

INSPECTION REPORT

Milltech Limited

14 September 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
- **learn**direct 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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Milltech Limited

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Milltech Limited (Milltech) is a private training organisation founded in 1983 by Mill Garages. The company is based in Sunderland, where it has a training centre in a grade 2 listed building. It provides work-based learning for young people, funded by Tyne and Wear Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in engineering and manufacturing technologies, business administration and law, and retail and commercial enterprise. The company also subcontracts with Springboard, a private training provider, for the training of Entry to Employment (E2E) learners.

2. In 1992 the Mill Garages Group was bought out by European Motor Holdings, which was followed by a management buy-out in February 1993. For many years the company was jointly owned by three directors until it was bought by a new director in March 2006. The director has assumed responsibility for the day-to-day management of training. He is supported by a management team consisting of a general manager, a business development/lifelong skills coach, an administration manager/internal auditor and a lead internal verifier.

3. The training team is led by the lead internal verifier, who is responsible for managing the quality, training requirements and standardisation activities for each vocational team. There are four internal verifiers and three assessors. Three basic skills tutors support learners on the E2E programme and there is an additional learning needs tutor who supports learners on the vocational programmes.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 3

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** More specifically, training in engineering and manufacturing technologies, preparation for life and work, and business administration and law is satisfactory. Leadership and management, quality improvement and equality of opportunity are also satisfactory.

5. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process is critical and inclusive. The company makes good use of learners' and employers' feedback to make judgements about the quality of provision. The company identified most of the key strengths and some of the weaknesses that the inspectors found, but overstated some strengths. The quality improvement plan is comprehensive and provides clear timescales and responsibilities for improving the provision. However, managers do not use it effectively as a working document to monitor continuous improvement regularly. The self-assessment grades matched those given by inspectors for all aspects of the provision.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** The company has made some improvements in its provision. Some of the weaknesses identified during the inspection and reinspection have been resolved successfully but others remain. Success rates for learners are now generally satisfactory or better across all areas of learning. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training in engineering and

administration remains weak. Quality assurance arrangements were judged to be good during the reinspection but they are now only satisfactory. The proportion of apprentices and advanced apprentices who complete their programme within the planned period of study is too low. Many quality improvement actions have only been implemented during the past nine months and have not yet had a positive effect on current learners.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR MILLTECH LIMITED:

- improve success rates
- ensure continuous quality improvement of all aspects of provision
- reinforce awareness and understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity
- improve off-the-job training
- use the management information system effectively at all levels in the company

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		3	
Apprenticeships for young people	86	3	

Preparation for life and work			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Employability training		3	
Entry to Employment	12	3	

Business administration and law			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Administration		3	
Apprenticeships for young people	61	3	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. Inspectors reported on and graded Milltech's preparation for life and work programme and work-based learning in engineering and manufacturing technologies and business administration and law. All the provision was inspected in the same week and judgements were also made about leadership and management, including equality of opportunity and quality improvement arrangements. Training in retail and commercial enterprise was not inspected, as there were too few learners.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	19
Number of learners interviewed	62
Number of staff interviewed	28
Number of employers interviewed	17
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	21
Number of visits	1

Leadership and Management

Strengths

- wide range of work placements to meet learners' needs and interests
- good management of additional learning support

Weaknesses

- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity
- insufficient quality monitoring of aspects of the provision

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Motor vehicle

Strengths

- good success rates for advanced apprentices
- good development of practical skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- some poor assessment practice
- insufficient employer understanding of framework requirements

Preparation for life and work

Employability training

Strengths

- good achievement of qualifications
- good progression onto apprenticeship programmes

Weaknesses

- insufficient vocational training at the training centre
- insufficient planning to meet learners' personal and social needs

Business administration and law

Administration

Strengths

- good learner progress
- good development of learners' business administration skills
- wide range of work placements

Weaknesses

- poor off-the-job training
- insufficient employer involvement in reviews

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT MILLTECH LIMITED:

- the support for literacy and numeracy - 'you get the reading and writing skills that help you to get a job'
- the quality of the work placements - 'they find placements that offer you promise; really good employment'
- on-the-job training and work experience - 'I feel like I've learnt more in four months than in two years at college, it's brilliant'
- the good personal support - 'they always check that you've settled in okay; I feel like I can always ring my assessor for help'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK MILLTECH LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:

