

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Motor Industry Training Limited**

**08 December 2005**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## 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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**)

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.

## Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

## Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

## Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Motor Industry Training Limited

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Motor Industry Training Limited (MIT) is a privately owned training provider. It provides apprenticeships for young people in motor vehicle engineering, including light and heavy vehicle mechanical repairs, body repair, body refinishing and vehicle parts distribution. The company was formed in 1998 with affiliation to the College of North West London. In February 2002, MIT obtained a contract with Surrey Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to deliver apprenticeships in motor vehicle engineering. MIT has recently moved from its premises in northwest London to new premises and workshops in West Byfleet, Surrey. It is currently using temporary offices in Woking, Surrey, after delays in the construction of its new building, which should now become fully operational in January 2006. MIT plans to continue providing training for learners in the London West area by retaining a training facility in that area.

2. Currently, most off-the-job training takes place at subcontracted colleges, although the development of MIT's own training centre will reduce the company's reliance on these organisations. The subcontracted further education colleges are Bridgwater College and Guildford College. Most learners attend Bridgwater College on a block-release basis of eight one-week blocks spread over the academic year. For those learners who are still attending Guildford College, attendance is on a day-release basis.

3. MIT employs 10 full-time staff, of whom one is a subcontracted assessment manager, and four part-time staff, including the lead internal verifier and a workshop technician. MIT also plans to recruit further assessors and a specialist literacy and numeracy tutor.

### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**Grade 2**

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** MIT's leadership and management and its approach to equality of opportunity are good, and its arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory. The provision in engineering and manufacturing technologies is good.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** MIT has produced an annual self-assessment report since April 2001 and has continually improved and refined the process. All staff have been trained in self-assessment and the new Common Inspection Framework. The process includes the views of all staff and also incorporates the views of learners and employers, collected by questionnaires. The most recent report is realistic and sufficiently critical, and identifies appropriate strengths and weaknesses, as well as key challenges and learners' views. These key points form the basis of an effective development action plan which is monitored at full staff meetings held every six months.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.** MIT has successfully resolved issues identified in previous inspections and its own self-assessment processes. It has made good progress in recent years in developing an

## MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED

effective quality assurance system, with centralised storage and easy access. It has established new management information systems, and staff meet regularly to discuss learners' performance. Key actions are well recorded in the development action plan and their implementation is effectively monitored at team meetings.

### KEY CHALLENGES FOR MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED:

- further improve the rate of apprenticeship framework completion
- maintain the improvements in the quality improvement practices
- effectively manage the risks in the planned developments to extend the provision
- provide more systematic literacy, numeracy and language skills support for learners
- use and analyse data more effectively to improve programmes
- improve monitoring and awareness of equality of opportunity with employers

### GRADES

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate*

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		3

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<b>Motor vehicle</b>			2
Apprenticeships for young people	161		2

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. Motor vehicle engineering was reported on and graded along with the generic aspects of leadership and management. A team of three inspectors visited MIT for four days in early December 2005.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	52
Number of staff interviewed	10
Number of employers interviewed	11
Number of subcontractors interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	20
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	1
Number of visits	1

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

**8. Learners are quick to learn and develop their practical skills well in the workplace.**

Many employers also support the learners by sponsoring them on a range of manufacturers' specialist courses. Learners work with competence and confidence, using specialist tools and diagnostic equipment well and quickly taking increasing responsibility to work unassisted on customer vehicles. They have a good understanding of the health and safety issues in the motor trade.

9. Retention rates have been a significant weakness in previous inspections, particularly for apprentices, but have improved and are now satisfactory. The proportion of the most recent intake of learners who are still learning also indicates continued improvement.

**10. Some learners have been on their training programmes far longer than expected and are making slow progress towards the completion of their frameworks.** However, MIT has recently introduced more frequent assessment and arrangements with Bridgwater College and many learners are now progressing at a faster rate.

**11. The apprenticeship achievement rate has been poor, particularly between 2001 and 2004,** when it fluctuated between 13 per cent and 22 per cent. The achievement rate has improved for recent intakes. However, at this stage, MIT's recent actions to improve retention and achievement rates have had insufficient time to affect performance data, and achievement rates remain below national averages.

