

INSPECTION REPORT

Martec Training

26 May 2006



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*

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Martec Training (Martec) was established in 1982 and forms part of a larger organisation known as Marson Garages (Wolstanton) Limited. Originally Martec was established to train apprentices in the motor vehicle industry specifically for the Marson group of motor vehicle franchises. The company grew and developed to extend training to other local companies in the motor vehicle industry. Martec provides work-based learning for young people and is funded by Staffordshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). It offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in engineering, with a small number of learners in retailing and commercial enterprise and business administration. In addition, a specialist Entry to Employment (E2E) programme is available. Martec is currently working with 80 employers. Martec has two training centres in Newcastle under Lyme in Staffordshire. They are surrounded by the five towns of Stoke-on-Trent traditionally linked with the ceramic industry, which has experienced a massive decline over recent years. Compared with the national average, the area has a high unemployment rate. Martec has links with local colleges and schools and is currently working with schools on developing programmes to deliver motor vehicle training to interested pupils. Martec recruits learners from a variety of backgrounds. Many learners are disengaged young people who have significant social problems.

2. Martec is managed by two directors, one of whom is responsible for the company's operational management. The company employs 19 full-time and three part-time members of staff, of whom 10 are assessors and five are internal verifiers.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 3

3. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** Martec's leadership and management are satisfactory, as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. Provision is satisfactory in engineering and manufacturing technologies, and in preparation for life and work.

4. **The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment report produced in February 2006 is sufficiently detailed and critical, but it does not identify some of the weakness found during inspection. The self-assessment process was carried out systematically. It included all staff, who understood the importance of the process in driving quality improvement. Insufficient use was made of data to support the self-assessment.

5. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** Many effective actions have improved the quality of the provision since the previous inspection. Martec has been successful at implementing a retention strategy to help improve retention and achievement rates. Most of the weaknesses present at the previous inspection have been successfully improved. Inspection grades have broadly remained the same. Some quality assurance procedures have recently been improved but as yet have not been fully implemented.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR MARTEC TRAINING:

- improve achievement rates for apprenticeships and maintain and improve achievement rates for national vocational qualifications (NVQs)
- introduce systems to better co-ordinate on- and off-the-job training and increase employers' engagement in the training programme
- further develop systems for recording learners' achievement
- continue to develop procedures to ensure the quality of the provision
- improve the training centre's operation and resources
- maintain and develop the open style of management

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

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

Engineering and manufacturing technologies			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Motor vehicle			
Apprenticeships for young people	64	3	
NVQ training for young people	3	3	

Preparation for life and work			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Employability training			
Entry to Employment	42	3	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

6. The inspection took place over four days during one week. Two of the areas of learning offered by the provider were reported on, which are engineering and manufacturing technologies, and preparation for life and work. Inspectors also collected and used evidence from provision in retail and commercial enterprise and business administration to support their judgements on Martec's leadership and management. There were insufficient learners within these areas of learning to report on them separately.

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	45
Number of staff interviewed	42
Number of employers interviewed	10
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	15

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

7. **Motor vehicle NVQ achievement rates are good.** In the period 2003-04, 62 per cent of motor vehicle learners on NVQ programmes completed their qualification compared with the national average of 47 per cent. In 2004-05, 92 per cent of learners on motor vehicle programmes achieved their NVQ, compared with a national average of 57 per cent. Learners develop a range of good work skills through regular assessments being carried out in the workplace. They make good progress with their training programmes, with some having started at level 1 or level 2 and then progressing to a level 3 advanced apprenticeship.

8. **Apprenticeship framework completion rates were low in 2004-05.** Only 32 per cent of learners who left in 2004-05 successfully completed their full framework and only 14 per cent of learners achieved in a timely manner.

9. **In preparation for life and work, learners develop good personal and employment skills.** They talk positively about the development of their skills and the progress they make while in training. Progression for learners from the E2E programme is satisfactory. Of the learners who started the programme over the past three years, progression to a successful outcome of education, training or employment averages out to 44 per cent.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Engineering and manufacturing technologies	0	1	1	0	2
Preparation for life and work	0	0	3	1	4
Total	0	1	4	1	6

10. **On motor vehicle programmes, Martec has a good process for identifying and supporting learners who may be at risk of leaving the programme early.** Progress reviews use a 'traffic light' type system to highlight potential problems.