- the amount of hands-on practical activities for E2E learners
- the pace of some learning - 'I could have done some things more quickly; targets could have been more challenging'
- off-the-job training - 'more help with things we are not sure about; tailored training on what we don't understand'
- facilities at the training centre - 'no canteen or drinks machine'

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- wide range of work placements to meet learners' needs and interests
- good management of additional learning support

Weaknesses

- insufficient reinforcement of equality of opportunity
- insufficient quality monitoring of aspects of the provision

8. Milltech provides opportunities for learners to work in a wide range of workplaces that meet their needs and interests. Learners benefit from Milltech's good reputation with a range of motor vehicle and administration employers. Motor vehicle learners work in small independent garages, medium-sized firms and large national companies with sites all over the country. Many administration learners work in large, national companies which provide structured on-the-job training and regular updating for learners about the company's latest products and services. Learners are carefully matched to appropriate employers. There is a thorough process to ensure that learners' interests, skills and aptitudes are identified at an early stage to find the most appropriate workplace for them. Learners in all locations work in fully developed roles for their employer and demonstrate good standards of workplace performance.

9. The company's management of additional learning support is good. It has developed an effective strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support. Learners' needs are clearly identified during initial assessment and detailed learning plans are drawn up for each learner. There are good arrangements to respect learners' sensitivities. For example, individual learning plans for additional learning support are kept separate from those for core activities. Support is arranged according to the needs of individual learners and the learning programme. Individual teaching by specialist staff, small group work and general guidance by training officers are all well co-ordinated. There are good arrangements for monitoring learners' overall progress with literacy and numeracy. There is a pastoral support tutor who is available to support learners who have personal difficulties or those who are considering leaving early. The role is well-publicised and promoted within Milltech. Forty-nine learners are currently receiving additional support in literacy, numeracy or language.

10. The managing director provides clear strategic direction. Staff at all levels have a good understanding of the strategic direction of the company. The company has a clear three-year business plan, which identifies a range of strengths, weaknesses and threats to the business. The plan is closely tied in with the company's key objectives and with the priorities set by the LSC. The company experienced a considerable period of disruption for two years from the date of the reinspection. Staff turnover was high and the quality of training programmes was in decline. The company has substantially recovered its position in the past 12 months. A new director bought the company in 2006 and assumed direct strategic and operational responsibility for all aspects of the company's work. Several new

appointments have been made to strengthen the motor vehicle and administration training teams. A dedicated additional learning needs tutor was appointed to provide in-class support for learners. A wide range of policies and procedures to improve the quality of provision have been devised and implemented recently. However, many of these initiatives are too new to have had a direct effect on current learners.

11. The company produces accurate and reliable data on learners' success rates. This information is used during staff meetings to monitor the company's performance and the progress of individual learners. Managers make appropriate use of this information to support judgements in the self-assessment report. The company has recently invested in computer software to monitor learners' progress. Managers are now able to identify the number of units that learners have completed and the proportion of the qualification that they still need to complete. The company carefully records and regularly updates the learners' progress towards achievement of key skills units and the technical certificate. Managers use this information effectively to identify learners who are making slow progress and to implement actions to improve their performance. However, training teams have not yet begun to make use of this monitoring software to support their learners.

12. Internal communications are good. Since early this year, the company has started to hold effective staff meetings every month which involve all employees. The meetings have a formal agenda, the minutes are well recorded and circulated promptly to all staff, and actions are detailed and followed up effectively. There are regular meetings of vocational teams to consider learners' progress and to standardise assessment practice. Informal communication is strong, and staff demonstrate a good team spirit.

13. Staff training and development are satisfactory. The new management is committed to promoting staff training and development. The company is accredited with the Investors in People standard, which is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Most of them hold a recognised teaching qualification or are working towards one. Attendance at training and development events is satisfactory. Appraisals are tied in with the company's business plan and learners' needs. New staff are well supported.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

14. Milltech has satisfactory policies and procedures for equality of opportunity. The company recently reviewed and updated its policies to include the latest legislation. Modified versions written in suitable language are distributed to learners and workplace supervisors during the induction process. Induction materials for equality of opportunity and diversity cover all key areas of equality of opportunity. Learners receive clear illustrations on racial harassment, disability and gender inequality. They are made aware of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace, and informed about whom they should contact in the event of bullying or harassment at work. Staff at Milltech take prompt action to deal with concerns raised by learners.