## The quality of provision

12. **MIT has comprehensive and wide-ranging arrangements in place to provide good support for its learners.** Learners' needs, skills and abilities are identified during the early phases of their programme and highly effective arrangements are put in place to match these needs closely. Learning co-ordinators closely monitor the learners' performance and attitudes during the early phases of their training and quickly respond to issues that may affect their performance. Progress reviews are frequent and regular and effectively involve the employer. They include specific targets and timescales, and arrangements are made for the additional visits of assessors. MIT constructs revised training plans for learners not able to make the planned progress. The plans may include additional sessions at the training centre and additional input from the further education college, to ensure the full range of activities and assessment opportunities is available. Learners transferred from other providers have been supported very effectively with specifically tailored training that has enabled them recoup lost time and to have some of their previous work accredited.

13. On-the-job training takes place in a wide variety of good-quality work placements ranging from large prestigious manufacturers' main agencies to small independent garages. Most workshops are modern and well equipped to deal with the technology of current vehicles. All learners are allocated to experienced workplace supervisors who are familiar with the requirements of national vocational qualification (NVQ) assessment. Assessment in the workplace is frequent, but for some learners the planning of assessment targets is not always specific or sufficiently time-related to prevent some slow progress occurring.

14. Most employers are clear about their responsibilities to provide relevant training and assessment opportunities for learners. However, most are unaware of the training that learners receive while attending the off-the-job training at the colleges and are unable to plan relevant training to build on the learners' off-the-job training experiences.

15. Off-the-job training is generally satisfactory. Learners on the programme-led pathway, who are not employed but are in full time training with MIT, train in the new, well-resourced MIT training centre. MIT's tutors deliver well-prepared practical and background knowledge sessions to a satisfactory or better standard. The delivery of technical certificates and key skills qualifications for apprentices and advanced apprentices is provided by the subcontracted colleges, which provide satisfactory or better teaching according to recent inspections. Learners express high levels of satisfaction with the off-the-job elements of their programmes and enjoy this part of their training.

16. Many learners have good progression opportunities. Learners on a programme-led pathway generally progress onto the apprentice frameworks after completing their preparation for work at MIT's training centre. Many learners also progress from apprenticeships to advanced apprenticeships.

## Leadership and management

17. **Senior managers at MIT have a clear strategic vision for the company,** and have developed a well-structured business plan to realise this vision of high-quality motor vehicle work-based learning. The establishment of MIT's own training centre is a key feature of this vision. MIT has recruited additional staff to provide the support and teaching of the off-the-job training elements of the programmes. A clear management structure has been



established with effective lines of accountability. Regular team meetings are held and good use of electronic communications ensures that all staff are kept informed of company developments.

**18. MIT has a high regard for the professional development of its staff**, and makes good use of training opportunities provided by external support agencies. It has carried out a comprehensive analysis of the skill requirements for each of the job roles in the organisation, and support for staff to attain these skills is good. All staff have a twice-yearly appraisal at which business and personal development targets are discussed, recorded and monitored. Recently appointed staff have had a well-structured induction into the company's practices and values.

**19. Particularly effective arrangements are in place to support learners from other providers.** The learners' transfers are well managed and the learners are well supported. Their progress is monitored so that they quickly attain the skills and qualifications to get back on track on their training programmes. Many of these learners are now on target to complete their framework within appropriate timescales.

20. MIT's management of literacy, numeracy and language skills support for learners is satisfactory. All learners take a range of initial assessments which identify the suitability of the learning programmes, as well as the learners' preferred learning styles and support level requirements. These arrangements have been recently revised and are more detailed than was previously the case. However, MIT is still reliant on the subcontracted colleges to deliver the required levels of support. It has plans to recruit a skills tutor to provide more individualised support for these learners.

**21. MIT has particularly effective arrangements to promote equality and diversity.** Equality of opportunity is covered well during learners' induction. Learning co-ordinators go through the equal opportunities policy and procedures thoroughly and carefully. The sessions are well structured so that learners can explore diversity issues in a safe and unthreatening environment. The progress review procedure has been amended and now contains a good range of questions that the learning co-ordinators can choose from to test the learners' ongoing understanding.

22. MIT uses a comprehensive range of promotional materials, including a newsletter and programme leaflets, all of which portray positive images of under-represented groups. The company uses its links with local schools well and works co-operatively with them to break down stereotypical images. However, these arrangements have had only a limited success with less than 2 per cent of the current intake of learners being women.

