



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JANUARY 1999

REINSPECTION REPORT MARCH 2000

# MARTEC Training

## SUMMARY

MARTEC Training provides government-funded training in motor-vehicle engineering and motor vehicle customer services. The training is good, with all theoretical and practical aspects delivered in the workplace. Trainees' achievements have steadily improved over the last three years. Trainees are well supported by MARTEC Training's staff and the workplace supervisors. Management of training is satisfactory, although good use was not made of management information. At the time of the original inspection, equality of opportunity was not high-profile for MARTEC Training and had not been promoted in the workplace. Upon reinspection, improvements had been made and both staffing resources and systems are in place to promote equality effectively. At the original inspection, quality assurance arrangements were unsatisfactory. They are now comprehensive and internal verification practices are rigorous.

**As a result of the reinspection of Martec Training, the original published report text for those areas which have been reinspected has been replaced by new text which makes reference to the original inspection findings. This summary page, the overall report introduction and the inspection findings introduction have been amended to reflect the findings of the reinspection. All other sections of the original report which have not been subject to full reinspection have been left in their original form.**

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Engineering	2
Retailing & customer service	2

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	4
Trainee support	2
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	4

REINSPECTION	GRADE
Equal opportunities	2
Quality assurance	3

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ innovative individual delivery of theory sessions in the workplace
- ◆ all assessment carried out in the workplace
- ◆ female staff provide good role models in a traditionally male industry
- ◆ trainees are well supported in the workplace
- ◆ individually designed and delivered additional learning support
- ◆ increased staff resources to co-ordinate equality of opportunity
- ◆ good internal verification practices



### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- ◆ workplace supervisors have little understanding of NVQs
- ◆ failure to promote equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ quality assurance unsystematic and does not ensure continuous improvement

## INTRODUCTION

1. MARTEC Training was established in 1982 to provide training, funded through the government's youth training scheme, for apprentices in the motor-vehicle industry. Its mission statement declares the company's intention to become and remain the acknowledged leader in the field of motor-industry training nationwide, by establishing a reputation for excellence. Following two changes of premises and the decision to sell the company's training centre and workshops, the general manager, appointed nine months ago, has worked with staff to reorganise the whole training provision and its delivery. The company has equipped its assessor/tutors with lap-top computers and, using CD-ROMs produced by one of the industry's awarding bodies, delivers all aspects of the training in the workplace. The training offered includes national vocational qualifications (NVQs) for motor-vehicle mechanics and trainees working in the industry in customer services and motor-vehicle parts at level 3.

2. The company contracts with Stafford Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) for government-funded youth training. It is a registered centre for the delivery of NVQs, is accredited for direct certification by the awarding bodies and has 57 youth trainees. The company employs four full- and four part-time staff. The only work which the company subcontracts is the health and safety inspections of the workplaces in which it places trainees. These inspections are carried out by a qualified health and safety consultant.

3. MARTEC Training is situated in the borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme. The area is noted for its pottery and mining industries, both of which have been in decline for some years. In March 2000, unemployment in Staffordshire and Newcastle stood at 3.4 per cent and 3.5 per cent respectively. In Staffordshire, 29.4 per cent of the unemployed are under 25 years old. In Staffordshire, 98.3 per cent of the population describes itself as white.

4. In Staffordshire, the number of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 48.1 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent for 1999.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

5. All staff were involved in the production of the company's self-assessment report, which was written by the general manager. Many of the most recently implemented and planned changes to the company's procedures have resulted from the self-assessment findings. Employers and trainees' views, which contributed to the report, were sought through questionnaires. In many sections of the report, key weaknesses were not identified, but some were addressed as initial ideas for improvement. A new self-assessment report was produced in January 2000. The document confirmed MARTEC's commitment to the self-assessment process and had input from Martec staff, trainees and employers. The strengths and weaknesses identified at reinspection were not identified in the report. The report is an open and honest attempt to assess the company's performance against the framework of *Raising the Standard*. Inspectors agreed with the grades proposed in the original report for the occupational areas, trainee support and management of training. Inspectors gave lower grades for equal opportunities and quality assurance than those proposed in the original report. For the reinspection, the grade proposed for quality assurance was agreed by the inspectors and a higher grade was awarded for equal opportunities.

