

# Midland Group Training Services Limited

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**Inspection date**

14 March 2008

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**Inspection number**

319220

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## Background information

### Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

#### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Engineering and manufacturing technologies

## Description of the provider

1. Midland Group Training Services (MGTS) was founded in 1965 and incorporated as a limited company in 1975. Since 1975, MGTS has operated as a not for profit educational charity. Based in Coventry, MGTS operates from a 40,000 sq ft facility comprising of offices, training rooms and large engineering training workshops. As an educational charity, MGTS is employer led and membership based. A board of trustees represent the 120 member companies and direct charitable activities.
2. MGTS employs 40 people. Work-based learning for young people is funded through Coventry and Warwickshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). MGTS has 297 learners on engineering and manufacturing apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes completing National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). MGTS also has 44 school pupils attending their training centre on young apprenticeship programmes in engineering. MGTS offers apprenticeships in a range of engineering disciplines, including technical services, engineering production, manufacturing, engineering maintenance and engineering design. Most learners complete their initial off-the-job training and technical certificates at the MGTS training centre. Staff from Dudley college deliver training for the technical certificates at the MGTS training centre.
3. In November 2003, MGTS became a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) for training in multi-skilled management of industrial electrical systems. MGTS also has CoVE status for leadership and management in partnership with North Warwickshire and Hinckley college and Warwickshire college. The CoVE facilities provide apprentices and advanced apprentices access to modern well equipped training resources as part of their off-the-job training.
4. Coventry has an estimated working age population of 190,000. Within the city 19% of the working population have declared that they have a disability. Around 16% of all those living in Coventry are from a minority ethnic group. The job seeker claimant count rate in April 2007 was 4%, above the West Midlands average of 3.3%. Engineering and manufacturing account for 14.1% of employment in the city. The proportion achieving an NVQ Level 2 by the age of 19 has increased by 6% since 2004 to 65% in 2006. This is below the sub-regional average of 74% and the West Midlands average of 70%.

## Summary of grades awarded

<b>Effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Outstanding: Grade 1</b>
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Outstanding: Grade 1</b>
<b>Achievement and standards</b>	<b>Outstanding: Grade 1</b>
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Outstanding: Grade 1</b>
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1
<b>Equality of opportunity</b>	<b>Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2</b>

## Sector subject area

<b>Engineering and manufacturing technologies</b>	<b>Outstanding: Grade 1</b>
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## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

#### Outstanding: Grade 1

Work-based learning  
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1  
Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

5. The overall effectiveness of MGTS provision is outstanding. Achievements and standards are outstanding and the quality of the provision is good. Training for engineering apprentices, advanced apprentices and for learners on Train to Gain programmes is outstanding. Leadership and management are outstanding and equality of opportunity is good.

#### Capacity to improve

#### Outstanding: Grade 1

6. MGTS has demonstrated an outstanding capacity to improve. Since the previous inspection, another CoVE status in leadership and management has been gained alongside the CoVE in multi-skilled management of industrial electrical systems gained in 2003. MGTS is one of the first training organisations to achieve the LSC 'new standard framework' with engineering specialisation. Quality assurance and quality improvement processes are outstanding. All of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been rectified and have now become strengths. Most of the strengths have been built on and identified again at the current inspection. Achievements have risen each year and most learners achieve their awards within the planned time periods.
7. The self-assessment process is good and takes account of the views of staff, learners, employers and subcontractors. It draws upon recent analysis of learners' achievements and trends over time. Inspectors agreed with most of the identified strengths in the report and many of the areas for improvement had been rectified. Suitable action plans have been produced to develop the company further and to build upon the areas judged in the self-assessment report to be satisfactory or to be strengths. Action plans are monitored at regular management meetings and updated at staff meetings.