15. The company systematically collects and evaluates data relating to learners' gender, ethnicity and disability. However, Milltech does not compare success rates for men and women or for learners from different backgrounds. The company is using external support to develop a detailed action plan for equality of opportunity. It has already implemented a number of new actions to promote equality of opportunity, such as the

production of posters for circulation to learners and employers, and encouraging learners to use mobile telephones and text messages to alert staff to any personal issues.

16. Milltech satisfactorily promotes equality of opportunity to young people. For example, in its presentations to local schools and a local centre for women from minority ethnic groups, it challenges stereotypical job roles. It has three women on vehicle engineering programmes. The company provides effective support for learners with disabilities such as dyslexia.

17. Milltech's training centre is located in a listed building. Access to the centre for learners with restricted mobility is difficult. Staff make suitable alternative arrangements so that learners with restricted mobility can attend off-the-job training at the centre.

18. Milltech does not reinforce equality of opportunity sufficiently. Although learners are introduced to equality of opportunity at induction, their awareness is insufficiently consolidated during the programme. Some learners have a poor understanding of equality of opportunity. Their understanding is not sufficiently reinforced or developed, for example at reviews. The company recognises this weakness and has recently introduced a revised set of standard equal opportunities questions for assessors to use during reviews. It has also recently carried out an awareness-raising session for staff and is planning to introduce specific training for assessors. However, these steps have not yet had an effect on learners.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

19. Milltech has carried out a careful analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, and it has recently introduced a number of new measures to improve the quality of its provision. These are now beginning to have an effect on learners. For example, it has recruited a number of well-qualified staff with specialist experience and has encouraged staff to take a level 4 teaching qualification. It has also introduced a clear scheme for the observation of teaching and learning. Most training staff have now been observed. The company provides tutors with constructive feedback to improve their performance. It has introduced a standard layout for all schemes of work and lesson plans. Detailed work is taking place to revise paperwork to improve the recording of learners' assessments.

20. Milltech's procedures for internal verification are effective. Internal verifiers regularly observe assessors and candidates in the workplace and provide constructive feedback to assessors. They hold regular meetings with assessors to standardise procedures and to share good practice. Clear internal verification sampling plans are in place, which ensure that all assessors, candidates and units are adequately sampled.

21. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Milltech produced an updated self-assessment report immediately before the inspection. The process was inclusive and staff contributed fully to the report. The report took appropriate account of learners' and employers' views. The self-assessment report identified most of the strengths and some of the weaknesses that the inspectors found. Inspectors gave the same grades for all aspects of the provision as those in the self-assessment.

22. Quality monitoring of some aspects of the provision is insufficient. Milltech has a detailed set of quality assurance procedures that are routinely audited for compliance. However, the company does not focus sufficiently on monitoring the quality of some

aspects of provision. For example, Milltech does not effectively monitor the quality of learners' progress reviews, assessment planning or the involvement of employers in review and planning processes. The company regularly collects feedback from learners and workplace supervisors to monitor the quality of its provision. However, some questions in the questionnaires are insufficiently evaluative and do not provide adequate information on which to improve quality or plan future actions. Systematic monitoring and evaluation of the quality of on-the-job training is not yet in place to drive improvement. The company recognises that it has made slow progress in improving its quality monitoring arrangements since the reinspection in 2003. Many of the current quality monitoring arrangements have only been introduced recently and they are not fully implemented across the company. Routine monitoring of progress against the company's quality improvement plan is not yet established.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Motor vehicle Apprenticeships for young people	86	3 3

23. Milltech provides training and assessment for 60 apprentices and 26 advanced apprentices on a range of motor vehicle training programmes. Forty-four learners are training in vehicle body repair, vehicle tyres, vehicle sales or vehicle parts. Forty-two learners are following programmes in vehicle mechanics. Of these, 36 are working on light vehicles and six on heavy vehicles. Apprentices are referred by Connexions, local employers and schools. Some apprentices have transferred from pre-employment courses run by Milltech. All advanced apprentices and most apprentices are employed. Most learners work in small independent garages. Some learners on vehicle body repair programmes work in large companies that carry out repairs for national insurance companies. Motor vehicle apprentices attend the training centre one day each week for training in background knowledge and key skills sessions. Vehicle body repair apprentices attend for one day every two weeks. Milltech's assessors carry out assessments in the learners' work environment.

