

INSPECTION REPORT

Motor Industry Training Limited Reinspection

01 October 2002



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. 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
- learning and job preparation programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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.

SUMMARY

The provider

Motor Industry Training Limited was formed in 1998 by its current managing director. It is based in London and offers modern apprenticeships for young people in motor vehicle engineering, including light and heavy vehicle mechanical repair, body repair and finishing vehicle parts distribution.

During its first two years, the company 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, Motor Industry Training Limited gained its first direct contract with London West and Surrey Learning and Skills Councils.

Motor Industry Training Limited employs two full-time and three part-time members of staff. A further four subcontracted staff members carry out the assessment and verification of learners' qualifications. Learners are employed in garages across London and Surrey, ranging from small independent garages to large franchised dealerships. Learners either attend a local college for one day a week, or a college in Somerset on block release. The employers carry out the on-the-job training, and assessment is conducted in the workplace by staff from Motor Industry Training Limited.

Since the original inspection in May 2001, the number of learners has increased from 36 to 84.

Overall judgement

The original inspection in May 2001 identified that training for learners was unsatisfactory and that leadership and management were very weak. The arrangements for quality assurance were also very weak and equal opportunity was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects were found to be satisfactory.

Grades awarded

	Original	Reinspection
Leadership and management	5	3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity	4	3
Quality assurance	5	3

	Original	Reinspection
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	3

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During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following key strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

KEY STRENGTHS

- good individual support for learners
- good off-the-job training
- significant improvement through self-assessment and action-planning
- success in recruiting learners from minority ethnic groups

KEY WEAKNESSES

- poor but improving retention rates for foundation modern apprentices
- weak progress reviews
- inadequate provision of additional learning support
- incomplete quality assurance procedures

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better induction for learners
- more detailed individual learning plans
- increased awareness of the importance of equal opportunities among employers

THE REINSPECTION

1. The reinspection of Motor Industry Training Limited (MIT) was conducted in two stages and two inspectors spent a total of 10 days there. The first were on 1 and 2 October 2002. The second stage was completed on 14 to 16 January 2003. Inspectors interviewed 19 learners, seven employers and six staff. They visited nine workplaces and one subcontractor. Two learning sessions were observed and graded. A range of documents was examined, including data, portfolios of evidence, learning plans, minutes of meetings, policies and procedures. MIT had prepared a revised self-assessment report for inspectors to examine.

Grades awarded to learning sessions at the original inspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Total	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3

Grades awarded to learning sessions at reinspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Total	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- significant improvement through self-assessment and action-planning
- prompt and effective action on problems affecting individual learners
- success in recruiting learners from minority ethnic groups

WEAKNESSES

- incomplete quality assurance procedures
- weak knowledge and understanding of equality of opportunity by some learners
- inadequate provision of additional learning support

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better auditing of policies and procedures
- more qualitative feedback from learners and employers
- increased awareness of the importance of equal opportunities among employers
- complete plans to achieve strategic objectives

2. Since the inspection of May 2001, MIT has made significant progress in resolving the weaknesses and improving the quality of training for learners. MIT has changed its subcontracting arrangements for off-the-job training and the new subcontractor has excellent resources and offers good off-the-job training. Service level agreements have been implemented with subcontractors. MIT now has a sound management information system. Data are collected, analysed and used as a basis for decisions made at assessor and management meetings. MIT has become an approved assessment centre for national vocational qualifications (NVQs) and all assessment is now by direct observation in the workplace. Business planning has started and there is now a business plan for 2002-03 which includes a range of targets for recruitment, retention and achievement rates. A strategic plan for the next five years has been produced and has challenging objectives. An implementation plan is under development, but does not yet identify how the objectives will be met, the cost and associated risk. A quality assurance system has been introduced and self-assessment has become an integral part of MIT's management system.

3. MIT is highly responsive to problems that affect individual learners. When learners have concerns, they are dealt with quickly and effectively. If learners become unemployed, MIT helps the learners to find a new employer and maintains contact to

enable the learners to continue their training with the new employer. Learners' personal and social difficulties are dealt with sensitively and effectively. New systems for monitoring the welfare of learners in the workplace have been introduced and are already proving effective.

4. The self-assessment report identified insufficient additional learning support as a weakness. All learners have an initial assessment of their basic skills, and the results are used to identify whether the learner should join an advanced or foundation modern apprenticeship. However, the results are not used to plan additional learning to meet identified weaknesses. The learners who are eligible for additional funding, are offered individual support and an individual development plan is prepared. Learners who do not qualify for funding, but still have additional needs, are not well supported. One learner for whom English is not his first language, was not given any additional help for two years. The college he was attending was unable to offer support and no other arrangements were made. He is now attending a different college and gets language support during his block release at college. However, the support is not identified on his individual learning plan and MIT does not have detailed records of his progress. Other learners who have been identified as having numeracy or literacy needs are not given adequate support. Their individual learning plans do not identify any additional support arrangements.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

5. MIT has an equal opportunities policy and an anti-harassment policy, which are given to learners in a comprehensive information pack at induction. All staff have attended training on equal opportunities. MIT collects and analyses data about the gender and ethnicity of learners. The company's success in recruiting learners from minority ethnic groups is identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. However, recruitment of female learners has not been successful and this was also identified.

