

INSPECTION REPORT

Motor Industry Training Ltd

21 May 2001



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and in New Deal options. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's *learnirect* provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Inadequate provision

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

- one third or more of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas and New Deal options are judged less than satisfactory, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

Motor Industry Training Limited is a small private training company, which has recently entered into its second year of a direct contract for work-based training. It is based in Wembley, in the borough of Brent in northwest London. It currently trains for 36 modern apprentices in motor vehicle engineering. Off-the-job training and assessment are subcontracted to local colleges.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Work-based training for young people is unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are particularly weak.

Work-based learning for young people

Engineering apprentices are employed in workplaces which provide a wide range of experience but their training is not planned adequately. Workplace supervisors have insufficient involvement in the apprentices' progress reviews and they are not informed of the extent of apprentices' progress towards achieving their qualifications. Apprentices do not gather evidence of their acquisition of key skills in the workplace. Until recently, apprentices were not assessed through direct observation of their performance in the workplace.

Leadership and management

Management procedures are unsatisfactory. There is a lack of co-ordination between the training and assessment at the subcontracted colleges and the training and assessment in the workplace. There are inadequate arrangements for identifying and providing apprentices with help in improving basic skills. There is no monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace. Arrangements for quality assurance are very weak.

GRADES

Engineering	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Leadership and management	5
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	5

KEY STRENGTHS

- good range of work placements
- prompt and effective action on issues affecting individual apprentices

KEY WEAKNESSES

- inadequate process for reviewing apprentices' progress
- inadequate use of data on apprentices' progress
- lack of planned training in the workplace
- insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training and assessment
- inadequate identification and provision of additional learning support
- insufficient monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace
- inadequate arrangements for quality assurance

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider range of evidence in portfolios
- better retention of foundation modern apprentices
- increased staff awareness of administrative processes
- more detailed service level agreements with subcontractors

THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

1. Motor Industry Training Limited (MIT) was formed in 1998 by its current managing director. During its first two years MIT, worked as a subcontractor to a local further education college, recruiting young people to the motor vehicle trades and finding them relevant employment. In April 2000, MIT gained its first direct contract for work-based training in motor vehicle engineering. It has 36 modern apprentices. MIT has four staff and rents offices in Wembley.

2. Work-based training is funded through a contract with London West Local Learning and Skills Council (LLSC). The population of Brent is approximately 253,000 according to the 1991 census, its proportion of persons from minority ethnic groups was 44.8 per cent, the highest proportion in all the London boroughs. In neighbouring Harrow and Ealing, the proportions of persons from minority ethnic groups were 26 per cent and 32 per cent, respectively. In April 2001, the unemployment rate in Brent was 5.1 per cent, compared with the national average of 3.3 per cent. The proportion of the unemployed persons in Brent aged between 18 and 24 was 16.2 per cent, significantly lower than the national figure of 25 per cent. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 47.3 per cent, compared with the national average of 49.2 per cent.

THE INSPECTION

3. Three inspectors spent a total of 12 days with MIT in May 2001. Inspectors interviewed 18 apprentices and visited eight work placements where they met with eight workplace supervisors and managers. They also interviewed three assessors subcontracted by MIT, the four MIT staff, and four assessor/verifiers at subcontracted colleges. They looked at 25 apprentices' personal files, 19 portfolios of evidence, contracts, policies, external verifier's reports, minutes of meetings, promotional materials, initial assessment materials, induction packs, management procedures and the self-assessment report. Inspectors observed and graded three training sessions but did not attend any reviews of apprentices' progress.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Total	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

Engineering

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	36	4

4. MIT has 12 advanced modern apprentices and 24 foundation modern apprentices in motor vehicle engineering. Eighteen of the apprentices are registered for NVQs in light vehicle mechanics and 12 for NVQs in body repair or refinishing. The remainder are working towards NVQs in heavy vehicle mechanics or parts management. None of them has yet completed their training programme. Most apprentices are referred to MIT by the local careers service. All apprentices are employed locally with companies ranging from franchised large dealerships to small privately owned garages and body-repair shops. Apprentices attend one of three local further education colleges for their off-the-job training, and approximately 80 per cent of them attend one particular college. Qualified and experienced college staff carry out off-the-job assessment and internal verification for the NVQs. Key skills training also takes place at college. MIT has recently appointed three part-time subcontractors to carry out NVQ assessment in the workplace. Reviews of apprentices' progress are carried out by MIT staff in the apprentices' workplaces.

Work-based learning for young people								
Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
	Number that started							38
Still in training							24	63

Work-based learning for young people								
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
	Number that started							16
Still in training							12	75
AMA framework completed							0	0

STRENGTHS

- good range of work placements
- good off-the-job practical resources for refinishing and body-repair

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate process for reviewing apprentices' progress
- inadequate use of data on apprentices
- lack of planned training in the workplace
- inadequate use of workplace evidence for key skills assessment
- insufficient assessment by direct observation in the workplace

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better college resources for light vehicle mechanics
- more comprehensive induction process
- better off-the-job training
- wider range of evidence in portfolios
- better retention of foundation modern apprentices

5. Apprentices' work placements enable them to cover the range of work required for their NVQ. Most apprentices gain experience by completing a wide range of jobs at appropriate levels. They are encouraged to develop their skills and work on their own, but know they can ask for help if they need it. The managing director of MIT has a good knowledge of the local motor vehicle trade and is effective in finding work for apprentices. Most apprentices receive an effective induction to their workplace and in several placements on health and safety practices. They are updated regularly.