Motor vehicle

Strengths

- good success rates for advanced apprentices
- good development of practical skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- some poor assessment practice
- insufficient employer understanding of framework requirements

Achievement and standards

24. Qualification success rates for advanced apprentices are good. The overall success rate in 2004-05 was 59 per cent, compared with a national average of 42 per cent. Forty-two per cent of the learners who completed the programme in 2003-04, and 53 per cent of those who completed in 2004-05, did so within the planned period of study. The national average for timely completions during these years was 31 per cent.

25. Learners develop good practical skills. Apprentices are able to complete complex tasks that exceed the standards employers expect of them. Many are able to perform tasks to the same standards as their more experienced colleagues. Apprentices carry out work operations and duties with minimum supervision. Vehicle repair apprentices carry out major repairs at an early stage in their apprenticeship. Body repair apprentices are

able to prepare and finish vehicles to a high standard, despite being on the programme for a relatively short period of time. Most apprentices show confidence in a range of tasks and take on additional responsibilities enthusiastically.

26. Success rates for apprentices are satisfactory. The overall success rate in 2003-04 was good at 61 per cent, compared with a national average of 26 per cent, but it declined to just 32 per cent in 2004-05, compared with a national average of 36 per cent. Funding body data for learners who completed in 2005-06 shows an upward trend in success rates for apprentices.

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	19	53	55	47	45
		timely	19	47	38	42	31
	2004-05	overall	17	59	54	59	42
		timely	17	53	40	53	31
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	23	61	39	61	26
		timely	18	28	14	28	9
	2004-05	overall	31	32	45	32	36
		timely	32	22	19	22	15

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

27. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching staff are well qualified and occupationally experienced. They regularly update their industry knowledge. Lessons are well planned and contain clear aims and objectives that are linked effectively to long-term targets. Tutors use questioning techniques effectively to elicit understanding. Learners participate in sessions and they are able to answer correctly a range of questions to demonstrate that learning has taken place. Tutors make good use of visual aids and supporting software to clearly demonstrate the practical aspects of motor vehicle engineering. They teach health and safety topics in imaginative ways that engage learners actively in small-group work to identify workplace hazards and risks. However, attendance at some sessions is poor. Managers are aware of this problem and have begun to implement initiatives to improve attendance.

28. Additional support for learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs is satisfactory. Learners receive an initial assessment when they join the programme and an individual learning plan is completed. Learning support is provided discreetly and sensitively during learning sessions at the training centre.

29. Information, advice and guidance for learners is satisfactory. Learners receive appropriate guidance before they join the programme. Staff carefully match learners' abilities and aspirations to the most appropriate programme. On completion of their

programme, learners who have shown interest and ability are referred to an advanced apprenticeship programme. On completion of the advanced apprenticeship, they are referred to other learning providers to further enhance their vocational skills.

30. There is some poor assessment practice. Learners are expected to collect evidence through the production of job cards and reports. The standard paperwork given to apprentices for this purpose is a poor photocopy. Learners have not been trained sufficiently in how to record the evidence they are collecting but assessors accept these reports. The planning of on-the-job assessment is not always effective. Assessors are not always aware of the work activities learners will be carrying out on the assessment visit. Work activities that produce evidence for units other than the one being assessed are not recorded by the assessor. Instead, further assessment visits are arranged. The paperwork used to record assessments is cumbersome. It is designed to record evidence for other purposes, such as reviews, but this leads to confusion and repetition. Some reviews are carried out during the same visit as an assessment. The review document is lengthy and does not record clear evidence of progression, achievement or additional support required by the learner. Milltech's staff are aware that the assessment and review paperwork needs replacing. A computer monitoring system has been introduced recently to identify and record learners' progress towards all aspects of the framework. However, this system is new and it is too early to judge its effectiveness.