23. At regular monthly meetings MIT's managers use information effectively to monitor the performance of learners by ethnic grouping, disability and gender. The percentage of learners who come from minority ethnic communities is significantly higher than the proportion of the population from minority ethnic communities in Surrey and West London, the two areas in which MIT operates.

24. Employers are provided with a copy of MIT's information and guidance on all aspects of the learners' programme, including the minimum expectations for equality and diversity. Employers are asked to sign up to MIT's equal opportunities policy if they do not have their own company policy. However, MIT's monitoring of the employers' engagement and

understanding of equality and diversity issues is to limited.

25. **Over the past 12 months, MIT has made several good developments to its quality improvement activities.** One such development is the structuring and collation onto spreadsheets of the policies and procedures for most of the key stages of the training. Staff have easy access to all policies and can search through linked lists to the necessary forms and documents.

26. MIT effectively manages and plans the self-assessment process, and staff have received appropriate training to enable them to participate fully in the process. The views of learners and employers are effectively incorporated and the resulting self-assessment report is realistic, sufficiently critical and mostly accurate. The key points form the basis of the development action plan, the implementation of which MIT monitors well.

27. MIT has successfully dealt with many of the issues raised in previous inspections. One such issue was of its management of subcontracted colleges. MIT has decided to reduce the number of colleges it uses to two and to reduce the number of learners attending college by day release, with most now attending block-release programmes at Bridgwater College. Attendance and retention rates have improved significantly since these changes and achievements rates are also improving.

28. MIT's establishment of its own training centre has required it to recruit and quality assure teaching staff. It has successfully achieved these objectives. A highly effective teaching observation scheme has been established and all tutors have been observed. Grading is realistic and feedback is helpful and comprehensive. The grade profile of the observations is in line with that expected for this type of provider.

29. MIT has recruited learning co-ordinators to improve the retention of learners during the early phases of their training. These co-ordinators administer the initial assessment tests and deliver the induction programmes. They get to know the learners well and recognise when learners may be becoming 'at risk' of withdrawing from their training. They provide good support on personal and training-related issues. Learners express high levels of confidence in these staff and greatly value the support provided.

30. **Internal verification is well planned and thorough.** The verification of assessment activities for on-and off-the-job training is planned well. Feedback to the assessors is helpful and supportive. Learners' portfolios are regularly verified. They contain clear acknowledgement that verification has taken place and identify any actions required to meet the awarding body's requirements.

31. **MIT has sufficiently developed its use of data as a management tool to promote improvement.** MIT collects extensive data about its learners and meets the requirements for funding purposes of its local LSC. However, it conducts too little routine systematic analysis of this data and the performance of each intake of learners is unclear.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- clear strategic vision and business planning
- good professional development of staff
- highly effective arrangements to support learners transferred from other providers
- particularly effective promotion of equality and diversity
- good recent improvements in quality improvement practices

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient use of data to promote improvement

## **Engineering and manufacturing technologies**

### ***Motor vehicle***

***Grade 2***

#### *Strengths*

- good development of workplace skills
- comprehensive and wide-ranging support for learners
- good internal verification practices

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor apprenticeship achievement rate between 2001 and 2004
- slow progress towards framework completion by some learners

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED:**

- 'the friendly staff who know what they're talking about'
- regular contact with the staff, who are helpful and supportive
- Bridgwater College - 'it's great'
- the teaching at Bridgwater College - 'it's spot on'
- the help they get - portfolio and support days are a big help
- doing practical work
- the good responses from the assessors

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:**

- communications with Bridgwater College
- the behaviour of other students at Bridgwater College
- the number of portfolio-building days
- the variety of work in the workplace

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- clear strategic vision and business planning
- good professional development of staff
- highly effective arrangements to support learners transferred from other providers
- particularly effective promotion of equality and diversity
- good recent improvements in quality improvement practices

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data to promote improvement

32. Senior managers at MIT have a clear strategic vision for the company, and have developed a well-structured business plan to realise this vision of high-quality motor vehicle work-based learning. Previous inspections and self-assessment activities have highlighted the extent to which the organisation was dependent on subcontracted provision. It was decided to expand the provision and establish MIT's own training centre to provide off-the-job training and support sessions for apprentices and to provide full-time motor vehicle programmes for school leavers in preparation for employment. MIT has significantly increased its staff numbers in response to these developments, from five to 13 within the past 12 months. This increase has been well managed. Most new staff have been recruited from other work-based learning providers and have brought with them a very good range of skills and experience, significantly enhancing MIT's provision. A clear management structure has been established with appropriate lines of accountability and communication. New posts have been established, including those for teaching staff to deliver the off-the-job training. The new appointments include learning co-ordinators, who provide targeted support for learners at all stages of their training, but particularly during the first months of the programme, when the challenges are the greatest.

