

Marson Garages (Wolstanton) Limited trading as Martec Training

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

25–27 April 2017

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Good	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not secured sufficient improvements in the quality of the study programme. Self-assessment, and quality improvement planning and monitoring are weak.
- Governors do not receive sufficiently detailed reports on the study programme to enable them to challenge managers effectively to make improvements to the provision.
- Staff do not sufficiently challenge learners who are not making expected progress or fulfilling their potential.
- Curriculum design and the use of initial assessment of learners' starting points are not enabling the most-able learners to progress quickly or undertake higher levels of learning
- Too few learners undertake work experience and planned enrichment activities. Staff plan work experience too late in the programme to enable learners to develop work-readiness skills according to their potential.
- Learners are not sufficiently confident with equality, diversity and safeguarding topics; employers' knowledge of their responsibilities in these areas is not sufficiently secure.
- Learners are not achieving enough of their learning aims or making sufficient progress in English and mathematics.

The provider has the following strengths

- Staff have strong links with employers and are experienced in the automotive sector, enabling learners to develop good automotive skills.
- Most learners complete their programme and progress to further education, apprenticeships or employment, supported by good information, advice and guidance and clear pathways for progression.
- Staff provide good support for learners to enable them to overcome barriers to learning, increase their confidence levels and keep safe.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Martec Training is part of a larger organisation known as Marson Garages (Wolstanton) Limited. It operates from a training centre in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Almost all learners undertake the study programme over a full academic year with motor vehicle maintenance being the vocational route. Martec Training also offers apprenticeship programmes under subcontracting arrangements for Newcastle-under-Lyme College, (now part of the Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group); this provision was not in scope for this inspection.
- Two executive directors and a chief executive manage the company and also carry out the governance of the provision. Almost all learners are White British males. Learners are recruited from Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stoke-on-Trent, and the surrounding areas. Unemployment in Staffordshire is lower than for the West Midlands as a whole, and educational achievement is higher.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Bring about secure improvements in the quality of the provision by:
 - strengthening governance arrangements, providing governors with more detailed information on the performance of the provision, so that they can support and challenge managers, and increasing governors' access to external support and challenge
 - undertaking more detailed analysis of learners' performance data and other key indicators to ensure that learners are making at least the progress expected of them
 - applying more rigour to self-assessment to ensure that governors and managers evaluate the provision accurately
 - developing comprehensive quality improvement plans to include detailed actions showing how improvements will be achieved, and setting more quantitative targets and detailed milestones to enable more rigorous and effective monitoring of progress.
- Ensure that managers and tutors set high expectations of learners by:
 - seeking the achievement of good standards of study and work-readiness skills early in the programme
 - providing more detailed written feedback in marked work, so that learners know what they need to do to improve their skills to higher levels
 - monitoring learners' progress more closely and taking prompt actions when learners fall behind with their progress.
- Raise standards and achievement in English and mathematics by improving learners' attendance and exam-readiness to secure better outcomes for learners.
- Develop the traineeship programme and other vocational elements of the study programme so that the most able learners identified at initial assessment of their starting points progress more quickly to apprenticeships or undertake higher levels of learning.
- Improve the work-readiness of learners. Plan for all learners to complete work experience

earlier in the programme and monitor their uptake of enrichment activities, taking swift actions if they do not participate sufficiently well.

- Reinforce topics of equality, diversity and safeguarding more frequently with learners, and brief employers appropriately so that learners are more confident in these topics and employers are better informed about their responsibilities when working with young people.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders and managers are not sufficiently ambitious for the study programme and they have not set high enough standards. They have maintained the strengths of the provision since the previous inspection, but they have failed to tackle well enough the areas for improvement and recommendations identified in that inspection. Managers have improved the arrangements to observe the quality of teaching and learning, and to identify staff development needs. However, they have been able to secure only modest improvements which have not yet resulted in improved outcomes for learners.
- Action planning to secure improvement is weak. The quality improvement plan accurately identifies improvement areas but does not have detailed actions, numerical measures, review dates; nor does it state what improvement will be secured. Managers are unable to identify accurately whether the actions they are taking are successful in helping them to raise standards.
- The current self-assessment report provides an overly optimistic narrative of the provision. The views of staff and learners suitably inform self-assessment, but managers do not analyse sufficiently the data to identify improvement actions, and the effectiveness of key components of the study programme is overstated.
- The strategy to support learners' development of English and mathematics has not been fully effective. Senior leaders and managers have revised the curriculum and provided additional learning resources for the English and mathematics courses. Prior to 2016/17 they unrealistically enrolled learners on short programmes where they were highly unlikely to achieve because of time constraints. Managers have now stopped these programmes. However, until very recently they have not had good enough tracking systems in place to identify that current learners are not making the expected progress in these subjects.
- Senior managers have accurately identified the reasons why the number of learners joining courses has fallen this year. Managers are currently reviewing the curriculum offer to improve the sustainability of the programme. They plan to make better use of the traineeship programme as a pre-entry route to apprenticeship for learners who are close to job readiness. However, it is too early to ascertain whether these plans will be effective in raising learner numbers.
- Managers place strong emphasis on the links with and needs of local employers and the local college of further education. They have developed close working relationships over a significant period. They adjust the curriculum content to respond to local needs, which is a major contributory factor in helping the very large majority of learners to progress to further learning, apprenticeships, or employment.
- Equality champions support the provider's good approach to equality and diversity. Managers have established a strong culture of mutual respect and they support their learners well. Females and learners from minority ethnic groups are under-represented. In the current year management initiatives have successfully increased the number of females in learning.

