

MI ComputSolutions

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		27–31 October 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
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 are successful in gaining their qualifications; many go on to higher level study or to employment as a result
- learners make good progress in their studies and gain valuable vocational, personal and social skills that prepare them well for further study or employment
- teaching and learning are good; tutors make learning relevant, memorable and enjoyable
- on classroom-based courses, tutors use assessment well to improve learners' skills; tutors have high expectations of learners and provide feedback that motivates them to work hard
- tutors and advisers provide highly effective personal and learning support to help learners overcome difficulties that might otherwise prevent them from learning or gaining employment
- managers monitor closely the quality of directly delivered and subcontracted provision; they take swift and decisive action if it falls below the high standards they set
- managers and staff liaise closely with local employers and voluntary organisations to ensure that the range of courses they offer meets learners' and employers' needs well
- the welcoming, inclusive and accessible learning environment is successful in enabling adults with little formal education or few qualifications to participate in learning and to progress.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- lesson observation reports are not sufficiently evaluative to identify good practice or help plan further improvement; reports do not cover all aspects of apprenticeship programmes
- tutors do not always make sufficient use of the outcomes of initial assessment of learners' skills to plan lessons that meet individual learners' needs
- targets in learners' progress review records are insufficiently specific and lack detail on how learners might make better progress
- vocational Tutors on vocational courses do not develop learners' skills in English and mathematics sufficiently well.
- numbers of apprentices are small, but the proportion that achieves is not consistently high across all the apprenticeship subjects offered by MI ComputSolutions (MISDC).

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Identify and share good practice in teaching and learning across directly delivered and subcontracted provision in order to:
 - ensure that the outcomes of learners' initial assessments are used to plan lessons that meet learners' individual and differing needs more closely
 - increase tutors' attention to improving learners' wider skills in English and mathematics in all lessons.
- Improve learners' progress by ensuring that learners' review records detail the skills and knowledge learners have acquired, set specific targets for their further development and provide clear information on what learners must do to meet these targets.
- Monitor the quality of all aspects of the apprenticeship programme and, when necessary, take swift action to improve apprentices' training and assessment to ensure that all make good progress and can achieve their awards.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Most of MISDC's learners attend classes in their chosen subjects at one of MISDC's learning centres, at its subcontractors' premises, or in the workplace. Almost all learners are adults over the age of 19. The proportion of learners that achieve their intended successfully qualifications is high.
- Most learners take courses to improve their English, mathematics or employability skills or to prepare them for employment in health and social care. The very large majority of these learners make good progress in their studies and acquire skills and knowledge that prepare them well for employment or higher level study. Learners value the training and care provided for them by their tutors and gain significantly in confidence and self-esteem as a result. Learners develop good personal and social skills to improve their employability and help them search for work. Apprentices develop good vocational and personal skills during their training at work. However, in vocational subjects, such as health and social care, learners do not always make sufficient progress in English and mathematics.
- Progression to employment or further study is good. Learners become adept at using the internet to search and apply for work and gain valuable skills in preparing information to support their applications. Staff at MISDC give learners good advice and support to guide their choice of study or their applications for employment.
- Learners' attendance at classes is generally good. However, managers have only recently introduced systems for analysing data on attendance so that it can take action if attendance does not meet its targets.
- On preparation for work programmes, staff make particularly good use of work experience to develop learners' work-related skills and gain relevant qualifications. Managers make good use of their links with employers and their knowledge of the local labour market to ensure that MISDC's courses equip learners with the skills employers need. Managers monitor work experience carefully to ensure that activities are meaningful and contribute to learners' development.
- MISDC attracts learners from particularly diverse groups of people. Many of its learners are from the most disadvantaged communities in the area that MISDC serves. Managers analyse data on the performance of these groups and take action where they identify imbalances in performance. They have successfully improved the success rates of men to be similar to those

for women, and no obvious disparities exist in the performance of other groups of learners, such as different ethnic groups.