6. At the college attended by 80 per cent of the apprentices, resources for practical work in body repair and refinishing are good and up to current industrial standards. However, some apprentices on placements in body repair workshops find the tasks they are given at college are more elementary than those they carry out in their workplace. Some of the teaching at the college fails to hold the apprentices' interest fully. In one case, MIT were unable to find a suitable college day-release course for an apprentice working towards a parts management qualification. This apprentice is now satisfactorily completing his portfolio of assessed evidence and knowledge at work with effective support from an MIT assessor.

7. Inspectors did not agree with the finding in the self-assessment report that the process for reviewing apprentices' progress was objective and thorough. Workplace supervisors are not sufficiently involved in the review process and neither they, nor the apprentices, receive copies of the record of the review. Records of the review process are insufficiently detailed and do not include a clear action plan identifying what the apprentice should achieve before the next review. Many of the review records in apprentices' files were incomplete or contained vague responses to questions. College staff are not involved in apprentices' progress reviews. They keep detailed records of the

progress apprentices make towards achieving their NVQs, but these are not shared adequately with workplace supervisors and some apprentices are not sure of the extent of their own progress. Workplace supervisors are not told about the NVQ assessment requirements and do not plan the apprentices' work to meet these. The work undertaken by apprentices in the workplace meets the employers' needs rather than their own. MIT has recently recruited assessors. They visit the apprentices at work to review their progress, observe their performance and carry out assessments of their NVQ competences. These assessments are not planned in advance. Assessment is made of whatever work an apprentice happens to be carrying out at the time of an assessor's visit. After each assessment, the assessor gives the apprentice written feedback on his or her performance and identifies the competences which have been assessed. Some of the more recent records of apprentices' progress reviews show an improvement in the setting of action plans relating to what the apprentices should do at work.

8. Workplace supervisors and some apprentices have little understanding of the key skills requirements in the apprenticeship frameworks. Apprentices attend college for key skills training and assessment sessions. Apprentices are assessed in key skills through off-the-job assignments and exercises carried out under simulated rather than real workplace conditions.

9. Apprentices' portfolios contain a disproportionate amount of evidence in the form of 'job cards' from the workplace. These 'job cards' provide only a brief description of the work apprentices have undertaken and are rarely complemented by other evidence such as written statements or photographs. Evidence in many completed portfolios is not properly organised. Portfolios seldom contained reports from the assessor on the direct observation of apprentices' performance at work. Most apprentices said that they had received only one or two assessments involving observation of their performance in the workplace.

10. The initial guidance given to new apprentices by MIT staff does not include adequate information and help on careers advice. MIT staff assume the apprentice has already received careers advice from other agencies. The induction process does not ensure that apprentices obtain a full understanding of what they have to achieve during their apprenticeship. Initial assessment is not effective in identifying apprentices' needs for additional learning support. MIT has not been operating long enough for its first group of apprentices to complete their training and statistics about their achievement are not available. Of the 38 foundation modern apprentices who joined their programme in 2000, 14, or 37 per cent, left without fulfilling all the objectives in their individual training plans, and of these, 10 failed to gain any qualification.

Poor Practice

An apprentice has nearly completed a portfolio of evidence for the level 2 NVQ. His job requires good communication, numeracy and information technology skills, which are reflected in much of the evidence in his portfolio. No attempt, however, had been made to use this evidence towards his achievement of key skills certification. He is unaware that he needs to obtain this certification in order to complete his apprenticeship.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 5

11. The managing director of MIT is closely involved with the apprentices as a training co-ordinator. Three employees have been recruited since December 2000, and they undertake interviews and initial assessment of apprentices, office administration and the development of management information systems, respectively. In the month before the inspection, MIT made subcontracting arrangements with three self-employed, work-based assessors. Off-the-job training is subcontracted to three local colleges. MIT has an equal opportunities policy and a manual of management procedures, but this does not mention quality assurance. There are no female apprentices. MIT produced its self-assessment report in October 2000.

STRENGTHS

- prompt and effective action on problems affecting individual apprentices
- success in recruiting apprentices from minority ethnic groups

WEAKNESSES

- lack of business planning and use of strategic targets
- insufficient co-ordination of on-and off-the-job training and assessment
- inadequate use of data in management of training
- inadequate identification and provision of additional learning support
- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace
- ineffective promotion of training opportunities to women
- inadequate arrangements for quality assurance
- unsatisfactory systems for obtaining employers' views
- lack of rigour in self-assessment

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- clearer staff meeting minutes and action plans
- increased staff awareness of administrative processes
- more clearly defined roles for staff
- more staff training
- increased awareness of the importance of equal opportunities among staff and apprentices
- more detailed service level agreements with subcontractors
- closer monitoring of subcontractors' performance
- better analysis of feedback from apprentices