6. For the first inspection, a team of three inspectors spent a total of 10 days at MARTEC Training during January 1999. Inspectors visited 13 workplaces and interviewed 20 trainees and 11 employers or workplace supervisors. They met all the staff and managers, as well as representatives of Stafford TEC and the government office for the region. They observed five training sessions and several reviews and assessments conducted in the workplace. They also examined assessment records, trainees' files and portfolios, and numerous documents about the training and its management. The following table shows the grades awarded to the training sessions observed by inspectors.

7. A team of two inspectors carried out the reinspection over four days in March 2000. The inspection team interviewed ten trainees and five employers, and carried out eight staff interviews. Company documentation, awarding-body and TEC information was examined. Trainees' portfolios and personal files were also examined.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Engineering		2	1			3
Retailing & customer service		1	1			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Engineering

### Grade 2

8. There are 45 trainees on motor-vehicle training programmes, leading to the achievement of an NVQ in either motor-vehicle mechanics or, for 15 trainees, body repair and paint. Eighteen of the trainees work towards an NVQ at level 1, and 27 work towards achievement at level 2. None are modern apprentices. MARTEC training has centre approval from the three awarding bodies with which it works. Managers have spent considerable time in the last two years structuring the training programmes to deliver the appropriate qualifications from these awarding bodies. MARTEC Training, in negotiation with trainees and employers, arranges the delivery of the qualification best suited to trainees' ability and the requirements of the job. All aspects of the training are delivered in the workplace. MARTEC Training's qualified and occupationally experienced staff regularly visit trainees in the workplace. The self-assessment report did not highlight all the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. However, they awarded the same grade as the company in its self-assessment report.

#### STRENGTHS

- ◆ productive individual delivery of underpinning knowledge
- ◆ frequent assessment in the workplace
- ◆ strong, supportive working relationship between trainees and trainers
- ◆ innovative use of technology to support theory teaching
- ◆ good understanding by trainees of NVQ requirements
- ◆ clear links between training and assessment

#### GOOD PRACTICE

*A trainee was working on a car's brake system when a training officer visited. The training officer used the laptop computer he had with him and took the trainee through the underpinning knowledge of an ABS brake system, before the trainee continued working. This also helped the trainee gather evidence for assessment.*

#### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ some theory sessions take place in an inappropriate environment
- ◆ workplace supervisors have a poor understanding of NVQ requirements
- ◆ there is no mechanism to track individual trainees' achievement during training

9. All trainees are trained in the workplace, working in a range of local companies which provide good training opportunities for motor-mechanic or body-repair trainees. Some of the trainees are employed at the start of their training programmes and others are helped by MARTEC Training to secure employment during or following training. Trainees are visited in the workplace every four weeks by MARTEC Training's assessor/tutors. The visits focus on the delivery of underpinning knowledge, assessment of trainees' competence in the workplace or their progress towards achievement of their qualification, and trainees can use the opportunity to seek guidance or support. Individual trainees' progress is monitored,

but there is no systematic process to enable their progress towards achievement of the NVQ to be measured at any given point during training. Resources in the workplace are invariably good and trainees produce good portfolios.

10. During their workplace visits, assessor/tutors make good use of laptop computers and CD-ROMs, with software designed to cover the theory requirements of the NVQ at level 2. The individual delivery requires full participation by the trainees, who appreciate the benefits of this. The topic for each session is selected to coincide with the practical work being undertaken by trainees in the workplace at that time. Employers are very enthusiastic about the style of theory training, as it does not remove trainees from the workplace and is immediately relevant to their work. However, in a few workplaces, the theory training takes place in an area where other employees carrying out their work interrupt the process. Trainees understand the requirements of the NVQ and, when an appropriate job becomes available, they call their assessor to visit and assess their performance by observation. Workplace supervisors monitor and authenticate the evidence which trainees derive from the workplace, but often lack sufficient knowledge of the NVQ to make the best use of this process. Achievements for the three years 1995-96, 96-97 and 97-98 show a steady improvement at 22 per cent, 25 per cent and 42 per cent respectively.

