component parts of their frameworks but unsure of when they will complete each part. Progress reviews provide a useful summary of the component parts that learners have achieved. Employers and trainers use this information effectively in tracking and monitoring learners' progress. However, the lack of detail in the progress review results in many learners not being sufficiently clear on what they need to do and by when.
- Assessment of learners' competence is detailed and thorough. Observations are well planned and carried out efficiently. Assessors record their observations in detail, with some providing typed copies of their notes for the learners' portfolios. Learners receive effective feedback which confirms their level of competence, but not all receive sufficient information on what they could do to improve their practice or their progress. Feedback references the next assessment activity, but not when it will take place.

- Trainers have developed good training materials for functional skills sessions, particularly in mathematics. Older learners, who are often training for the first time since leaving school, enjoy group training sessions. This supports an improvement in their workplace communication abilities. Trainers encourage the use of dictionaries to help learners spell more difficult words correctly. Learners value the opportunity to improve their English and mathematics skills.
- Learners feel safe and free from bullying and harassment, but trainers and assessors miss opportunities to promote equality and generate an understanding of diversity in the workplace.

Motor vehicle

Apprenticeships 16-19 study programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment in motor vehicle programmes are good. This is reflective of the high success rates for advanced apprentices, high standards of work and the rapid rates of skill development, particularly on the study programme. Many employers value the increased assessments in the workplace and the frequency of review visits which are increasing the rate of progress towards the achievement of their framework.
- Training in the workplace is good and employers move apprentices into more advanced work on more sophisticated vehicles and complex technology as soon as they are ready. Employers encourage and support study programme learners to develop good basic motor vehicle skills and employability skills during their work experience.
- MIT provides a wide range of high-quality, industry-standard resources in its workshops for diagnostic analysis and practical work. The vehicles used for training in the workshops are suitable for apprentices working at a foundation or intermediate level and are improving at advanced level. MIT has purchased two current production vehicles with use of company-owned vehicles for advanced level diagnostic work along with the necessary diagnostic software.
- Trainers have high levels of vocational skill and practical knowledge and use their experience well to enrich training sessions. Learners progressively develop and acquire essential vehicle management skills, confidence and good background knowledge.
- Trainers use interactive learning technology well to enhance explanations and support in-class assessments. Learners frequently use diagnostic software and retrieve vehicle data from a range of sources to support efficient vehicle repairs. Learners find this approach makes learning more memorable and appreciate being able to access materials at home and in the workplace. However, trainers do not pay sufficient attention to their learners' different levels of ability when planning training and do not always challenge the more able learners effectively.
- Assessors use a wide range of assessment strategies to determine competence and record this well on the electronic recording system. Evidence portfolios are electronic which learners and employers find easier to manage. Assessors update them sufficiently frequently to provide prompt feedback on performance. Trainers' feedback on learners' written work provides an accurate view of performance and clear guidance on how to improve.
- A new electronic system to monitor learners' progress provides timely information, although most data focus on completing the vocational qualification. Targets set during progress reviews are not specific, measurable or time bound. Few targets relate to the development of wider personal skills such as improving technical English.
- MIT provides helpful support to develop learners' English and mathematics skills. A specialist tutor works very well alongside trainers and assessors supporting the development of learners' skills as well as improving staff awareness of what is required to up skill learners. However, trainers are not always correcting spelling errors sufficiently frequently in written work to improve technical English.

- All learners receive good advice from trainers, assessors and employers about the needs and requirements of the industry. MIT makes significant efforts to find learners suitable work placements or employment opportunities.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Learners show considerable respect for their peers and trainers. Staff know their learners well and are adept at removing barriers to success. Learners on the study programme are making rapid gains in self-confidence and are making swift progress towards employability. However, learners lack awareness of the diversity in workplaces and the types of scenario they will encounter.

Hairdressing

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. The overall success rates for the new subcontractor in the current year appear to be in line with national rates, although too many learners are making slow progress towards completion of their frameworks within the timeframes expected.
- Teaching of practical skills, both in the training centre and workplace, is good. Learners' enjoyment and engagement in practical hairdressing skills are evident. The standard of work is in line with the requirements of the qualification; learners demonstrate a diverse range of skills including cutting, blow drying and setting. Learners develop good communication skills in client care while working in busy commercially-viable salons.
- Some theory sessions require improvement as the current lack of appropriate resources means the trainers rely too heavily on text books. Learning strategies are narrow and trainers do not sufficiently challenge learners. Trainers do not use interactive learning technologies to enliven lessons and motivate learners, such as using pictures to demonstrate the reactions to colouring services rather than just discussing it.
- Subcontractor staff have appropriate teaching and assessment qualifications. Trainers have good hairdressing knowledge and experience and are enthusiastic, committed and supportive; as a result they effectively engage, motivate and inspire learners. Learners benefit from working in high-quality commercial salons. The facilities at the academy are also of a particularly high standard and learners enjoy attending.
- Trainers do not use learners' prior skills, knowledge and initial screening results to individualise learning programmes or to inform target setting. Employers are insufficiently involved in agreeing the overall length of the programme or the sequence of unit delivery. All learners are on the same length of programme. Learners are not actively encouraged to achieve higher levels of functional skills than those required by the framework, even when they are capable of doing so.
- During progress reviews, trainers do not always set learners sufficiently meaningful targets. Most targets relate to completion of the vocational qualification and these are not always time bound. Trainers do not focus sufficiently on developing learners' wider knowledge and personal skills.
- A lack of clients in the training centre and work on block heads mean learners have few opportunities for assessment. As a result, some learners are making slow progress towards completion of their qualification. Too few assessments take place in the workplace, in particular for advanced apprentices, where naturally-occurring assessment opportunities could be utilised.
- The planning and teaching of functional skills and the development of learners' English and mathematics require improvement. Learners are unaware of when or how they are developing their functional skills. There are no specific functional skills sessions and trainers do not mark learners' work to correct spelling or grammar, nor do they provide feedback on how learners can improve their communications skills or mental arithmetic.