- A very small minority of MISDC's learners are on apprenticeship programmes. Apprentices in health and social care make good progress in their studies and a high proportion of learners achieve the qualification. However, success rates in other subjects are not consistently high from year to year. Apprentices in customer service and information and communication technology are currently making slow progress towards their qualifications.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- MISDC offers courses in seven subject areas. Teaching, learning and assessment in health and social care and foundation English and mathematics were selected for inspection as a representative sample of MISDC's provision and were reported and graded individually. The remaining subject areas were inspected and helped contribute to overall grades for provision.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Tutors provide learning that is interesting and relevant for learners, helps them make good progress, and enables them to succeed in their qualifications and gain employment or study at a higher level. Many learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds and tutors understand well the difficulties these learners face in learning and employment. Tutors plan learning programmes effectively to provide good practical support and encouragement to help learners succeed.
- Tutors make good use of well-designed exercises and activities that draw on learners' experience to help make concepts relevant and memorable. In health and social care, for example, tutors draw upon learners' own experience of using local community services to develop their wider understanding of the difficulties that service users face. Teaching is lively and varied; it maintains learners' interest and reinforces successfully their knowledge and understanding. Learners feel comfortable about contributing to discussion and learn well from one another. Apprentices are in good work placements that develop their work-related skills very effectively.
- On classroom-based courses, tutors use assessment well to enable learning. In lessons, they use a wide range of suitable methods such as peer assessment, group work and open and directed questions to check learning. Tutors' feedback motivates and helps learners understand how well they are doing. This builds learners' confidence, encourages learners to reflect on their own learning and helps them progress. Tutors' verbal feedback on assignments is similarly helpful, but their written comments are not always sufficiently detailed or legible.
- Assessment on the small number of apprenticeships offered by MISDC is not uniformly good. Tutors in health and social care assess apprentices regularly and feedback helps them make good progress in their studies. However, tutors have not assessed apprentices in customer service sufficiently frequently and they are making very slow progress.
- Resources for learning are good. In lessons, tutors make good use of information and learning technology to illustrate topics and make concepts interesting and memorable. Tutors use well-designed paper and electronic resources in class and to help learners to work on their own. However, tutors and managers do not analyse the extent to which learners make independent use of these resources in their learning to determine their effectiveness.
- Advisers carry out thorough assessments of learners when they join MISDC to ensure they are placed on courses that match their needs and ambitions. Advisers use these sessions well to test learners' aptitudes for MISDC's different vocational courses or to identify additional learning needs. However, tutors do not always make sufficient use of the outcomes of these initial assessments to plan lessons that meet individual learners' needs closely.
- Tutors use monthly progress review meetings with individual learners and apprentices to guide their development, but do not always provide sufficient information on the skills or knowledge learners have acquired to measure their progress accurately. The targets on reviews are insufficiently specific to remind learners clearly of what they should do to make better progress.

Apprentices in customer service are given insufficient information in their targets to help them learn between reviews and make better progress.

- Staff have strong links with employers and other providers and use these to give learners up-to-date information on options for employment or further study. They guide learners effectively in their job searches and give them good advice and practical help on the preparation of curriculum vitae and job applications.
- Tutors pay suitable attention to developing learners' use of correct subject terminology. In childcare courses, for example, tutors encourage learners to use suitable phrases to praise children's work. Tutors pay attention to learners' work-related application of mathematics, for example, enabling learners in healthcare courses to calculate medication dosages. However, tutors do not make sufficient use of these opportunities to extend learners' understanding and use of English or mathematics.
- Staff at MISDC and its subcontractors create safe and inclusive learning environments where learners and staff treat one another with high levels of mutual respect. Tutors encourage learners to share their different cultures and experiences and to learn from one another to tackle some of the difficulties and discrimination that learners face. If necessary, tutors challenge inappropriate stereotyping and encourage learners' tolerance of differing lifestyles. However, tutors do not build this development into their learning plans to develop this understanding systematically.

Health and social care

19+ Learning programmes Apprenticeships

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The large majority of learners are on classroom based courses; a small number of learners are on apprenticeship programmes. Most learners make good progress and achieve their qualifications. Learners' progression to higher level study or employment is good. Tutors provide well-structured learning opportunities that develop and extend learners' skills, knowledge and understanding to high standards.
- Tutors and assessors have high expectations for learners' development and practice in health and social care. Tutors plan learning well to develop good practical and personal skills and a professional approach to the provision of care. Tutors make good use of challenging case studies and examples based on clients in care settings to stimulate debate and enable learning. Learners have high aspirations and are well-motivated to study for their qualifications and to gain employment.
- Tutors are well qualified, with a wide range of experience of health care services. They make good use of this knowledge and experience to explain concepts and principles which focus, for example, on ensuring that individuals' rights and preferences are respected as part of the care they receive. Learners enjoy their learning; attendance and punctuality at lessons are good.
- Tutors make effective use of information and learning technology to illustrate topics, for example, using well-chosen video clips to show the range of care services available to clients. MISDC gives learners good access to computers to prepare assignments for assessment, but provides too few resources for learners to use for reference, independent study or research outside the classroom.
- Tutors structure courses in health and social care well to give learners clear guidance and milestones against which they can measure their progress. Tutors use these well to improve learners' confidence and to help learners manage their time, for example, in planning and writing assignments. Tutors give learners detailed feedback on marked assignments and observed assessments. This helps learners improve their practice and understanding, for example, of the importance of effective hand washing techniques to prevent the spread of infection.