### **Retailing & customer service**

### **Grade 2**

11. There are 12 trainees on a programme of work-based training for young people, leading to the achievement of an NVQ at level 2 in retail operations (motor-vehicle parts). There are no modern apprentices. Throughout their training, trainees are placed with local motor-vehicle retail companies. A few trainees are employed from the start of training, and many are offered employment by the end of their two-year programme. All aspects of training are delivered in the workplace. MARTEC Training's assessors carry out assessments during their frequent visits to the workplace. MARTEC Training's self-assessment report identified most of the main strengths and weaknesses also identified by inspectors, who awarded the same grade as the company.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good links between theory and practice in the workplace
- ◆ thorough assessments, using diverse evidence
- ◆ imaginative approach to the use of technology in training
- ◆ good understanding by trainees of NVQ and assessment processes
- ◆ close working relationship between trainees and training staff

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ inappropriate environment for theory in a few workplaces
- ◆ little understanding of the NVQ and its assessment by most employers

12. MARTEC Training's tutor assessors visit trainees in the workplace every four weeks to deliver training in theory, and they develop good working relationships with trainees. They visit every 13 weeks, to review trainees' progress, and operate flexibly to ensure that reviews, training and assessments fit logically with the work being undertaken by trainees at any given time. If a particular job is being done, trainees can contact their assessor and arrange a visit at short notice for their on-the-job competence to be assessed by direct observation. Assessment is thorough and well-recorded and trainees are encouraged to use a variety of sources for evidence of their competence. Portfolios are well presented, and evidence is clearly referenced to the NVQ units. At each visit, the tutor assessor provides assignment work for trainees to complete before the next visit and covers the work set at the previous visit. Trainees and their workplace supervisors are well informed about progress, arrangements are made with the supervisors to ensure that trainees have opportunities to complete each element of their NVQ. Employers have a high regard for the training and support which MARTEC Training provides. They cooperate with the training and help their trainees with the practical work, although, in many cases, their understanding of the NVQ and its requirements is poor.

13. Trainees have a good understanding of their training programme and the requirements of the NVQ and its assessment. The delivery of theory in the workplace allows tutors to tailor the training to the work currently being undertaken by trainees. Both trainees and employers appreciate the close link and immediate relevance of theory to the practice. Tutors make good use of a laptop computer and training software on a CD-ROM to illustrate some aspects of theory and involve trainees with the software's interactive features. In some workplaces, it is difficult to find a place where the two- or three-hour theory session can be delivered without interruption. Over the last three years, few retail operations trainees have failed to complete their training, and, although low, NVQ achievement rates have steadily improved over the past three years. In 1995-96, 96-97 and 97-98 achievement was 40 per cent, 86 per cent and 84 per cent respectively.

### **GENERIC AREAS**

#### **Equal opportunities**

#### **Grade 2**

14. MARTEC Training has a clearly written policy of equal opportunities which is copied to all employers and trainees in their respective guidance handbooks. The company interviews all applicants for training as well as referrals from the careers service. Staff operate in the spirit of the company's policy. At the time of the original inspection, the company did not comply with all aspects of the policy, and staff awareness of equal opportunities was low.