11. **In preparation for life and work, learners receive very effective learning and pastoral support.** Progress reviews are effective in supporting learners and identifying achievements and targets. A high level of care and attention is taken to place learners with an appropriate employer and employers demonstrate a good understanding of the level of

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support required by most learners. Martec's staff frequently support learners who find barriers to their learning, and have frequently intervened to help learners who experience problems at work.

12. The initial assessment process for E2E is comprehensive and very effective. Learners participate in a range of planned assessment and team-building activities over a six-week period. Learners value the opportunity to try out a range of different learning opportunities during this time. Where a learner has individual needs that Martec feels unable to meet, the company works closely with Connexions and other training providers to find an appropriate alternative for the young person.

13. On motor vehicle programmes, insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training takes place. Employers do not receive a copy of an off-the-job training programme. On- and off-the-job training are not systematically co-ordinated to maximise the learning opportunities for learners.

14. Teaching and learning at Martec's motor vehicle training centre are delivered well, and learners enjoy attending the centre. Learners find the tutors easy to understand and say that the tutors are patient with them and happy to explain things several times if necessary. The quality of teaching on the E2E programme is satisfactory, and staff and learners have a good working relationship. Most schemes of work and session plans are satisfactory, but some are not sufficiently detailed.

15. Some poor-quality learning materials are being used on the E2E programme. The language level of some worksheets and materials is too complex for the ability level of many of the learners. Many of the materials used contain no graphics or colour and are made up purely of text, often containing terminology that has little meaning to learners.

16. Systems for the central recording of learners' achievements are inadequate on E2E programmes. Information on each learner's achievements is recorded and kept on their file. Other than the use of the whiteboard, there is no other central record of achievements that enables staff to break down learners' achievements across the range of qualifications offered.

Leadership and management

17. Martec has established an effective management team which works closely together in an open and consultative environment providing good management of new initiatives. Staff are well motivated, and feel free to raise issues and share information regarding learners' needs. The management style is open, and staff value the information they receive from senior management.

18. The overall management of support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Improvement in adult literacy and numeracy levels is a priority for Martec. All learners undergo a diagnostic test at the start of the course. There are indications that the provision of support is effective but no analysis takes place to measure the overall success of the support

19. Martec makes insufficient use of data to monitor learners' progress. The company has recently developed a management information system that has significant potential to

provide useful management information. The management information system is assisting in producing reports that are available to senior management. However, the number and type of reports produced are restricted by the amount of data currently available, and this limits their effectiveness in supporting the planning of programmes.

20. The staff at Martec work hard at creating a harmonious and socially inclusive environment. The senior managers are working hard to attract learners from under-represented groups. Martec has been successful in rectifying the gender imbalance typical in the motor vehicle industry. The company has worked hard at challenging the stereotypical view of the industry and has actively promoted its motor vehicle programme to potential women learners.

21. Martec has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy that applies to all learners and staff. However, there is no overall procedure to ensure that the equal opportunities policy is systematically applied in work placements, and the language used in the policy is difficult for learners to understand and interpret.

22. Many effective initiatives identified by managers and staff continue to improve the quality of the provision. A quality group with members from all departments of the company meets on a frequent basis to consider ways in which to improve the provision.

23. Martec's quality assurance procedures are insufficiently developed. Existing procedures have not been sufficiently adapted and updated to meet the specific needs of new and developing programmes. Senior management have identified the need to appoint a designated member of staff to develop quality assurance procedures to help support and guide quality improvement. Procedures are in place for the formal observation of training. Tutors receive detailed feedback and their training needs are identified and linked to the individual staff development plan.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- very effective, close teamworking in an open and consultative management environment
- good strategies to attract and retain under-represented groups
- many effective actions to improve the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed monitoring systems
- insufficiently developed procedures to quality assure the provision.