The governance of the provider

- The two executive directors along with the chief executive form the governance of the provision. They have little external support and do not receive appropriately detailed information to enable them to fulfil their governance role effectively. Managers mainly inform the board about marketing and capacity issues. The board members have not received sufficient information about the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on learners' achievement and progress. Managers have only recently established a simple progress-tracking system to enable board members to understand clearly whether learners are at risk of not achieving their learning aims.
- Very recent improvements to the safeguarding policy now require the regular reporting of safeguarding risks and issues to the board. The inclusion of regular safeguarding reports produced by managers has strengthened the role of governors with regards to the monitoring of safeguarding risks. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of this.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Records to ensure regulatory compliance are complete, accurate and up to date. Pre-employment checks are thorough, and appropriate risk-management procedures are put in place whenever staff start work before their checks have been completed.
- Arrangements for reporting on safeguarding concerns are particularly effective. Staff adhere to these and liaise closely with managers when a concern is raised. The provider has been successful in resolving learners' concerns by working effectively with local agencies, especially for learners who are children looked after and covered by child protection plans.
- Managers meet their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. Staff complete the provider's mandatory training on safeguarding and 'Prevent' as part of an extensive programme of online training, visits from the police and other agencies. While initial training in safeguarding is useful for learners, it is not yet systematically reinforced to ensure that learners are confident about such topics. Employers look after their learners appropriately and value their contribution to the workplace, but they do not sufficiently understand the wider safeguarding issues. The provider has not fully prepared employers for their responsibility when working with young people. Managers have developed a new, comprehensive safeguarding policy, but it is too soon to assess its impact on learners.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Managers and staff do not demonstrate consistently high expectations of learners. Staff do not ensure that all learners are challenged to make better and faster progress in their courses. For example, tutors do not consistently challenge learners in theory lessons to ensure that they come prepared with pens and notebooks and are completely ready to engage at the start the class. As a result, learners are not acquiring basic study or employability skills quickly enough to prepare them well for further education or the workplace.

- Tutors too rarely plan sufficiently challenging lessons in English and mathematics. Most tutors plan interesting activities that increase learners' motivation to learn. For example, learners in one mathematics lesson enjoyed participating in an extended learning activity that reinforced well their understanding of the basics of area, volume, fractions and statistics. However, classes seldom challenge the most capable learners to develop their understanding beyond a basic level. Consequently, learners do not extend their knowledge sufficiently to equip them to do well in assessments and examinations.
- Staff make insufficient use of information about the starting points of a minority of learners in automotive courses. All learners complete the motor vehicle vocational course at level one, despite a small minority joining the programme with good enough academic ability and prior qualifications to enable them to tackle more challenging work. The most able learners are not sufficiently challenged to enable them to aspire to higher levels of learning.
- Staff do not support learners sufficiently in preparing them for their work placements or to reflect on their progress. Staff do not help learners identify the technical and employability skills they should aim to develop during their placement. Learners are not subsequently able to reflect on the progress they have made as a result of their experiences. Too few learners can clearly identify how their placements helped them to improve their readiness for work.
- Tutors do not consistently provide sufficient written feedback that identifies what learners need to do to improve their work further. They do not challenge learners consistently to improve the standards of their work beyond a basic level to enable them to further improve their skills. Tutors assess and mark learners' work accurately to identify clearly how learners have met the required standard.
- Staff do not reinforce sufficiently learners' understanding of issues related to diversity. While tutors plan and deliver activities related to issues of diversity at the start of the learners' programmes, they do not reinforce these topics throughout the rest of the course. The majority of learners are not able to retain or recall in sufficient depth the knowledge from the initial activities, particularly on topics related to racism and gender.
- Tutors plan and deliver good practical training in automotive skills. Learners benefit from interesting practical sessions where they work well together, for example, to strip and re-assemble braking and suspension systems. Tutors help learners understand the operation of automotive systems and improve their technical vocabulary in theory lessons. Learners develop their technical skills and knowledge well, equipping them to tackle maintenance and repair tasks and preparing them for work in the automotive industry.
- Staff are supportive of their learners and take good care of their pastoral support needs. Staff identify accurately learners' support needs and provide effective help in conjunction with specialist support agencies, if necessary. Learners benefit from particularly effective formal and informal advice and guidance from staff about their future careers plans. As a result, learners become more motivated to complete their course and develop the confidence to plan their next steps into work or further learning.
- Tutors generally make effective use of information about learners' starting points to adjust programme content to meet their differing personal needs. For example, staff adjust programmes for learners with low esteem to incorporate activities which develop their personal and social skills. This improves learners' confidence and encourages them

to remain in learning.