33. There is a high regard for the professional development of staff within MIT. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that staff are appropriately qualified and have good access to training that will enable them to develop and extend their skills and knowledge. All staff have a twice-yearly appraisal at which business and personal development targets are discussed, recorded and monitored. A comprehensive analysis of the skill requirements for each of the job roles in the organisation matrix has been carried out, and support for staff to attain these skills is good. Recently appointed staff have had a well-structured induction into the company's practices and values. For example, a recently appointed learning co-ordinator spent two days with an assessor visiting employers and learners, before having to decide if they wished to take up the post. On taking up the post, further developmental activities were arranged for the learning co-ordinator. Good use is made of training opportunities provided by the support agencies such as the local LSC and the Learning and Skills Development Agency as well as the local provider support group. In many cases these specialist consultants have been re-engaged by MIT to provide further, more specific, individualised training for all staff.

34. Particularly effective arrangements are in place to support learners joining MIT from other providers. A group of learners transferred from another provider where their progress was poor, having completed no components of the apprenticeship framework. MIT managed their transfer well and supported them well. It targeted these learners' progress so that they quickly attained the relevant skills and qualifications to take advantage of the block-release programmes at Bridgwater College. Many of these learners are now on target to complete their framework within appropriate timescales. A significant number of learners have previously been at a variety of other providers, including further education colleges. Most of these learners are now making much better progress than previously. All report being better supported and are much happier with their progress.

35. MIT's management of literacy, numeracy and language skills support for learners is satisfactory. All learners take a range of initial assessments which identify the suitability of the learning programmes as well as the learners' preferred learning styles and support level requirements. These arrangements have been recently revised and are more detailed than was previously the case. MIT currently relies on the subcontracted colleges to meet learners' identified literacy, numeracy or language skills support needs. However, as part of the planned reduction in this reliance on the colleges, learning co-ordinators now closely monitor the support needs of the learners. MIT also plans recruit a skills tutor to support these learners when the work on the new training centre is completed.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

36. MIT has particularly effective arrangements to promote equality and diversity. Equality of opportunity is covered well during learners' induction. Learning co-ordinators go through the equal opportunities policy and procedures carefully, explaining the anti-harassment, anti-bullying and grievance procedures. The sessions are structured well so that learners can explore diversity issues in a safe and unthreatening environment. The progress review procedure has been amended and now contains a good range of questions that the learning co-ordinators can choose from to test the learners' ongoing understanding. All learners interviewed during the inspection demonstrated a good understanding of diversity issues.

37. MIT produces a regular newsletter celebrating learners' achievements and presenting positive images of under-represented groups. Promotional materials also contain similar positive images, and a specific information sheet targeted at female learners has been produced. The company uses its links with local schools well and works co-operatively with them to break down stereotypes. However, these arrangements have had only a limited success, with less than 2 per cent of the current intake of learners being women. MIT's managers use information effectively to monitor the performance of learners by ethnic grouping, disability and gender, at regular monthly meetings. The percentage of learners who are from minority ethnic communities is significantly higher than the proportion of the population who are from minority ethnic groups in Surrey and West London, the two areas in which MIT operates.

38. Training for staff in equality of opportunity and promoting diversity features clearly in the business plan, and all staff have attended internal and external courses in raising awareness. MIT makes effective use of feedback from staff, employers and learners to plan the training.

39. The company's service level agreement with employers stipulates that they must not discriminate against learners and that they must meet all the requirements of current legislation. Employers are provided with a copy of MIT's information and guidance on all aspects of the learners' programme, including the minimum expectations for anti-harassment, anti-bullying and grievance procedures. However, there is limited monitoring of the employers' engagement and understanding of equality and diversity issues in the workplace.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 3**

40. There have been several good recent developments in the quality improvement practices of MIT. A range of policies and procedures covers many of the critical elements of the training cycle. These are very effectively collected on a spreadsheet and linked lists on a central computer system. Staff have access to all the relevant procedures and can locate the latest versions of documents and forms with ease. However, this system does not yet fully extend to all key policies and procedures following the recent changes in the company structure and staffing, and the need to review and update some of the existing policies. Regular auditing of these procedures has yet to be fully established.