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Motor vehicle

Strengths

- good NVQ achievement rates

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- good standard of learners' work
- good process for identifying and supporting learners at risk

Weaknesses

- low achievement rates for full apprenticeship frameworks
- insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- poor standards of cleanliness and attention to safety at the training centre

Preparation for life and work

Employability training

Strengths

- good progress in developing a range of work and personal skills
- very effective learning and pastoral support for individual learners
- comprehensive and effective initial assessment

Weaknesses

- some poor-quality learning materials
- inadequate systems for recording learners' achievement

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT MARTEC TRAINING:

- the different activities that there are
- the good teachers – more laid back than at school
- the tractor-driving courses
- the group projects – and the teamwork
- the practical work
- the mathematics and English sessions
- talking to other people
- the honest and reliable staff
- the garden project
- the friendly environment
- making new mates

WHAT LEARNERS THINK MARTEC TRAINING COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of practical work in mechanics when in the centre
- learners' money - it shouldn't be stopped if you're late
- the tools and equipment at the training centre
- the parking at training centre
- the amount of day-release training
- the provision of resources and engines to work on

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- very effective, close teamworking in an open and consultative management environment
- good strategies to attract and retain under-represented groups
- many effective actions to improve the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed monitoring systems
- insufficiently developed procedures to quality assure the provision.

24. Martec has established an effective management team who work closely together in an open and consultative management environment, providing good management of new initiatives. The senior management team encourages other managers at all levels to identify areas where the provision can be improved. Internal communication is good. Regular meetings take place at senior management level, individual team meetings take place frequently and all staff meet with their line manager on a monthly basis. Minutes are taken of the more formal meetings, which have clearly identified action points with assigned responsibilities and timescales. There is much informal discussion between staff outside of meetings. Staff are well motivated, and feel free to raise issues and share information regarding learners' needs. Staff have a clear understanding of the long-term objectives of Martec and can identify their role in the organisation and the part they play in helping it achieve its objectives. The management style is open and staff value the information they receive from senior management. The business plan for Martec contains a broad outline of how the learning programme is to be developed. The strategic development plan clearly outlines the plans and activities to help the company develop its objectives. Directors have a clear vision of how they want to improve the provision and the management structure that is required to support this. Good links exist with schools, and Martec's staff attend careers evenings and take part in mock interviews. Staff visit the local Connexions offices regularly to provide updates on opportunities for learners. The provider is now providing taster sessions for year 11 pupils at the end of the school year.

25. Staff have access to a wide variety of staff training opportunities that form part of their individual development plans. All staff receive an annual appraisal and a mid-year review. The staff training and development is linked to the company's business goals.

26. The overall management of support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Improvement in adult literacy and numeracy levels is a priority for Martec. All learners undergo a diagnostic test at the start of the course. There are indications that the provision of support is effective, but no analysis takes place to measure the overall success of the support. Some adaptations to written materials are made to help those with reading difficulties.

27. Data collected by Martec is insufficiently developed to be used to monitor learners'

individual progress. A management information system has recently been developed that has significant potential to provide useful management information. However, insufficient data is available for analysis to take place of learners' attendance, progression or the performance of different tutors and assessors. The management information system assists the production of reports that are available to senior management. However, the number and type of reports produced are restricted by the limited amount of data currently available, and this limits their effectiveness in supporting the planning of programmes. However, detailed financial information is provided by the centre co-ordinator to help plan and support management decisions to ensure effective and efficient deployment of the provider's resources.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

28. The staff at Martec work hard at successfully creating a harmonious and socially inclusive environment. The senior managers are working hard to attract learners from under-represented groups. Marketing materials produced by Martec are available in different languages and are distributed to multicultural centres throughout the area. Imagery reflecting cultural diversity is highly visible, reinforces equality of opportunity and social inclusion, and challenges stereotypical views. Martec has been successful in rectifying the gender imbalance often seen in the motor vehicle industry. The company has worked hard at challenging the stereotypical view of the industry and has actively promoted its motor vehicle programme to potential women learners. Martec has been successful at attracting women to its motor vehicle programmes. It ensures that women learners are well supported in their training centre and in their work placements, challenging stereotypical views and ensuring that they are well integrated with the programme.