- Initial assessment, advice and guidance are thorough and well documented. Advisers identify learners' individual interests and aptitudes carefully to direct them to the most appropriate courses. This is effective in ensuring that learners study at appropriate levels and helps them identify options for future employment.
- Staff at MISDC have very effective links with local employers and other support agencies. They use these well to help learners, many of whom are unemployed or who have little prior experience of formal education, gain relevant skills in the workplace and develop their employability. Training is well matched to the employment needs of local care homes and other services that support vulnerable, elderly or disabled individuals and their families. Learners value the help that their tutors provide in supporting them to find work placements or to prepare job applications.
- Tutors take care to encourage learners to use correct healthcare terminology properly, and to carry out relevant calculations, for example, on medication. However, they do not do enough to develop learners' English and mathematical skills. Many learners do not appreciate the importance of developing these skills alongside their vocational studies. A very small number of learners with English language needs have not been adequately supported to improve these skills.
- MISDC recruits learners from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. Tutors make very good use of learners' different experience and understanding to enrich learning and promote learners' wider understanding of equality and diversity. Tutors cover safeguarding topics thoroughly and enable learners to explore a range of differing cultural practices. Tutors challenge learners' thinking very effectively with relevant and recent case studies to improve learners' understanding and practice.

Foundation English and mathematics

Good

19+ Learning programmes

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and lead to good outcomes for learners. Tutors have high expectations for learners and motivate them well to study and complete their courses successfully. Most learners grow in confidence and develop good English and mathematical skills. Their attendance is good; learners make good progress and most achieve their qualifications. The majority of learners progress to further education, training and employment and are better able to apply for job opportunities than before.
- Tutors make good use of their skills and experience to develop schemes of work and learning plans that stimulate learners' interest and meet their individual needs. Tutors collect further information from learners at regular intervals to adapt learning to meet new needs that arise during the course, for example, as a result of learners' changed personal circumstances. Tutors make good use of activities that are relevant to learners' lives and experience to develop their team working, communication and problem-solving skills in addition to their English or mathematical skills. However, tutors do not record learning targets for individual learners in sufficient detail to help them make better progress.
- Managers at MISDC and its subcontractors provide good resources for learning. In functional skills lessons, tutors use information technology and online resources very effectively to extend and develop learners' knowledge. Tutors set useful and relevant homework tasks, such as using the internet to research different occupations, to develop learners' independent learning and research skills and help them make good progress in their studies. Learners are pleased with their progress and quickly become confident in using their improved reading and writing skills, for example, to search for work on the internet and to apply for jobs.
- Assessment is used well to help learners progress. Tutors carry out thorough assessments of learners' skills at the start of their programmes and most use these well to plan lessons that meet learners' individual needs. In lessons, tutors make good use of questions, peer assessment

and observation of practical tasks to assess and extend learning and challenge learners to achieve higher standards in their work. They give learners clear and helpful verbal feedback that tells them what they need to do to improve further. However, tutors' written feedback is not always sufficiently legible and easy for learners to read and understand.

- Learners' English, spelling, punctuation and grammar are developed purposefully and extended well in both English and mathematics lessons. Mathematics tutors reinforce key mathematical terms well and emphasise their correct pronunciation.
- Staff at MISDC give learners good information, advice and guidance. They provide careers advice at learners' initial interviews, at their induction and at the end of learners' courses. Information is detailed and encourages learners to aspire to further learning or search for employment.
- Tutors promote equality and an awareness of diversity well. Working relationships between learners and staff are excellent and foster a culture of mutual respect that enables learning. Learners feel valued and particularly well supported by staff. Tutors are successful in encouraging learners from a wide range of different cultures, or with very different life experiences, to contribute confidently in lessons. However, tutors do not pay sufficient attention to the development of learners' understanding of different lifestyles, cultures or religions to improve this understanding.
- Learners feel safe and enjoy their learning. Tutors pay careful attention to learners' health and safety at learning centres. However, they do not do enough to develop learners' understanding of how to stay safe, particularly when using the internet or social media.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management are good. The MISDC board has a clear strategy which is implemented by a very effective management team. High expectations for learners' success underpin all managers' decisions and most learners achieve their learning goals. MISDC's management team works very successfully with subcontractors to provide good access to learning for those with little previous formal education. Its provision is very effective in meeting the needs of learners and employers in the local community.
- Strong and mutually beneficial partnerships with employers, local authorities, agencies and voluntary bodies form a sound basis for the accurate planning of MISDC's curriculum. Managers at MISDC play a leading role in the borough's employment skills network. They use these relationships well to provide a wide range of courses that meet the needs of employers and community groups, frequently taught close to where learners live or work.
- Staff are well qualified and experienced in working with learners who have diverse needs. Very good communications between managers and staff, including those in subcontracted provision, ensure that staff implement managers' initiatives smoothly. However, managers do not record a minority of procedures in sufficient detail to monitor their effectiveness. Policies and procedures are appropriate, although managers have not reviewed a few of them within an acceptable timescale.
- Managers have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in lessons. Teaching accommodation is much improved and access to information and learning technology is now very good. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved. Managers recognise the need to improve the teaching of English and mathematics within other subjects and have put in place a programme of staff development and mentoring to rectify this. However, progress towards the setting of focused targets for learners and more accurate recording of reviews of learners' progress has been slow.
- Managers' effectively review and develop staff performance. All staff have an annual appraisal which leads to relevant professional development. A well-structured observation process, which includes staff in subcontracted provision, ensures that managers evaluate tutors' teaching, learning and assessment skills twice yearly. Managers make effective use of external observers

