

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: Martec Training
Date of visit: 21 August 2007

Context

Martec Training (Martec) was established in 1982 to train apprentices in the motor vehicle industry specifically for the Marson group of motor vehicle franchises. The company grew and developed to extend training to other local companies in the motor vehicle industry. Martec provides work-based learning for young people and is funded by Staffordshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). As well as apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in engineering, Martec has a small number of learners in retail and customer services and a specialist entry to employment (E2E) programme. Martec is based in Newcastle-Under-Lyme and is run by 2 directors who are supported by a general manager and 22 staff.

At the previous inspection all aspects of Martec's provision were judged to be satisfactory. The key challenges were judged to be:

- Improve achievement rates for apprenticeships and maintain and improve achievement rates for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)
- Introduce systems to better co-ordinate on- and off-the job training and increase employers' engagement in the training programme
- Further develop systems for recording learners' achievement
- Continue to develop procedures to ensure the quality of the provision
- Improve the training centre's operation and resources
- Maintain and develop the open style of management

Achievement and standards

What improvements to success rates have Martec training made since the previous inspection when apprenticeship framework completion rates were low?	Reasonable Progress
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Martec have made reasonable progress in improving success rates. Most recent data shows a good improvement in framework success rates. Overall success rates for all apprentices have improved, and are now only 5% below the national average of 58%. Advanced apprenticeship rates are now significantly higher than national averages, but those for apprentices, although improved, remain 10% below the national average of 60%. Since the previous inspection Martec has introduced rigorous initial assessment and a new induction programme. Learners are matched to appropriate training programmes. Retention has improved significantly, with over 90% of the current cohort still in training. The company now closely monitors

progress towards completion of the framework on a monthly basis, and the findings are shared with learners and assessors. Learners at risk of not completing within their funded time are clearly identified, and measures are put in place to help them finish the framework. However, the company is aware that it does not yet identify clear and specific targets to ensure that learners understand exactly how to achieve their qualifications. Positive outcomes on the E2E programme remain at around 50%.

The quality of provision

How well co-ordinated is on- and off-the job training as this was a weakness at the previous inspection in motor vehicle training?	Reasonable Progress
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The company has increased its co-ordination of on- and off- the job training and made reasonable progress. It now gives employers information about the awarding body's knowledge and skill requirements for framework completion. In addition to this Martec provide employers with a termly schedule of learning activities to help them to plan jobs which will give learners opportunities to practice skills and have them assessed. Assessors share information about learners' progress and learning needs with employers at regular quarterly reviews. Staff at Martec telephone employers before learners are due to attend lessons, to help overcome attendance problems. Martec has introduced strategies to support learners with activities which employers cannot provide. For example, they send learners on courses from specialist providers to cover areas which need manufacturer specific equipment, provided workshops in topics which they have identified as being hard for some employers to provide, and have invested in occupational up-dating for staff.

How well recorded are the achievements of E2E learners as the central recording of this was inadequate at the previous inspection	Reasonable Progress
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Martec have made reasonable progress in dealing with this area for improvement. The manager of the E2E programme has been in post for six months. Staff now monitor learners' progress using the same electronic monitoring system used for apprentices. This gives staff a clear record of the progress learners are making on each aspect of their programme including attendance, jobsearch, ASDAN and skills for life. It identifies clearly those at risk of not completing the programme within the funded time, as well as attendance rates and patterns. The process is very recent and it is not yet possible to fully judge its impact. The monitoring sheet is regularly updated and accessible to staff and learners. It is complemented by a paper based monitoring system which shows individual learner targets. This is updated monthly. Martec now have a clear overall picture of learners' progress.

What improvements have Martec made to the quality of the E2E learning materials since the previous inspection, where they were judged to be of poor quality?	Insufficient Progress
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Since the previous inspection Martec have made some improvements to E2E learning materials but progress has been insufficient. Martec have very recently started a thorough review of all learning materials as part of the introduction of their new E2E programme. They previously had modified many of the existing materials to use colour and graphics. However, the graphics have just been added to the documents rather than properly integrated. Many of the documents are still poorly copied. There are still too many examples of confusing, and sometimes incorrect, language. For example "multi" is referred to as the one thousandth prefix in a worksheet about formulae. Some worksheets are poorly laid out with insufficient guidance for the learner. Under the guidance of the new E2E manager a portfolio of learning materials is being developed. The new materials are much clearer and use graphics well to illustrate various points. However, the quality of the copying is still poor in some cases and some of the language is still too complex. Martec have identified this point and recently bought a new printer and intend to print multiple copies rather than use the poorer quality photocopier.

How well do Martec attend to safety and cleanliness at the training centre?	Significant Progress
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Martec has made significant progress on this theme. A wide range of improvements have been made to the training centre. Safe walkways have been created with use of floor markings. Specific large tool storage spaces have been created and are used consistently. Vehicles that are being worked on will not be used again on the public highway. All machines and equipment have appropriate guards fitted. There is no fume extraction but arrangements for ensuring that running engines pose no hazard are satisfactory. Particularly good attention has been paid to cleanliness. The centre is kept clear of debris, although a very few workbenches are still untidy. Martec have created cleaning stations where cleaning implements are readily and visibly stored. Additional screening has been provided to ensure that practices such as welding do not constitute a hazard to other personnel. The induction of learners has a strong focus on health and safety and Martec carry out regular and detailed checks of learners' workplaces.

Leadership and Management

How well developed are Martec's quality assurance procedures as these were judged to be insufficiently developed at the previous inspection?	Reasonable progress
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Since the previous inspection Martec has made reasonable progress on developing quality assurance procedures. They have established a member of staff with specific responsibility for quality assurance, who completed a thorough review of all procedures in April 2007. The new policy is clear, well-laid out and effectively links all aspects of quality assurance. Good use is made of flowcharts and the focus on the

impact on learners is much stronger. Greater use is made of target-setting and monitoring of targets. Martec has made better use of the links with the Staffordshire Training Providers' Association. Martec has recently bought into the scheme for learners' surveys, carried out by a subcontractor, although they have only just received the results from the survey of apprentices and not yet had a survey of E2E learners. Observations of teaching and learning continue and Martec has arranged for the local FE college to carry out some observations. However, there is as yet no analysis of the results of these observations to look at overall trends and profiles. The follow up of issues found at audit is more robust.