29. Equality of opportunity is reinforced and monitored in the workplace during the learners' monthly progress reviews and at the quarterly visits made by the welfare officer. Feedback from learners is analysed and appropriate responses are given. When problems have been identified in the workplace, Martec has responded quickly to learners' concerns and has achieved positive outcomes.

30. Martec issues employees with a pack including information on equality of opportunity. Most employers have a satisfactory understanding of their responsibilities to ensure learners are protected by equal opportunities legislation. Learners display a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity. The topic is covered well at induction, where learners' perceptions and awareness of stereotyping are raised. Staff have received training in equality and discrimination and have a clear understanding of the practical applications. However, lesson observations do not report on equality of opportunity to help staff develop good practice.

31. Martec has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy that applies to all learners and staff. The policies give guidance on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Detailed procedures deal with bullying or harassment. Employers either use their own equal opportunities policy, which Martec checks, or adopt Martec's own policy. However, there is no overall procedure to ensure that equal opportunities policies are systematically applied in work placements. The language used in policies is difficult for learners to understand and interpret. Procedures for dealing with complaints are satisfactory and learners have an adequate understanding of the process. Where complaints have been made, they have been dealt with promptly and effectively.

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Martec has identified the priority of equality of opportunity in the new management structure and has established an equality of opportunity and diversity group chaired by a senior manager.

32. Access is satisfactory at the two training sites and access audits have been completed. Martec has responded to the findings of the audits and has made adaptations to improve access to learning. The company provides a good range of aids and modified equipment to help learners with particular needs, such as hearing loops for the hearing impaired. In most cases, individual needs are assessed and effectively met.

33. Martec collects data on staff and learners' gender, ethnicity and disability which broadly matches the profile of the local community. Data is not currently used to compare the performance of different groups.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

34. Many effective initiatives identified by managers and staff continue to improve the quality of the provision. A quality group with representatives from all departments of the company meets frequently to consider ways to improve the provision. This group acts as a forum to share concerns and develop new systems. More specifically, this has led to improved initial assessment being adopted to place learners on more appropriate programmes. Martec successfully identified the need to improve retention and achievement rates and has developed a traffic light system to identify learners who are at risk of leaving their learning programme. Where a need has been identified, additional support is provided to help learners overcome their barriers to learning. Martec has successfully improved retention rates from 53 per cent in 2004 to a current position of 94 per cent. The need to improve the monitoring of learners' progress has been identified, and Martec has purchased and developed appropriate computer programmes to achieve this.

35. Martec has a clear self-assessment procedure, with quality improvement meetings taking place on a regular basis. Staff have a clear understanding of the value of self-assessment and are clear about the role they play within the overall process. Staff are sufficiently evaluative to make clear judgements about their strengths and weaknesses. A development plan is generated that has clear performance indicators and target dates with designated responsibilities. The development plan is systematically monitored and reviewed to ensure that objectives will be achieved. The self-assessment report broadly reflects many of the strengths and some of the weaknesses identified by inspectors.

36. Internal verification is satisfactory. The process is systematic and thorough, and meets with the awarding bodies requirements. Feedback to assessors is clear. Staff hold monthly internal verification meetings to improve the consistency of approach, and to discuss learners' progress and actions needed. External verifiers' reports are discussed and improvement actions are assigned.

37. Martec's quality assurance procedures are insufficiently developed. Existing procedures have not been sufficiently adapted and updated to meet the specific needs of new and developing programmes. Senior management has identified the need to appoint a designated member of staff to develop quality assurance procedures to help support and guide quality improvement of the provision. Work has started to formalise quality assurance arrangements and ensure that currently incomplete key procedures are fully

developed. Procedures are in place for the formal observations of training and detailed feedback to tutors is given. Training needs identified are linked to the individual staff development plan. However, there is no analysis of the grade profiles observed or evaluation of whether additional training has improved the overall quality of teaching and learning. An internal audit system is included and these audits do take place, but the system for following up issues is not clear.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Motor vehicle		
Apprenticeships for young people	64	3
NVQ training for young people	3	3