to moderate findings. However, observation reports are insufficiently critical or detailed to help tutors become outstanding practitioners. Managers do not provide sufficient opportunities for tutors in different subcontractors' provision and direct delivery teams to share good practice, or do enough to monitor and improve the quality of all aspects of its small apprenticeship programme.

- Managers' and teaching teams' detailed and thorough self-assessment correctly identifies the chief areas for improvement, and leads to appropriate action plans. Managers monitor their implementation carefully. Following induction, managers collect the views of learners systematically and use them well to make improvements, for example, in reducing the volume of administrative paperwork that learners must complete. However, feedback from learners at the end of their course is not sufficiently detailed to be useful in making improvements. Managers' use of employer feedback has improved but does not yet provide sufficient information to develop employer relationships further.
- Quality assurance of the great majority of the subcontracted provision is exceptionally good. Initial compliance arrangements are very thorough. Managers regularly collect detailed data on performance and use these in monthly review meetings with subcontractors. Performance is formally recorded and leads to clear action points for improvement. However, managers agreed a recent contract to take over a very small number of apprenticeships from a provider that had ceased trading too hastily. Managers did not carry out sufficiently detailed checks on the capacity of its new subcontractor to deliver good quality learning and assessment. These learners have made very slow progress.
- Managers and staff promote equality and an awareness of diversity effectively. The diverse nature of MISDC's learners is mirrored in staff appointments. Staff have a broad range of language skills that they use to support learners well, especially during information and advice sessions. Staff are given appropriate training in equality and diversity. All learners are treated with fairness and dignity. Managers have accurately identified achievement gaps between different learner groups and taken effective action to close them. Complaints procedures are clear and known to learners. Managers have dealt swiftly and appropriately with the very few complaints that have been made.
- The safeguarding of learners is good. MISDC has clear policies for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Managers use safe recruitment practices to minimise risk to learners. A single register of checks on staff suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults is up to date and contains all relevant information. Arrangements to protect learners from bullying and harassment are effective and learners feel safe. Managers understand how to respond when learners are in danger of radicalisation and acted appropriately to counter one threat. Initial training for staff on safeguarding is good. Managers pay good attention to health and safety and monitor practices appropriately.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

MI ComputSolutions

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	3	-	-
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	-	-	2	3	-	-

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	2
Foundation English and mathematics	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1371							
Principal/CEO	Ms Bola Sobowale							
Date of previous inspection	August 2009							
Website address	http://www.micomputsolutions.co.uk							
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+
	-	41	-	110	-	113	-	5
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	3	37	1	5	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		1		1			
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mediprosects ■ Bexley Resources Plus ■ Millennium Academy ■ Liral Veget ■ Step Ahead 							

Contextual information

MI ComputSolutions (MISDC) was established in 2002 as a voluntary organisation providing education and training to disadvantaged community groups in the boroughs of Lewisham and Newham. In 2005 it extended its provision of both accredited and non-accredited courses through subcontracting arrangements with local training providers and community organisations. Most learners attend classes at one of MISDC's learning centres in Brixton and Deptford, or at its subcontractors' premises. Learners on workplace learning courses attend off-the-job classes at their employers' premises. MISDC's small number of apprentices are trained at their workplaces and in off-the-job training sessions at MISDC or its subcontractors' premises.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Penelope Horner HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and six additional inspectors, assisted by the chief executive 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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