12. MIT has no business plan in operation, despite referring to one in its self-assessment report. The only targets the company has set itself relate to the recruitment numbers

required under its contract with the LLSC. MIT has no strategic targets. There are no targets for the apprentices' retention, progression and achievement. No targets are set for the performance of staff or subcontractors. The failure to set a range of targets was not acknowledged as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

13. In its self-assessment report, the company failed to acknowledge that there is little co-ordination between on- and off-the-job training. Workplace supervisors are not aware of the training taking place at college. In the workplace, apprentices are not given tasks in a systematic way to reinforce their college training. There is no communication between college staff and workplace supervisors. The MIT managing director liaises between the subcontractors and employers but does not have copies of the colleges' training plans or the documents showing individual apprentices' progress. The work-based assessors recently subcontracted by MIT have not had any contact with the colleges' assessors or internal verifiers. They are not kept fully informed of apprentices' progress or training plans. However, the company's managing director has a good personal knowledge of each individual apprentice and if apprentices have problems, the company acts quickly to resolve them. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report.

14. A database of information about apprentices is being developed but it is not used effectively in the management of the training. Staff do not understand the data held. Staff meetings, which are held monthly, do not consider reports relating to apprentices' recruitment, progression, retention or achievement and reports on apprentices' performance are not circulated. MIT staff have devised their own test to for identifying apprentices' needs for additional learning support but there are no guidelines on the implementation of such support. Little or no additional learning support has been provided to these apprentices identified as being in need of it. The initial assessment results for several apprentices showed they had weaknesses in numeracy. Their training plans, however, did not include any provision of learning support to help them overcome these.

15. A staff appraisal system had been devised but has not yet been implemented. All staff are still quite new. The roles of two staff are not clear enough and all staff need to increase their awareness and understanding of administrative processes and quality assurance arrangements. Some staff training has taken place. There has, however, been no systematic identification of the training staff need in order to meet their needs and those of the company.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 4

16. MIT analyses data about the gender and ethnicity of apprentices. The company's success in recruiting apprentices from minority ethnic groups is identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. However, recruitment of female apprentices has not been successful, a weakness acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Training is not promoted adequately to women. The company's service agreement with employers stipulates that they must have an equal opportunities policy. The service agreement with subcontractors, however, does not include such a requirement. There is, however, insufficient monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities in the workplace. Pictures of an overtly sexist nature were displayed in workplaces. One member of MIT staff has recently received training in equality of opportunity but staff who visit workplaces and review apprentices' progress have not had such training. Equality of opportunity is discussed with apprentices at their induction. Their understanding of equal opportunities is not checked thereafter and many have only a basic understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Trainees are well aware of MIT's complaints procedure. The company's offices and college workshops are accessible to persons with restricted mobility but some areas of smaller garages where apprentices have work placements are not.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 5**

17. MIT's procedures manual does not include arrangements for quality assurance. There is a basic quality assurance policy statement and MIT has identified areas where quality assurance is required. Currently, there are no effective quality assurance arrangements covering recruitment, initial assessment, induction, training, progress reviews and assessment. The performance of MIT staff is not monitored adequately. Minutes of staff meetings do not show action plans which specify tasks for improving training, and the timescales for their completion. The MIT manager makes frequent visits to the main subcontracting college but action plans resulting from these visits are not written down. A member of the company's staff has observed off-the-job training at colleges but has not evaluated its quality. There are some shortcomings in the assessment process. In particular, not enough assessment takes place at the apprentices' workplaces. Internal verification at the main college is mainly satisfactory but assessments for body repair and paint qualifications have been delayed for several months. The work-based assessors subcontracted by MIT have not yet met the internal verifier and have not been registered with the college which is the NVQ assessment centre. MIT failed to check whether registration had taken place before the assessors started their work. In the service agreements, there is no requirement for subcontractors to identify their quality assurance arrangements. Agreements between subcontractors and MIT are undated and do not stipulate that subcontractors should provide details of their planned training. Colleges are in breach of their service agreement by failing to provide MIT with progress reports about each apprentice twice a term.

18. Arrangements to obtain feedback from employers are unsatisfactory. The only feedback received from employers are comments they may make to MIT staff who visit apprentices in the workplace. Employers' comments on records of apprentices' reviews are cursory. Apprentices complete feedback forms. The questions on these, however, do not elicit responses which are detailed enough to enable staff to find out whether apprentices value their training or not. Feedback is not analysed or used systematically to arrive at overall judgements about the training and support apprentices receive.

19. The self-assessment report was produced by the managing director. Apprentices, employers and subcontractors were not involved sufficiently in the self-assessment process. Inspectors did not agree with some of the judgements in the self-assessment report. Inspectors considered that some of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report were no more than normal practice and they found weaknesses the company had not identified. The action plans to rectify weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report were not detailed enough. They did not state exactly what action had to be taken, specify who was responsible for carrying it out, and stipulate deadlines to be met.

Poor Practice

A workplace supervisor reported that he had received so little information about his apprentice's training programme that the only way to find out the apprentice's level of competence was to give him a task and closely monitor the outcome.