38. Martec has 67 learners working towards qualifications in engineering and manufacturing technologies. Seventeen of these are completing advanced apprenticeships, of which 10 are working in vehicle maintenance and repair, four in vehicle body repair or paint refinishing and three in vehicle parts. Forty-seven learners are apprentices, of which 34 are working in vehicle maintenance, three in vehicle fitting and eight in vehicle body repair or paint refinishing and two in vehicle parts. The remaining three learners are working towards level 3 NVQs, one in motorcycle maintenance and two in light vehicle maintenance. Apprentices attend Martec's training centre for off-the-job technical training for one day every two weeks. They also study for key skills exams and complete NVQ and key skills portfolios. Motor vehicle training is managed by the general manager who has a team of six trainers and assessors, a health and safety officer, a welfare officer and a placement officer. Assessment is carried out in the workplace by Martec's assessors, who visit the learners at least once every four weeks. Learners' progress reviews are carried out in the workplace every 12 weeks. All learners are also visited every 12 weeks by a dedicated welfare officer to check their general progress and any welfare issues.

Motor vehicle

Strengths

- good NVQ achievement rates
- good standard of learners' work
- good process for identifying and supporting learners at risk

Weaknesses

- low achievement rates for full apprenticeship frameworks
- insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- poor standards of cleanliness and attention to safety at the training centre

Achievement and standards

39. Achievement rates are good for NVQ-only courses. In 2003-04, 62 per cent of NVQ-only motor vehicle learners completed their NVQ compared with the national average of just 47 per cent. However, just 38 per cent completed in the planned time, for which the national average is just 32 per cent. In 2004-05, 92 per cent of motor vehicle NVQ-only learners achieved their NVQ, compared with a national average of 57 per cent.

Sixty-seven per cent have achieved in the planned time, compared with the national average of 37 per cent.

40. Learners' work is good and of a high commercial standard. Employers and learners alike value the skills that learners develop in the training centre. Learners have the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills across all aspects of the motor vehicle industry. Learners are proud of their work and are encouraged to develop their skills quickly to reach a competent level. One learner was selected as a finalist in a motor vehicle national competition for the level of skill that they had achieved. Learners are confident and are able to give clear explanations of the techniques and skills they use. Learners make good progress with their training programmes, with some starting at level 1 or level 2 and then progressing to a level 3 advanced apprenticeship. Learners take pride in their NVQ portfolios, which are of a good standard, presented and organised well, and contain a range of evidence including good-quality digital photographs of their work.

41. There have been too few learners on advanced apprenticeships to make a meaningful judgement on achievement. Achievements rates were low in 2004-05 for apprenticeship frameworks. Only 32 per cent of learners who left in 2004-05 successfully completed their full frameworks, and only 14 per cent of learners did so in a timely manner. In 2003-04, 42 per cent of learners completed the full frameworks, but only 8 per cent did so in a timely manner. Martec has identified this weakness and has introduced a successful strategy to help improve retention and achievement rates. Retention rates have improved from 53 per cent in 2004-05 to 94 per cent for 2005-06. Learners currently on programme are on target to complete their qualification on schedule, with many making good progress with their key skills qualifications and technical certificates.

Programme	End Year	Success Rate	No, of learners	Provider NVQ Rate	National NVQ Rate	Provider framework rate	National framework rate
Advanced Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	0	0	0	0	27
		timely	1	0	34	0	45
	2004-05	overall	1	0	57	0	25
		timely	1	100	33	0	0
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	12	42	48	42	32
		timely	13	8	22	8	13
	2004-05	overall	31	42	52	32	41
		timely	29	24	27	14	19
NVQ training for young	2003-04	overall	13	62	47	0	0
		timely	13	38	32	0	0
	2004-05	overall	12	92	57	0	0
		timely	9	67	37	0	0

For details of how to calculate overall and timely success rates please refer to the "Quality Improvement Pack" (available from the Learning and Skills Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk).