At the first inspection, the following main weaknesses were identified:

- ◆ lack of compliance with equal opportunities policy
- ◆ little promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace
- ◆ no trend analysis of collected data to inform recruitment policy
- ◆ gender-offensive material displayed in some workplaces

15. The self-assessment report for reinspection did not identify accurately the strengths and weaknesses identified at reinspection. The company underestimated the progress made and inspectors awarded a higher grade than the one proposed by MARTEC.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ appointment of dynamic equal opportunities co-ordinator
- ◆ action taken to recruit a wider range of trainees
- ◆ high staff awareness of equality issues

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ some poor trainee and employer awareness of equal opportunities

16. The company's policy on equal opportunities contains statements about the specific roles and responsibilities of key staff and makes clear commitments to the provision of staff and provider training, in terms of raising awareness of equal opportunities. At the time of the first inspection, MARTEC Training had neither complied with the requirement to appoint and maintain a person with responsibility for equal opportunities, nor sought to provide the development and training for staff or work-placement providers necessary to raise their awareness of equal opportunities. Upon reinspection, a member of staff had been appointed to the position of equal opportunities co-ordinator. This individual has an enthusiastic and dynamic approach to the monitoring and promotion of equal opportunities issues. The co-ordinator has attended awareness-raising sessions externally and has created links with a range of local organisations to acquire and share best practice. Equal opportunities is now an agenda item at all monthly staff meetings. The equal opportunities co-ordinator updates colleagues on equality issues and progress with initiatives. The equal opportunities policy has been updated and all trainees, staff members and employers have been given a copy. All placement providers are given a guidance booklet which contains a copy of the policy, but employers are often unaware of the policy and its requirements. Although it is a requirement of its policy, MARTEC Training does not seek to ensure that employers develop and implement an equal opportunities policy in line with its own. Although employers receive a copy of the MARTEC equal opportunities policy, awareness of its contents and requirements is low. Opportunities to reinforce formally the equal opportunities to employers are missed during placement visits and when visiting to sign initial training agreements.

17. MARTEC Training operates a recruitment policy which does not discriminate against prospective trainees. Staff are supportive of trainees in the workplace, and working relationships among employers, trainees and staff are such that incidents of discrimination, harassment or victimisation would not be tolerated. Equal opportunities is not discussed during the trainee progress reviews and opportunities are missed during the review process to reinforce the equal opportunities message. Some trainees have a poor recollection of the equal opportunities part of their initial induction. At the time of the first inspection, some of the workplaces, staff displayed calendars and posters which were not in accord with good practice in equal opportunities. Upon reinspection, most workplaces had removed the offending material. At the first inspection, two of the trainees were from minority ethnic groups, and, MARTEC Training has been successful in providing training for women in a traditionally male-dominated occupational area. Currently there are no women in training or trainees from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of minority ethnic groups in the local area is low at two per cent. The equal opportunities co-ordinator has attempted to encourage those under-represented groups to apply for training by visiting community groups, employers and the careers service. MARTEC has revised its recruitment strategies. It has enlisted the help of an employer from a minority ethnic group to promote MARTEC with community groups and schools. Marketing materials have been revised to include women and people from minority ethnic groups. The company monitors trainees in terms of gender, ethnicity and disability. At the time of the first inspection, these data were not analysed or systematically used to influence recruitment policy, selection procedures or work-placement arrangements. The MARTEC management-information system now supplies data which is analysed and used to inform and direct strategy for recruitment, selection and retention.

18. Staff awareness of equal opportunities is high. The equal opportunities co-ordinator updates staff regularly both formally through the regular staff meetings and informally. There has been recent staff training on equality issues from the TEC and other external agencies. The equal opportunities co-ordinator has built up a library of information and material, which staff refer to and use frequently.