6. New recruitment materials show positive images of women working in the motor industry. MIT has set targets to increase the participation of women in its training programmes. The company's service level agreement with employers stipulates that they must not discriminate against learners, in accordance with current legislation. More recent agreements refer to MIT's information which gives employers more detail and information about equal opportunities and dealing with harassment. Equality of opportunity is discussed with learners at their induction. During visits to the workplace, assessors ask learners about how they are treated. Recently this process has been separated from the progress review so that learners are able to discuss their welfare confidentially with MIT's staff. This allows learners to express their concerns more freely and helps the staff to monitor equal opportunities more effectively. However, some learners do not fully understand their rights and responsibilities. These learners also have a poor understanding of what action they could take if they feel they are treated unfairly. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. Also, some of the employers have a weak understanding of equal opportunities.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

7. Self-assessment is now an integral part of MIT's management system. There are clear links between self-assessment and the business plan. Reports are produced every six months, and are thorough and compare favourably to inspection findings. However, a few judgements are subjective and not based on sound evidence. The action plan produced as a result of the original inspection in May 2001 has been closely monitored and most actions have been implemented.

8. MIT now has adequate arrangements to quality assure its training and assessment. Internal verification procedures are well written and sound. Feedback is sought from learners and employers on a range of topics and the data are analysed and used as a basis for decision-making. Improvements have been made as a result of these decisions. However, the questionnaire mainly requires a yes or no response and does not encourage sufficient detail. MIT has an employer representative at business meetings. There are procedures for most key activities and these are audited for compliance. However there are a few significant activities not included. MIT does not systematically monitor the quality of induction and progress reviews. The auditing of procedures is in its early stages and is not yet fully implemented.

9. MIT has regular meetings with subcontractors. Assessors regularly visit colleges to monitor the training. Detailed records are kept and the results of feedback from learners are sent to subcontractors for action. Subcontracted staff are set targets and are regularly appraised.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	84	3

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good range of work placements
- good support for learners
- good off-the-job training
- excellent off-the-job resources

WEAKNESSES

- poor but improving retention rates for foundation modern apprentices
- inadequate use of workplace evidence for key skills assessment
- weak progress reviews

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more detailed individual learning plans
- better induction for learners

10. At the original inspection in May 2001, there was inadequate data on retention and achievement rates. MIT has now compiled useful data and is using them to monitor performance. For those learners who started between 1999 and 2001, the achievement rates were poor. MIT has recognised this and has taken significant steps to improve the situation. Many learners have now achieved the NVQ at level 2. Most learners are progressing well and are on schedule to achieve their qualification.

11. Off-the-job training resources at the main subcontracted college of further education are excellent. Workshops and classrooms have modern equipment. Demonstration vehicles and equipment are linked to computer terminals in the classroom and workshop areas. Learners can use individual motor vehicle systems and

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work at their own pace on any vehicle component. Lecturers can access each learner's computer terminal and display their work on a central display board. Individual and group learning is effective. Learners speak highly of these facilities and are well motivated to achieve. Workshops are well resourced with mostly up-to-date vehicles. Resources in all areas of motor vehicle are good.

12. Off-the-job training is good. Teaching and training sessions are well presented in varied and appropriate teaching styles and there is good reference to industrial applications. Learning is checked at critical points in the learning sessions. Schemes of work and lesson plans are in place for all lessons. Individual learning needs and styles are identified and catered for. There are well-prepared learning materials which are used by the learners. Staff are well qualified and vocationally experienced.

13. Learners are well supported by MIT. Assessors visit the workplace every eight weeks to review the learners' progress, and they carry out interim visits to assess learners' competence. Assessors also visit the college during each block release. Learners appreciate this frequent contact with the assessor. When learners have difficulties or need additional support, more frequent informal visits are carried out. MIT's assessors have helped a number of learners to find alternative employment or placements when problems have arisen and this has been carried out with minimum disruption. Employers are also supported well and are very positive about MIT.

14. Work placements offer the full range of work required to cover the NVQ. Most learners 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 and assessors of MIT have a good knowledge of the local motor vehicle trade and are effective in finding work placements and employment for learners. Most learners are given an effective induction to their workplace. However, induction into the training programme is not carried out in sufficient depth to ensure learners fully understand their rights and responsibilities and the requirements of the programme.

15. Progress reviews are weak. They are carried out every eight weeks in the workplace for most learners, and more frequently for those learners who need additional support. Employers are involved in the reviews and the learner and employer are given a copy of the review document. However, most of the reviews are poorly recorded. Statements are brief and are often repetitive. They do not include targets that are realistic and measurable. Equality of opportunity and health and safety are agenda items, but are not covered in sufficient depth to reinforce the information.

16. Retention rates for foundation modern apprentices are poor but are improving. The retention rate has risen from 28 per cent in 1999-2000 to 48 per cent in 2001-02. The poor retention rates were identified as a weakness by the provider and action has been taken to improve them. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these changes. All of the learners who started in 2002-03 are still in learning.

17. Learners attend college for key skills training and assessment sessions. They are assessed through off-the-job assignments and exercises carried out under simulated conditions. There is little use of natural evidence from the workplace. Learners understand the key skills, but employers are not fully aware of how key skills evidence is gathered from the workplace.

18. Individual learning plans do not always include sufficient information about learners' planned training and assessment. Learning plans are not always updated to include the achievement of the level 2 NVQ and do not show that the learners are working towards the level 3.