41. All staff have received good recent training on self-assessment and the new Common Inspection Framework. The resulting self-assessment report was developed after consultation with all staff and incorporates the views of learners and employers, collected by well-constructed questionnaires. The most recent report is realistic, sufficiently critical and identifies appropriate strengths and weaknesses, as well identifying key challenges and learners' views. These key points form the basis of an effective development action plan which is monitored at full staff meetings held every six months.

42. A significant issue for MIT in its previous inspection was the management of its arrangements with the subcontracted colleges. It has recently resolved this issue by moving from day-release training at local further education colleges to a block-release model at Bridgwater College. Although this college is a considerable distance from MIT's local base and learners have to travel and stay in bed and breakfast accommodation, the move has been welcomed by the learners who speak very highly of the provision. Attendance and retention issues have been resolved and achievement rates for the main NVQ award and the key skills qualifications have significantly improved. Several operational issues, particularly concerning the timing of the eight one-week blocks, were initially raised by the learners. These were promptly and effectively dealt with by MIT's staff during their regular visits to Bridgwater College.

43. Following the initial dissatisfaction with the provision of off-the-job training provided by a range of subcontracted colleges, MIT also took the decision to establish its own training centre, the development of which is now reaching completion. This has raised the need to recruit teaching staff, especially for the full-time programme-led pathway which started during the summer of 2005. Since the start of these teaching programmes, MIT has also established a highly effective teaching and learning observation scheme. A senior manager, who is an experienced teacher and trained observer, has observed all tutors. Grading is realistic and feedback is comprehensive and helpful. In the cases of an unsatisfactory grade, follow-up support has been provided and further observations take place, usually within a month. The grade profile of the observations is in line with what would be expected for this type of provider.

44. MIT's analysis of retention rates highlighted the significant loss of learners during the early phases of their programmes. To rectify this, MIT has recruited additional staff to support the learners throughout their training and particularly during the first six months. These learning co-ordinators administer the initial assessment and induction activities and get to know the learners very well. They provide good support to the learners in the workplace during this initial phase, visiting them at least every month and helping them with personal and employment-related difficulties. Learners express high levels of confidence in these staff and greatly value the support provided. This initiative has enabled the assessors to concentrate on the learners' progress towards achievement of their main NVQ and to make more frequent visits, usually monthly, to the workplace for assessment.

45. Internal verification is well planned and thorough. The verification of assessment activities is planned well for on- and off-the-job training. Feedback to the assessors is helpful and supportive. Learners' portfolios are regularly verified. They contain clear acknowledgement that verification has taken place and of any actions required to meet the awarding body's requirements.

46. MIT has not sufficiently developed its use of data as a management tool to promote improvement. MIT collects extensive data about its learners and meets the requirements for funding purposes of its local LSC. However there is often too much data and the performance of each intake of learners is unclear. MIT has recently adopted a new management information system and senior staff have recently received training on its use. There is an awareness among staff that analysis of data is available. However, insufficient attention has been paid at management and staff meetings to the nature of the questions to be asked and the linking of the appropriate data to these questions.



## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Motor vehicle</b>		<b>2</b>
Apprenticeships for young people	161	2

47. MIT offers training for 162 learners in motor vehicle engineering, of whom 55 are advanced apprentices, 72 are apprentices and 34 are learners on the recently introduced programme-led pathway initiative. Learners study for a variety of NVQs and technical certificates at level 2 and 3 in vehicle maintenance and repair (light and heavy vehicle options), body repair and paint operations and parts personnel training. The company recruits learners through a variety of methods, including referrals from employers or Connexions and through its own promotional activities. Learners are asked to attend selection tests and then interviews with MIT and employers, after which the most appropriate vocational option and level of qualification for the learner are selected.

48. Most learners are employed in companies, some are in work placements and those on the programme-led pathway are in full-time training in MIT's new training centre. A wide variety of work placements includes franchised main dealerships, specialist light vehicle repairers, heavy goods maintenance companies and small garages which may include fast-fit tyre and exhaust centres. Most apprentices attend Bridgewater College on block release for their off-the-job training where they study for their technical certificates and key skills qualifications. A few third-year learners who were not transferred to Bridgewater College still attend a local college on day release to complete their studies.