- Tutors promote well learners' understanding of safe working practices in practical workshop environments. Tutors consistently encourage learners to use tools appropriately, wear correct personal protective equipment and maintain the tidiness of their work areas. Learners adhere to safe working practices consistently in practical workshops and understand well how to keep themselves and their peers safe.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Many learners on study programmes do not have sufficient work experience to develop their readiness for work. Less than a third of learners who are shortly to complete their programme this year have met the study programme requirements for work experience and have little time remaining to complete this aspect.
- Learners are not prepared effectively to be ready to learn and do not demonstrate sufficient personal or social responsibility for their learning. In theory lessons learners are easily distracted and take too long to start tasks. Learners do not make sufficient use of work diaries to record their progress and reflect on the skills they need to develop further, as demonstrated by the relatively few learners who improve their English and mathematics GCSE grades.
- Learners' attendance has declined slightly this year from previously good levels. Learners' attendance levels are not good enough in English, mathematics, and digital skills classes and for a few of the enrichment activities. Managers have recognised that attendance needs to improve in these subjects and activities. Current indicators suggest that too few learners will meet their learning targets or receive their planned enrichment entitlement this year.
- Learners do not benefit effectively from the wide range of enrichment activities provided by Martec Training. These include team building, drug awareness, educational trips locally and abroad, and drama presentations. In particular, learners do not systematically reflect on the skills they develop from their enrichment sessions or consider how these activities support the vocational aspects of their programme or develop their personal skills.
- Although the provider regularly promotes equality, diversity and prevention of bullying and radicalisation, learners are not confident in discussing these issues. For example, recently, the provider dedicated a week to 'anti-bullying', where staff developed handouts and posters which promoted lively discussions. Learners did not evaluate what they had learned from the week, and were not able to explain the value of this development to their study or work experience.
- The very large majority of learners progress to further education, apprenticeships or employment. The provider has established well-defined pathways from the study programme. Information, advice and guidance, particularly towards the end of the programme, are good. Well-experienced staff with sound knowledge of the automotive sector provide learners with good advice and guidance to enable them to achieve their next steps towards their career aspirations.
- Learners enjoy the practical sessions, are encouraged to take pride in their work and benefit from the good rapport they have with their tutors. They display good behaviour in classes. They generally arrive on time and are respectful to staff and each other. Tutors

manage classroom disruption well, minimising any behavioural impact on group learning.

- Staff support vulnerable learners particularly well. The provider maintains good communication with local agencies to ensure that safeguarding and welfare issues are resolved. The designated safeguarding lead works particularly well with tutors to ensure that learners have good personal support throughout lessons. For example, one learner who was struggling with personal issues was supported over a long period of time and subsequently received a good-work award.
- The provider's systems and procedures for health and safety enable learners to feel and keep safe. Learners know who to contact if they have a concern and are confident that staff will help them resolve problems. Learners know how to protect themselves when using social media. The provider monitors internet safety particularly effectively and learners do not access the provider's computers unsupervised. Staff undertake risk assessments of the workshops, classrooms and work places appropriately to ensure that learners' health and safety are protected.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Too few learners achieve their qualifications. Since 2013/14, around a third of the qualification aims have not been achieved. While a few courses have high achievement rates, too many have low achievement rates. In these classes learners do not acquire the skills they need to gain their qualifications and enhance future employment prospects.
- Only a small minority of learners taking GCSE courses in English and mathematics develop their skills sufficiently well to improve their grades while on programme. Recent practice tests indicate that most learners will not achieve their target grade.
- The provider does not support learners sufficiently to develop work-readiness skills and behaviours early enough in their programme. For example, most learners carry out/complete work experience too late in their programme for it to have sufficient benefit on their progress and development.
- The few learners with disabilities do not achieve as well as other learners. Staff do not develop sufficiently strong partnerships with the guardians of those learners with education, health and care plans to achieve the planned educational progress.
- Most learners stay on their programme for the planned duration. Retention rates have remained high since the previous inspection, and this has been maintained for the current year. This helps the very large majority of learners to progress to further education, training or employment.
- Learners gain good automotive skills aligned closely to the needs of local garages, which staff know and understand well. For example, the programme includes a strong emphasis on customer service skills requested by employers. This ensures that learners acquire the practical skills in their chosen career well.
- The provider gives good support to children looked after, including those leaving care to move to independent living. The strong support from the provider's staff enables learners to acquire the necessary life skills to settle in their new accommodation and remain in learning.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53259
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	99
Principal/CEO	Tracey Marson
Telephone number	01782 717 272
Website	www.martectraining.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	18	-	54	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	4		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the programme manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, reviewed assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Maxine Mayer, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jason Lancaster	Ofsted Inspector
Barbara Hughes	Ofsted Inspector

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