### **Trainee support**

### **Grade 2**

19. MARTEC Training provides a supportive environment in which trainees are able to fully achieve their potential. The company works closely with the local careers service and schools, and staff provide accurate advice and guidance for prospective trainees to judge the appropriateness of the training programme to their career aims. Marketing material is well written to provide clarification of the nature of the training programmes and what is required of trainees. All prospective trainees are interviewed and undertake an initial assessment of their basic skills. MARTEC Training's self-assessment report highlighted some, although not all, of the main strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors, who awarded the same grade as the company in its report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ high level of support for trainees in the workplace
- ◆ well-planned and -delivered induction
- ◆ effective initial assessment informs training plan
- ◆ staff provide clear advice and significant levels of pastoral support
- ◆ frequent, rigorous reviews which promote trainees' achievement
- ◆ well-delivered additional learning support appropriate to individuals' needs

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ prior learning not systematically assessed on entry
- ◆ trainees not adequately informed about grievance and complaints procedures

20. Initial assessment of trainees' basic skills is thorough, and the results are used to shape trainees' individual training plans and determine the additional support needs which trainees may require. The material used in the assessment, and, subsequently, in providing appropriate additional support, is designed to be directly relevant to trainees' chosen occupation. Although trainees' prior achievements are often taken account of when planning training, they are not systematically assessed on entry. Additional learning support is tailored to individual trainees' needs and is predominantly provided in the workplace, although trainees are taken out of the workplace for additional support, when appropriate. All trainees undertake an induction programme which is well planned and delivered. This programme is effective and, over the first few weeks of training, trainees develop an understanding of their training programme and its requirements. Considerable emphasis is placed on all aspects of health and safety and continuously reinforced by tutors during visits to the workplace. Trainees are not adequately informed about MARTEC Training's grievance and complaints procedures. The procedures are not contained in the trainees' handbook, and trainees tend to rely on their tutors as the only complaints channel.

21. Trainees develop close working relationships with their tutor/assessor and feel able to seek help from them in dealing with any problems. Tutors' frequent visits to the workplace are used to good effect in providing a link between MARTEC Training and the employer, which enables it to provide a continuity of support for trainees. Progress reviews are rigorous, and short-term achievement targets are set, recorded and monitored and progress towards targets reviewed at each visit. Employers are informed about trainees' progress at each visit; they work with the tutor/assessors to promote progress towards the achievement of the NVQ. MARTEC Training's staff provide a high level of pastoral support for trainees and, when appropriate, involve trainees' parents and external agencies in resolving personal difficulties which interfere with progress.

## Management of training

## Grade 3

22. The management structure is clear, and staff understand their respective roles and responsibilities. The managers, training staff and administration staff operate from the same office and work as a close-knit team. A full-time general manager, co-ordinates the work of a team of four full-time assessor/tutors. All training is work-based. The general manager has been in post for about nine months and has had the clear priority of reorganising the training programmes and moving their delivery from various off-the-job training locations to the present system of entirely work-based training and assessment. MARTEC Training's self-assessment report did not identify some of the main strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors, but inspectors agreed with the grade proposed by the company in its report.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ open and supportive management
- ◆ regular staff appraisal addresses staff development needs
- ◆ good management of work-based training
- ◆ well-informed staff and clear internal communications

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ poor use of management information
- ◆ low awareness of MARTEC Training's values and policies among employers
- ◆ weak monitoring and analysis of performance against targets

23. There is a good rapport among managers and staff at MARTEC Training. The general manager (the company's internal verifier) maintains close regular contact with trainees and work placements. Communications in the company are good. Formal meetings, involving all managers and staff, are held monthly, and excellent informal channels of communication supplement these. Staff are well informed about the company, its aims and the steps taken to achieve those aims. Management is supportive, and staff cite several examples of the help which they have received from managers in respect of personal and domestic problems, as well as those about the workplace. Staff appraisal works well in identifying staff development needs, these in turn address the aims of the staff and the company. Staff development needs are generally met, and staff are encouraged to continue to develop their expertise and remain up to date.

24. Working relationships among MARTEC Training's staff and the employers providing workplaces are good. However, employers have little awareness of the company's policies or aims and often regard training as MARTEC Training's prerogative. Managers set clear targets for most aspects of their business, including trainee recruitment and growth; in particular, training programmes and NVQ achievement, against contractual requirements. The monitoring of progress towards

the set targets is weak, and there is little analysis of performance against the targets over a period of time. Although management information is collected and recorded on a computer, it is frequently not easily obtainable in a form which is useful to the decision-making processes of the company. The information held is generally not broken down by programme or occupational area.