49. MIT currently employs 10 full-time staff, of whom one is a subcontracted assistant manager, and four part-time staff, including the lead internal verifier and a workshop technician. The assessors are industry experienced, vocationally qualified and have assessor and verifier qualifications. All learners receive regular pastoral review visits in the workplace, and NVQ progress is monitored and assessed in the workplace at least every eight weeks by their assessor.

### **Motor vehicle**

**Grade 2**

#### *Strengths*

- good development of workplace skills
- comprehensive and wide-ranging support for learners
- good internal verification practices

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor apprenticeship achievement rate between 2001 and 2004
- slow progress towards framework completion by some learners

## Achievement and standards

50. Learners' workplace skills are developed well. Employers provide learners with good opportunities to develop their practical skills on a wide range of high-specification equipment. Learners are quick to learn and soon develop their practical skills. They demonstrate confidence in using tools and equipment, and carry out their work systematically. Employers allocate learners to experienced workplace mentors as well as transferring them between various parts of the businesses. This gives the learners opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge. Some employers also sponsor learners on a range of manufacturers' training programmes to broaden their skills and abilities through relevant training experiences. Many learners soon develop high levels of competence and confidence and take increasing responsibility to work unassisted on customers' vehicles.

51. Learners' portfolios are of a satisfactory standard, meeting the awarding body's requirements. The overall standard of learners' understanding of health and safety in the workplace is satisfactory. However, some learners show a high level of awareness of health and safety issues in the motor trade and demonstrate this in their working practices.

52. Retention rates are satisfactory across all engineering programmes, having improved since the previous inspection. The proportion of learners still in learning on apprenticeship programmes is 72 per cent for the 2004-05 intake and 94 per cent for the 2005-06 intake. On advanced apprenticeship programmes, 58 per cent and 88 per cent out of the 2004-05 and 2005-06 intakes, respectively, remain in learning.

53. Some learners make slow progress in completing their framework. These learners have been on their training programmes far longer than their anticipated duration. MIT has recently taken action to rectify this, however by using more assessors and establishing the role of learning co-ordinators, for example. Many learners are now completing their outstanding work and are making progress at a much faster rate. Forty-five per cent of all framework completions have occurred within the past six months.

54. The apprenticeship achievement rate has been low for learners starting between 2001 and 2004. Completion rates for apprenticeship programmes are historically low and currently remain below national averages. The achievement rate for learners starting apprenticeships programmes between 2001 and 2004 was poor at 16 per cent, 22 per cent and 13 per cent, respectively. However, the progress of apprentices recruited from 2003 onwards is improving, with 29 per cent of the 2003-04 intake still in learning as well as 13 per cent having achieved their qualification. In relation to advanced apprenticeships, learners' completion rates have historically been inconsistent. For those advanced apprentices who started in 2002-03, the achievement rate is currently 29 per cent with 31 per cent still on programme. Recent initiatives to improve learners' achievement have had insufficient time to affect published data but there are early indications of a much-improved trend.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	8	100	26	100	31	100	51	100	25	100	17	100				
Retained*	0	0	4	15	2	6	20	39	11	44	4	24				
Successfully completed	0	0	4	15	2	6	15	29	10	40	4	24				
Still in learning	7	88	15	58	17	55	16	31	0	0	0	0				

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02		2000-01					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	52	100	58	100	45	100	37	100	25	100	31	100				
Retained*	0	0	0	0	21	47	14	38	10	40	14	45				
Successfully completed	0	0	0	0	6	13	8	22	4	16	4	13				
Still in learning	49	94	42	72	13	29	2	5	0	0	0	0				

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

### The quality of provision

55. Support for learners is comprehensive and wide-ranging. All potential learners receive a variety of initial assessment tests where their vocational aptitude, learning styles and literacy, numeracy and language support needs are clearly identified. Learners are then provided with learning programmes that closely match their needs, skills and abilities. Where learners have identified support needs, the support is quickly provided through the two subcontracted colleges which deliver off-the-job training. For example, a learner was identified by the initial assessment as having dyslexia. MIT referred the learner to a specialist tutor at the subcontracted college, who helped the learner devise appropriate learning strategies. The learner is now making good progress and is anticipated to complete ahead of schedule. Learning co-ordinators and assessors visit the workplace every four to six weeks to review learners' progress formally. Most assessors visit more frequently, sometimes fortnightly, and often on demand when appropriate assessment opportunities arise. Learners appreciate and value this frequent contact with MIT's staff and state that it has a motivating effect on them. When learners have reported personal difficulties or problems that are affecting their learning, MIT's staff take prompt action to ensure that these concerns are quickly investigated and resolved. In recent months, good additional portfolio support sessions have been arranged at MIT's training centre. In these sessions, learners receive individual support and targeted help to encourage them to complete the collection of background knowledge and key skills qualifications evidence for their portfolios. Those learners who have transferred from other providers have been given particularly effective support to catch up on assessment and to complete their apprenticeship framework on schedule.