31. Employers do not have sufficient understanding of the framework requirements. They are aware of the attendance requirements for off-the-job training but they do not clearly understand the structure of the qualification. Employers are not sufficiently involved in co-ordinating the learners' work tasks with the background knowledge sessions delivered at the training centre. Training staff are aware of this problem and have recently begun to involve employers more closely in the planning of the learners' training.

Leadership and management

32. The engineering department was restructured recently to create clearer lines of responsibility and to focus tutors' efforts more closely on improving framework achievements. Recent data shows that current learners are making good progress towards framework achievement.

33. Arrangements for promoting learners' health and safety are satisfactory. New employers are thoroughly assessed to ensure that they meet minimum health and safety standards. There are appropriate arrangements for regular monitoring of employers' health and safety practices. Health and safety are taught during off-the-job training sessions and reinforced during learners' progress reviews.

34. Internal verification is satisfactory. Internal verifiers give constructive feedback to assessors. Standardisation meetings take place regularly to confirm assessors' judgements and to share good practice. Assessors have recently begun to encourage learners to make use of a diverse range of evidence, including photographic evidence of their work. Further staff training is planned to make additional improvements in assessment methods.

35. Arrangements for promoting and reinforcing equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Learners receive information and advice about diversity, employment rights and responsibilities and gender discrimination during induction. However, there is insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity during learners' progress reviews.

36. The company's self-assessment process accurately identified most of the strengths and weaknesses reported by the inspectors. The self-assessment grade matched the grade given by inspectors.

Preparation for life and work**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Employability training</i> Entry to Employment	12	3 3

37. Milltech subcontracts with Springboard, a private training provider, for the provision of E2E programmes for young people. The aims of E2E are to prepare young people for further education, training or employment. Milltech specialises in training learners in motor vehicle programmes, administration and retailing. At the time of inspection, 12 learners were on the programme. Learners work toward qualifications in key skills, literacy and numeracy, and information and communications technology (ICT). Learners are referred to the programme by other work-based learning providers or by Connexions advisers. Some are recruited through the company's marketing and promotional activities. Learners attend the programme for a minimum of 16 hours each week. Learners have the opportunity to attend a work experience trial or placement during the programme. Five learners are currently on work placements.

Employability training*Strengths*

- good achievement of qualifications
- good progression onto apprenticeship programmes

Weaknesses

- insufficient vocational training at the training centre
- insufficient planning to meet learners' personal and social needs

Achievement and standards

38. There is good achievement of externally accredited qualifications. Of the 67 learners who left in the 12 months before the inspection, 52 achieved a qualification. All learners achieved a key skill in application of number, communication and information technology. Three achieved a level 1 qualification in motor vehicle and four achieved a 'Be Safe' health and safety award.

39. There is good progression for learners onto apprenticeship programmes. Fifty-five per cent of learners who completed the programme in 2005-06 progressed into further education, training or employment. Seventy-four per cent of these progressed onto an apprenticeship programme and 19 per cent are still in learning. Many learners continue to progress onto advanced apprenticeships. The company has a good record of providing apprenticeship opportunities for learners following successful completion of the E2E programme. This helps to motivate and enthuse learners. Current learners are making good progress with their work. Most develop valuable vocational skills. Some are offered employment at the company providing them with a placement.

40. The standard of learners' work in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Learners' portfolios show a broad range of evidence to support their work. They develop confidence in using their literacy and numeracy skills. Learners say that they value the support they receive in literacy and numeracy as it helps them to become more employable.

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.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	67	100	77	100	54	100										
Progression ¹	29	43	35	45	37	69										
Achieved objectives ²	6	9	6	8	5	9										
Still in learning	13	19	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

41. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Learners have the opportunity to discuss their career choices with tutors. Connexions advisers provide additional advice and guidance when required. Learners always know what they will be doing at the training centre at any given time. However, information about the structure and design of the E2E programme is not sufficiently shared with learners.

42. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Classes are small and staff give good individual support. Lesson plans have clear aims and objectives, which are shared with learners. However, schemes of work contain few practical activities to engage learners and too many learning activities are paper-based.