### Quality assurance

### Grade 3

25. Since the appointment of the general manager, the need to rationalise training provision and its delivery has been a priority. The need to review quality assurance is only now being addressed, and its development is at an early stage. Those procedures which have been developed and documented do not yet form part of a complete quality assurance system. The company's self-assessment process started in January 1998, when key members of staff attended a series of workshops provided by Staffordshire TEC to raise awareness of self-assessment. Staff who attended the workshops then communicated the messages to all the staff at MARTEC Training. The original self-assessment report did not identify some of the significant weaknesses in quality assurance found by inspectors, who awarded a lower grade than that proposed by the company at the first inspection. A decision was then taken by the company to place responsibility for quality assurance with the Managing Director. Upon reinspection, policies and procedures in place at the time of the original inspection had been developed and built upon. Many procedures are being implemented by staff. MARTEC is currently working towards the Investor in People Award, with an expected assessment date in May 2000.

At the first inspection, the following main weaknesses were identified:

- ◆ unsystematic quality assurance
- ◆ no trend analysis of data
- ◆ low staff awareness of quality assurance procedures
- ◆ underdeveloped internal verification

26. Many improvements contained in the company's action plan had been carried out by reinspection. Inspectors agree with the self-assessment grade.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ comprehensive policies and procedures
- ◆ full staff involvement with self-assessment
- ◆ rising levels of achievement
- ◆ good internal verification practice

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ quality systems do not yet drive continuous improvement

27. Quality assurance systems are clear, and staff are familiar with, and increasingly utilise, those procedures which relate to their work. Procedures support the quality assurance of activities in key areas such as workplace monitoring, internal verification, and the induction of trainees. Managers and staff at MARTEC Training work to improve all aspects of the company's activities, and their efforts to improve the quality of the training provided have been accompanied by a steady improvement in NVQ achievement rates over a period of three years after changing to a different awarding body for engineering NVQs. The percentage of trainees completing training and obtaining an NVQ has risen from 10 in 1996 to 44 in 1998. At the time of the first inspection, measures taken to improve quality had been unco-ordinated, and data on trainees' achievement was not analysed to indicate which programmes had produced the improvements or the particular levels of NVQ at which achievement rates have increased. The improvement in achievement rates was identified during the first inspection only as a result of inspectors' requests for more detailed data. MARTEC has now introduced a management-information system to generate data and enable staff to identify and analyse training trends.

28. Responsibility for internal verification has been clearly identified with one member of the management team, appropriately qualified to carry out this role. An internal-verification strategy has been agreed to ensure comprehensive coverage of all assessors and NVQ units. Internal Verification is ongoing, and records of all decisions made are maintained. All assessors are observed assessing trainees in the workplace and are given constructive written feedback on their performance. Where a change in assessment practice or method is agreed, action to implement such a change is monitored and recorded. There are regular informal meetings between the assessors and the internal verifier, and these provide an opportunity for issues relating to assessment and verification to be raised and clarified. Managers recognise the value of these meetings, and plan to include them in the scheduled meetings' calendar.

29. The revised quality procedures are not yet fully established. Whilst progress is being made, the systems do not yet inform improvement in all areas. MARTEC planned to have the new system implemented by January 2000. It has not fully met this deadline.

30. In areas such as induction and recruitment, there is evidence that the analysis of data for those leaving early is being used to positive effect, but overall the quality procedures that were in place at the first inspection were not embedded and impacting on training outcomes. Staff had a low awareness of the quality assurance procedures which had been in place for some years and had developed their own methods for improving particular aspects of quality. Staff awareness and understanding of quality processes is growing, and is enhanced by the inclusion of quality assurance as a standard agenda item at all monthly staff meetings.