The quality of provision

42. Martec has a good process for identifying and supporting learners who may be at risk of leaving the programme early. Progress reviews use a 'traffic light' type system successfully to highlight any potential problems. Learners who are considered as being at risk of leaving the programme are identified as red or amber and are contacted immediately by an assessor or the welfare officer. The welfare officer and assessors are skilled at supporting learners who are experiencing barriers to continuing with their learning programme. The welfare officer will frequently intervene successfully where learners are experiencing problems in the workplace. Of the 17 learners who started during 2005-06, 16 have been successfully retained on the programme. This retention rate is a significant increase on previous years. All progress review forms are checked by the lead verifier and assessor to determine what action is required. The welfare officer also visits learners at least every 12 weeks to discuss general progress and to check on the learners' welfare. The emphasis on thoroughly checking learners' general welfare has led to timely interventions which have prevented some learners leaving the programme early.

43. Insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training takes place. Employers do not receive a copy of an off-the-job training programme. On- and off-the-job training are not systematically co-ordinated to maximise the learning opportunities for learners. Background knowledge topics covered at the training centre are not sufficiently linked to practical training carried out in the workplace. Employers do not always take part in learners' progress reviews. Learners and the employer are given a copy of the review form and sign it, but all parties do not always properly review together the progress being made. During the learners' progress reviews, a brief discussion takes place between learners and assessors about equality of opportunity, and health and safety. The employer is not usually present and so is not involved in the discussion and sharing of information. Some employers are reluctant to allow their learners to attend the day release training, especially if they are busy at work. This results in learners falling behind with their background knowledge work. Employers do not appreciate the problems that this can cause, as they are not sufficiently involved in the training process.

44. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Training sessions at Martec's training centre are delivered well and learners enjoy attending the centre. Learners find the tutors easy to understand and say that the tutors are patient with them and happy to explain things several times if necessary. Learners frequently receive individual coaching in developing their skills. They receive good training from appropriately qualified instructors who have a good range of industrial experience.

45. Learners with additional learning needs in areas such as literacy or numeracy or are offered extra lessons. Support is provided by tutors who are qualified to teach learners with additional learning needs. Initial assessment tests are used to identify learners who may have difficulty with their chosen qualification, so that support can be planned into the overall training programme. Support for learners with additional learning needs is satisfactory.

46. Assessment and verification are carried out satisfactorily. Assessors and verifiers meet regularly to discuss qualification issues and to carry out standardisation exercises, so that all have a common understanding about what evidence is needed for the various awards.

Verification is carried out in a planned and thorough way at various stages, and assessors are regularly observed carrying out assessments by verifiers to check their competence. Thorough, regular assessment is being carried out both in the training centre and the workplace. Assessors visit learners' workplaces frequently to make the most of assessment opportunities.

Leadership and management

47. Learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities, and have good, respectful working relationships with Martec's staff members. Information about equality of opportunity is provided to learners at the start of their programmes and further information is discussed during learners' progress reviews. The application of equality issues at work is monitored by discussion and questioning during progress reviews, and sometimes during assessment visits. Visits by the welfare officer also check on how learners are being treated and how they are treating others.

48. Staff were involved in producing the self-assessment report and their views and opinions were actively sought and taken into account. The self-assessment report for engineering identifies some of the strengths identified by inspectors, but does not correctly identify any of the weaknesses.

49. Inspectors found poor standards of cleanliness and poor attention to safety at Martec's training centre. The training workshop area was cluttered with training aids, tools, equipment, vehicles and project work. This created many trip hazards, particularly as there were no designated safe walkway areas. Axle stands had the proper steel support pins missing and these had been replaced with unsuitable and untested bolts. Bench and pedestal grinders had guards missing. Support rests were missing in one case and the supports were badly adjusted in another. A bench-mounted drill had no safety guards fitted as they had been broken off and not replaced. As soon as these issues were pointed out, the manager did ensure that all were immediately corrected. Resources overall are satisfactory, although some of the vehicles used for training are quite old technology.