43. There is insufficient vocational training at Milltech's training centre. Most learners have the opportunity to attend a work placement and gain practical experience, but no vocationally specific activities are delivered in the centre to enhance learners' employability. There are insufficient opportunities for learners in work placements to be better prepared for the world of work. For example, one learner who had recently left school, found her own work placement in a retail outlet. The learner has been at the placement for five weeks, where she carries out stocktaking, merchandising, housekeeping and pricing tasks. Though she regularly attends the training centre, there are few opportunities there for her to practise or learn skills in retailing to support her in the work placement. Milltech's staff recognise this problem. The company is reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it covers literacy, numeracy, language skills, vocational skills and personal and social skills. Staff are also taking steps to look for suitable accommodation to use as a workshop for motor vehicle training. This initiative has not yet had an effect on current learners.

44. There is insufficient planning to meet learners' personal and social needs. Activities to develop their personal and social skills are based on short-term priorities. They are not sufficiently linked to each learner's main E2E learning objectives or other aspects of their

programme. For example, with the exception of timekeeping, few learners receive additional support in their work placements on personal and social development. Similarly, learners' E2E passports focus too much on the achievement of literacy and numeracy qualifications and do not sufficiently identify the skills learners need to develop and improve their employability. Learners are not formally assessed to identify their current level of personal and social skills. Planned personal and social skills do not have a key role in the curriculum.

Leadership and management

45. Overall management of the E2E programme is satisfactory. Communication is good. Staff regularly discuss problems and new ideas. Staff from apprenticeship programmes work closely with the E2E staff to ensure that learners who are approaching the end of their programme are offered a suitable placement to enable them to progress to an apprenticeship.

46. Equality of opportunity and health and safety are covered satisfactorily during induction. Learners attend induction for one day each week for the first five weeks of the programme. The induction process satisfactorily covers health and safety and equality and diversity. However, some learners do not recall the equality and diversity elements of the induction and are unable to say clearly what was covered.

47. The company's self-assessment process is inclusive and critical. It identified most of the strengths and weaknesses that the inspectors found. Inspectors gave the same grade as those in the self-assessment report.

Business administration and law**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Administration Apprenticeships for young people	61	3 3

48. Milltech provides training for 61 learners in business administration and law. Thirty-seven learners are following apprenticeship programmes and 24 are working towards advanced apprenticeships. Most learners are employed in a range of large, small and medium-sized businesses in the Sunderland area. Learners are recruited throughout the year. Most are referred by Connexions or their employer and others apply on the recommendation of current learners. Milltech interviews all applicants to determine their suitability for the programme. An initial assessment is also carried out to establish the most appropriate level for the applicant and to identify any learning needs. New learners attend an induction that covers the apprenticeship qualifications, health and safety and equality of opportunity. A diagnostic assessment identifies learners' literacy and numeracy needs. Learners attend the training centre once every two weeks for off-the-job training. Training officers carry out assessment in the workplace every four weeks and a progress review every 12 weeks.

Administration*Strengths*

- good learner progress
- good development of learners' business administration skills
- wide range of work placements

Weaknesses

- poor off-the-job training
- insufficient employer involvement in reviews

Achievement and standards

49. Learners make good progress. Provisional funding body data for 2005-06 shows that success rates for apprentices and advanced apprentices are improving. The timely success rates are very close to the overall success rates, which demonstrates that learners are making good progress and that they are achieving their targets. Seven of the 61 current learners have completed their framework early and are awaiting certification. Most current learners are on target to complete their framework within the planned period of study. The proportion of learners who progress from an apprenticeship programme to an advanced programme is good. Eight of the 24 advanced apprentices progressed from an apprenticeship programme.

50. Learners develop good business administration skills. They understand their role in their company and develop the skills and knowledge required to carry out that role to a very high standard. They make very good use of ICT in their work. One apprentice has

developed skills to use a distributed telephone switchboard. Two others are making good use of their employer's bespoke software in the administration of a garage cash management system and in a builder's merchants order-processing and customer communications system. Learners develop confidence and self-esteem. They are willing to work independently, to accept greater responsibility and make a significant contribution to their company. Some apprentices have been promoted and others have taken on more senior roles to cover staff holidays, illnesses and business requirements. One learner says that she finds it hard to believe how much progress she has made since she joined the programme and that she is now proud to describe herself as a professional administrator. In two companies, more experienced learners are supervising newer members of staff. Most apprentices take part in their company's performance appraisal scheme. The appraisal performance targets contribute significantly to their development at work. The standard of learners' work is good. Attendance at off-the-job training is good.