56. Learners' progress reviews are effective. Employers and workplace supervisors are

involved well in the reviews, which include clear, specific and measurable targets with appropriate timescales. Learners identified as making slow progress or who may benefit from a revised training programme agree a detailed action plan containing clear targets with their assessor and employer, and receive more frequent progress reviews.

57. The on-the-job training is satisfactory. Learners take part in many good-quality work placements which range from large manufacturers' main agents to small independent garages. Most workshops are modern and well equipped with facilities that range from general-purpose repair equipment to high-technology equipment required to repair modern vehicles. Learners are allocated experienced workplace mentors or supervisors to supervise them and to help them collect evidence for their qualifications. The range of tasks available in the workplace is more than adequate to meet the NVQ requirements and provide a wide range of assessment opportunities. Assessors regularly visit learners in the workplace to assess them. They identify and record assessment evidence then review what further NVQ evidence the learner needs to be assessed. From this information, employers and work-based supervisors can arrange work to meet these NVQ requirements. However, for some learners the targets are not always specific or sufficiently time-related. Learners are enthusiastic about the opportunities offered and are complimentary about the support they receive from employers, workplace supervisors and MIT's assessors. Learners progress to more demanding tasks as they gain experience and many are later trusted to carry out tasks with minimal supervision.

58. There is limited co-ordination between the on- and off-the-job training to help reinforce and speed up the learning process for the learners. Most employers are clear on their responsibilities to provide relevant training opportunities for learners and, where possible, will ensure that the work being allocated to learners reflects the range of work required for the NVQ. However, most employers are generally unaware of the off-the-job training that learners receive while attending Bridgwater College or Guilford College. These employers are unable to plan relevant training opportunities either before or upon the learners' return to the workplace, particularly for learners on block-release programmes at Bridgwater College. Some learners' progress through their programme has been delayed.

59. Off-the-job training is generally satisfactory. Programme-led pathway learners train in MIT's new, well-resourced training centre. MIT's tutors deliver well-prepared practical and background knowledge sessions to a satisfactory or better standard. The technical certificate and key skills training for apprentices is carried out by Bridgwater College or Guildford College, with most learners attending eight one-week blocks at Bridgwater College. Information gathered from recent inspection reports for these colleges confirms that the standard of teaching and learning at these colleges is satisfactory or better.

60. Many learners state how much they enjoyed their training. Some particularly express their liking of the off-the-job training at Bridgwater College. Some learners on the programmes have been transferred from other providers or from full-time college programmes and all speak very highly of their training and the individual support they receive from MIT's staff. Many learners have good progression opportunities. Those on the programme-led pathway progress onto the apprenticeship frameworks after completing their preparation for work at MIT's training centre and when a suitable work-placement has been found for them. Many learners also progress from apprenticeships to advanced apprenticeships providing they are able and their workplace is appropriate to support level 3 training and assessment requirements.

## **Leadership and management**

61. The management of the motor vehicle programmes is good. Regular team meetings and appropriate use of electronic communications to share good practice ensures that all staff are kept informed on appropriate matters, including the operation of the training programmes. All staff have recently attended training workshops covering recent changes to equality and diversity legislation, health and safety updating and quality assurance updates. Staff were fully involved in the development of the most recent self-assessment report, which is sufficiently critical, realistic and largely accurate.

62. MIT has a very effective internal verification system that is well planned, detailed, and thoroughly monitored. Records show that assessment decisions are internally verified, all assessors are observed and that detailed and informative feedback is given at each stage. Sampling plans are prepared in advance and records are kept up to date.

63. Learners have a good understanding of issues related to equality of opportunity, harassment and bullying, and are aware of how to seek support on matters of personal welfare. Insufficient monitoring and awareness-raising of equality of opportunity takes place with employers in the workplace.