Preparation for life and work

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Employability training</i> Entry to Employment	42	3 3

50. Currently there are 42 learners on an E2E programme with Martec. Learners initially attend the training centre for a minimum of 16 hours a week. This increases as their programme progresses. Following an introductory presentation and induction, learners participate in a six-week programme of initial assessment and negotiate an individual timetable that links the three strands of the E2E programme. For some learners, their planned activities initially take place in the training centre, but some learners go straight on to a work placement. Currently 43 per cent of learners are on a work placement as part of their E2E programme. Nine staff work on the E2E programme. Two staff manage and co-ordinate the programme and have specific responsibilities for either literacy and numeracy skills and work placements or the timetabling and management of learners' programmes and activities in the centre. The co-ordinators are supported by two full-time tutors and a team of four full- and part-time tutor assessors. A full-time administration worker provides support to the E2E team.

Employability training

Strengths

- good progress in developing a range of work and personal skills
- very effective learning and pastoral support for individual learners
- comprehensive and effective initial assessment

Weaknesses

- some poor-quality learning materials
- inadequate systems for recording learners' achievement

Achievement and standards

51. Learners develop good personal and employment skills. They talk positively about the development of their skills and the progress they make while in training. Martec has a variety of employers who offer work placements and work experience to learners. Most of these are in the automotive trade. Employers range from small, local businesses to national employers, and learners have opportunities to gain a variety of skills and experience. Martec's staff work closely with employers to agree targets related to learners' work, and progress towards these is monitored effectively. Regular visits to the workplace ensure that learners stay on track to meet the goals that they have agreed. Sessions at the training centre prepare learners effectively for a work placement and concentrate on developing learners' literacy, numeracy and social skills in preparation for a work placement.

52. In addition to the achievement objectives set for learners, the number of additional qualifications available to E2E learners has increased in the past 12 months, enabling

learners to obtain formal certification in the workplace as well as in the training centre. The proportion of learners achieving additional qualifications has increased from 35 per cent in 2003-04 to 84 per cent in 2005-06, with most learners for this current year still in learning.

53. Progression for learners from the E2E programme is satisfactory. Of the learners who started the programme over the past three years, progression to a successful outcome of education, training or employment averages out to 44 per cent. In 2003-04 and 2004-05, however, the number of successful outcomes with contracts from two other providers being transferred to Martec. Following lengthy discussions with the LSC, these contracts were withdrawn. Learners' progression rates for 2005-06 remain satisfactory. Of the learners on Martec's apprenticeship programmes, 13 have progressed from E2E.

54. Periodic testing of the literacy and numeracy levels of learners shows that, of those currently on an E2E programme, 51 per cent have progressed by at least one level of the entry level framework for literacy and 39 per cent have made progress in numeracy. This is satisfactory. Most learners receive in-house certificates for the achievement of milestones on their E2E programme as well as certificates for short courses that they attend, such as first aid and an entry level award for skills for working life. Examples of learners' achievements are also displayed in photographs in the social room at the training centre and a large whiteboard displays 'stars' that acknowledge learners' participation, achievements and skills.

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

LSC funded work-based learning															
Entry to Employment	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	56	100	75	100	82	100									
Progression ¹	6	11	30	40	42	51									
Achieved objectives ²	8	14	33	44	35	43									
Still in learning	42	75	0	0	0	0									

1. Measured in terms of learners' movement to further training, education or employment, during or after their training

2. These being the key objectives identified for each learner while on E2E

The quality of provision

55. Learners receive very effective learning and pastoral support. For those learners on a work placement, staff visit the workplace at least once a week and more frequently if required, and progress reviews take place every month for all learners. There are additional reviews that include Connexions advisers. Progress reviews are effective in supporting learners and identifying achievements and targets. Progress review records are completed satisfactorily, and contain clear and specific targets. Support for improving learners' literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. Progress towards agreed goals in this area is reviewed regularly. Learners attend the training centre at agreed times for individual coaching, or group learning sessions to help them improve their literacy or numeracy skills. Learners are grouped in classes according to their level of ability and learners are clear that these sessions help them to improve their skills. All of the learners that inspectors spoke to about their literacy and numeracy needs were able to state what level of the entry level framework they had been assessed at, and what level they were aspiring to achieve.