- Advice and guidance for learners are sufficient to ensure that learners are on the appropriate programme. Learners receive a brief induction and handbook at the start of their programme. However, learners do not start working on the employment rights and responsibilities element of their framework early in their programme.
- Learners' awareness of equality and diversity is under developed. In training sessions, trainers do not always use naturally-occurring opportunities to raise learner awareness and promote equality and diversity linked to the industry.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. Senior managers have clear strategies and strong aspirations to improve the quality of provision to outstanding. In the last year MIT has put in place a wide range of systems and processes to develop the quality of the learners' experience, although a few are too recent to have their full impact assessed. Staff are committed to the organisational drive for quality. The management structure and systems developed over the last year offer good capacity for further improvement.
- MIT has introduced good initiatives to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Strong performance management of staff, taking into account learner evaluations, outcomes and observation grades, has made a positive difference to quality. The well-planned and regular observation system is not yet sufficiently refined to judge the quality of all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. The sharing of best practice across subcontracted provision is not sufficiently systematic.
- Staff, across all the provision, have good relevant industry experience and a good level of knowledge and skills; although, in one subcontractor, their knowledge of work-based learning is not sufficient. Staff training is regular and frequent and tutors and trainers find it useful. Subcontractors' staff participate in, and help deliver, training where they have particular expertise.
- Quality improvement systems and planning are good. Self-assessment is inclusive and accurately reflects the recent inspection report. The process has generated a thorough and useful quality improvement plan. Managers use this well to drive improvements which are evident in many areas; however, a few actions, although well considered, have yet to fully impact throughout the whole provision. For example, the drive to ensure good target setting for learners has failed to materialise in too many instances.
- Data management has improved significantly and MIT uses relevant and well-presented information very effectively to shape management decisions. Audit systems are well planned and effective in ensuring contract compliance.
- MIT has strengthened its management of subcontractors through regular contract meetings, better performance information and building good working relationships. In all but one subcontract this has worked very well, with obvious and significant improvements. Subcontractors value this close working, with shared systems, joint observations of teaching, learning and assessment, sharing learner evaluations and close monitoring of performance. However, managers do not always discuss the quality of the teaching in contract meetings, which focus on performance and compliance.
- MIT has worked hard to ensure that the vast majority of provision meets the needs of employers, learners, local schools and local community. Learners on the study programme are enjoying good quality programmes with a range of trade options for learners to follow. Learners are on appropriate courses and most have programmes tailored to meet their individual needs and employers' needs. Information, advice and guidance are good across all programmes.
- Arrangements to promote equality and diversity are a high priority within MIT. Significant expertise at senior level has led to a very thorough action plan addressing all aspects of developing and promoting equality and diversity. MIT has developed a relevant range of targets to drive its plans forward and measure progress. Senior managers carefully monitor the

performance and recruitment of a wide range of specific groups of learners. Managers take appropriate action to address identified differences and have a good awareness of underlying issues.

- MIT offers good equality and diversity training to both staff and learners and their knowledge and understanding is generally sound. A key priority is the development of learners' understanding of diversity throughout their programme; however, too often, trainers do not have the confidence to use naturally-occurring opportunities or use industry-specific scenarios to cultivate understanding.
- MIT meets its statutory requirements for the safeguarding of learners. MIT vets all staff through relevant checks and, where these are being processed, good arrangements ensure new staff are suitably supervised. The safeguarding officer handles incidents and disclosures very effectively through appropriate referral. Health and safety have a high priority and arrangements, including risk assessments, are good both in the workplace and in training. Staff are trained to a good standard and receive regular updates.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

MIT Skills Limited

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Manufacturing technologies	2
Motor vehicle	2
Hairdressing	3

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	14+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1838							
	Part-time: 255							
Managing Director	Mr Hisham Zubeidi							
Date of previous inspection	October 2012							
Website address	www.mitskills.com							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	27	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	1	-	20	-	4	-	-
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	164	411	25	81	-	-		
Number of learners aged 14-16	334							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	334							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ha Ha ■ Twin ■ Youth Force 							

Contextual information

MIT is a privately owned company based in West Byfleet in Surrey. MIT works with a wide range of employers across the United Kingdom to provide apprenticeship training in business improvement techniques, manufacturing operations, motor vehicle, hairdressing, administration and customer services. The company provides off-the-job training in its training centre in Surrey, through its subcontractors' premises throughout England and in employers' own premises. In manufacturing, the main employer/partner provides agency work on contract for various sectors. MIT provides trade-based study programmes for 16 to 18 learners with work experience in local motor vehicle and construction companies as well as English and mathematics. MIT offers a wide range of work-based training courses to local schools.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Joy Montgomery HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of Business Development & Partnerships 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 relevant 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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