51. Overall qualification success rates are satisfactory. The success rate for advanced apprentices improved from an unsatisfactory 21 per cent in 2003-04 to 44 per cent in 2004-05, which is above the national average of 34 per cent. The success rate for apprentices declined from 53 per cent in 2003-04 to below the national average of 40 per cent in 2004-05. The proportion of apprentices and advanced apprentices who completed within the planned period of study in 2003-04 and 2004-05 is generally poor.

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	33	64	49	21	28
		timely	37	30	30	5	16
	2004-05	overall	16	63	51	44	34
		timely	9	44	34	22	22
Apprenticeships	2003-04	overall	32	59	54	53	41
		timely	31	13	24	6	18
	2004-05	overall	50	56	57	40	48
		timely	52	35	33	23	28

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

52. Learners benefit from the wide range of work placements that Milltech offers. Learners work in small independent firms, medium-sized enterprises and large national companies. Milltech has very good working relationships with employers. Employers express confidence in Milltech's training officers and find them responsive and well organised. For many employers, Milltech is the training provider of choice. Most employers are enthusiastic, and take their role in the learners' development at work very seriously. Most workplace supervisors are extremely supportive. Some are former Milltech learners. Milltech carefully matches new learners with suitable employers. Staff

promptly identify alternative placements for learners who find their existing employer unsuitable. Staff effectively help some employers to select and recruit appropriate learners. Some employers have their own training schemes, which train and develop learners over and above the requirements of the framework.

53. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Training officers use an appropriate range of assessment methods. They adequately record direct observation of working practice. Their questioning techniques and feedback to learners are satisfactory.

54. The range of programmes is satisfactory. The apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes meet the needs of the learners. The recent introduction of an E-NVQ is very exciting. This initiative enables learners to study and complete many aspects of their apprenticeship online, with the support of a Milltech tutor. E-learners make particularly good progress, benefit from improved communications with their training officer and are generally highly motivated.

55. Learners receive a satisfactory initial assessment and induction. The initial assessment process determines the learners' suitability for the programme and their level of literacy and numeracy. Milltech's literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. Diagnostic assessment identifies areas of literacy and numeracy support which a learner requires in order to successfully complete their programme. Thirteen learners are currently receiving extra help with literacy and numeracy.

56. Off-the-job training is poor. Sessions are dominated by the tutor, who talks at the learners and gives insufficient attention to their individual learning needs. There is little checking and reinforcement of understanding. Learning activities lack variety. Sessions are poorly planned and structured. Learners' individual training plans record the requirements of the framework and how learners will be assessed, but these plans are not individualised. There is insufficient co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Most employers provide high-standard training and coaching closely tied to the learners' job performance. Neither Milltech's staff nor employers use this high-quality training to support learners to gain additional evidence towards their qualification.

57. There is insufficient employer involvement in learners' reviews. Most review meetings involve only the learner and training officer. The learners' workplace supervisor participates at the end of the meeting. Most supervisors add a bland comment on the learners' progress review document and sign the paperwork. They are unaware of the significant role that they could take in target-setting and formulating and implementing medium-term plans to drive the learners' progress. Some workplace supervisors do not realise that the review process is distinct from assessment. Many review meetings take place in inappropriate settings, such as at the learners' desk in an open-plan office with work colleagues nearby.

Leadership and management

58. The recent appointment of a team leader has helped to focus efforts on long-standing weaknesses in the area of learning. Some have been resolved and others are in the process of resolution. Communication has improved and is effective. Training officers now make regular use of data in meetings to discuss and monitor learners' performance.

59. Arrangements for internal verification are adequate and meet awarding body

requirements. The new internal verifier provides good feedback to learners and training officers. The revised internal verification system is beginning to have a positive effect on learners' progress.

60. Equality of opportunity is generally satisfactory. Learner induction covers equality and diversity, gender and disability. Learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities at work and can clearly identify how they would go about making a complaint about unfair treatment. However, there is insufficient reinforcement of equality and diversity during reviews.

61. All staff contributed to the self-assessment report, which identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses that the inspectors found. However, staff did not identify the poor off-the-job training as a weakness. Inspectors gave the same grade as that in the self-assessment.