MARTEC TRAINING

Support for literacy and numeracy extends to supporting learners in the workplace, and inspectors identified some good examples of employers providing specific literacy and numeracy support. Work placements are carefully selected to meet learners' vocational and personal needs. Staff make good use of their links with local employers to maintain and develop a variety of placement opportunities. Effective use is made of supervisors in the workplace to provide support and supervision for learners. A high level of care and attention is given to placing learners with an appropriate employer, and employers demonstrate a good understanding of the level of support required by most learners. Martec's staff frequently support learners who find barriers to their learning and have frequently intervened to help learners who have experienced problems at work. Martec has also helped learners who have experienced problems in continuing their learning, such as by providing financial support for travel to and from the training centre.

56. The initial assessment process for E2E is comprehensive and very effective. Learners participate in a range of planned assessment and team building activities over a six-week period. Not only do learners enjoy many of the activities but they also learn about their own abilities and develop their skills and confidence. Learners value the opportunity to try out a range of different learning opportunities during this time. Where a learner has individual needs that Martec feels unable to meet, the company works closely with Connexions and other training providers to find an appropriate alternative for the young person. Assessment activities cover the three strands of the E2E programme and culminate in the agreement of an individual learning plan containing specific and measurable targets. Individual learning plans are satisfactory, and contain clear and measurable targets. A record to summarise the outcomes of the initial assessment process is produced on a cumulative basis throughout the six-week assessment period. These records are clear, comprehensive and provide a good picture of the emerging abilities and needs of each of the learners. The records have recently been introduced and provide a much improved record compared with those that were used previously. The induction that learners receive is satisfactory and learners show a satisfactory awareness of equality issues, health and safety practices and the expectations and requirements of the E2E programme.

57. The quality of teaching on the E2E programme is satisfactory and the working relationship between staff and learners is good. Most schemes of work and session plans are satisfactory, although some are not detailed enough. Some of the accommodation at the training centre is cramped and the training rooms are uninspiring. There are few displays in the training rooms to engage young people and encourage an atmosphere of learning. In the better sessions observed by inspectors, good use was made of learners to support each other with their work, and tutors made good use of questions to check out learners' understanding and encourage participation in the session. In some cases, the sessions were too tutor-led and opportunities for encouraging learners to become active, move around and shift the balance of activity from the tutor to the learners were not taken.

58. Poor-quality learning materials are being used on the E2E programme. The language level of some worksheets and materials is too complex for the ability level of many of the learners. Many of the materials used contain no graphics or colour and are made up purely of text, often containing terminology that has little meaning to learners. They are uninspiring and many are poorly photocopied. There is a marked distinction between the professionally produced materials used in some sessions and those materials that are produced in-house. This has been identified by staff and some steps have been taken to reproduce materials that are of a better quality.

59. Systems for the central recording of learners' achievements are inadequate. Information on learners' achievements is recorded and kept on their files. Good use is made of a whiteboard in the E2E office to follow the progress of learners towards their objectives. However, other than the use of the whiteboard, there is no other central record of achievements that enables staff to break down learners' achievements across the range of qualifications offered. Inspectors experienced some difficulty in getting information on achievements for the purposes of inspection. While this was effectively rectified during the inspection, existing systems provide little scope for collecting data over and above that required to meet contractual requirements. Similarly, data collated on the reasons for learners leaving the E2E programme is not analysed over and above contractual requirements.

Leadership and management

60. The management of the E2E training programme is satisfactory. There is good communication between staff and much informal sharing of information related to learners and their learning programmes. Formal team meetings are held regularly and are recorded. Staff place learners at the heart of their work and this is positively encouraged by managers. Attention to health and safety in the training centre and on work placements is satisfactory. Staff involved in teaching and learning sessions hold, or are working towards, teaching qualifications. The self-assessment report is satisfactory and staff are involved in the process of compiling the report and making judgements about the provision. Assessment and verification of qualifications is satisfactory.