## Key strengths

- Very high success rates
- Good skills development
- Progression is good
- Good on- and off-the-job training
- Excellent range and standard of resources
- Very good progress reviews
- Very effective monitoring of progress
- Very good strategic planning
- Excellent partnership arrangements
- Very good quality improvement processes
- Good equality and diversity initiatives

## Key areas for improvement

- Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- Emphasis on the use of personal protective equipment in the training centre

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

#### Outstanding: Grade 1

Work-based learning  
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1  
Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

8. Achievements and standards are outstanding for all learners. Success rates are very high and most learners achieve their qualifications in the planned time. Engineering apprentices and advanced apprentices develop good skills in the training centre and at work. The standard of learners' work is high and learners' progress is impressive.
9. Train to Gain learners benefit from the opportunity to gain qualifications at work and enjoy the training. They gain additional confidence in performing work tasks and through demonstrating new skills. For some learners additional help with literacy and numeracy is appreciated and many go on to achieve higher level jobs after gaining new skills and qualifications.
10. Apprentices and advanced apprentices achieve a wide range of skills and many additional courses are provided in addition to those that are funded. First year apprentices are quickly found employment with suitable employers and most go on to complete an advanced apprenticeship. Learners often complete higher level courses and some go on to undertake degrees in engineering.

### Quality of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning  
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2  
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

11. The quality of the provision is good overall. Training is well planned at the training centre and in the workplace. Training programmes are well structured to meet the needs of learners and of employers. Resources are very good and learners benefit from additional equipment purchased through the CoVEs. Learners are well motivated and enjoy the training. The training centre reflects many of the disciplines found at work such as strict attendance and timekeeping. However, the friendly atmosphere between learners and staff motivates learners to work hard and promotes maturity with the younger learners. Learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their work and they do this with confidence.
12. All learners are well supported by assessors, tutors and workplace mentors. Additional help is provided for those requiring numeracy and literacy support. MGTS and the subcontracted colleges carry out effective initial assessment for those attending off-the-job training. Learners' mechanical aptitude is initially assessed as well as their basic and key skills.

### Leadership and management



**Outstanding: Grade 1**

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

**Equality of opportunity**

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

13. MGTS leadership and management are outstanding. It has very good strategic planning processes that lead to clearly defined company objectives, linked to targets and key performance indicators. Managers carry out a comprehensive analysis on a broad range of business influencers. These include the local and national LSC priorities, awarding body and sector skills councils plans, Government priorities and political influencing reports, as well as the needs of the local engineering and manufacturing industries. Following analysis, the relevant issues for MGTS and employers are appropriately targeted, resulting in stretching objectives being agreed together with key performance indicators to meet the targets.
14. Partnership arrangements with key organisations are excellent. These include strong links with the local authority, connexions service and local schools to design the new engineering diploma that will be offered from September 2008. They have also piloted the young apprenticeship in engineering with schools and have 44 young apprentices working at their training centre for two days a week. This initiative is in its fourth year and some of the young apprentices have subsequently gone on to advanced engineering apprenticeships. MGTS has a key role at careers conventions and schools events to explain about different engineering options and careers to young people. The company is part of a national partnership for employer led training (NPELT) made up of five similar organisations that meet to evaluate new initiatives and share information about the engineering and manufacturing industries.
15. Staff development is good. Managers meet with staff every 12 weeks to discuss performances against KPIs, future development opportunities and training needs identified by formal observations of their work. All managers have recently completed a Level two qualification in equality and diversity. Most staff have also completed the qualification and first year apprentices are doing the same qualification. All managers have completed an information, advice and guidance course and all staff are completing the course to provide the relevant support to learners. Other recent courses completed by staff include technical update training, teaching and assessment courses.
16. MGTS has very good quality improvement processes. The company has well written comprehensive quality procedures that are regularly audited, revised and improved. Feedback is sought and analysed from employers and learners through regular questionnaires leading to comprehensive evaluations of services. Identified improvement opportunities are actioned and re-evaluated. The NPELT group share self-assessment reports, other key documents and processes to identify and share best practice and improve the quality of their work. The group also benchmark achievement and other performance data for improvement purposes.
17. There are good equality and diversity initiatives. All apprentices attending the first year at the training centre complete an equality and diversity qualification at Level 2 to broaden understanding and expand their knowledge. The course helps to develop confidence and enhances their life skills. Learners enjoy the course and benefit from it. At learners

progress reviews, training and development advisers discuss various pre-prepared equality and diversity scenarios that challenge learners and employers to think about equality issues. The scenarios provide a very good basis for interesting debate and help to expand the knowledge and understanding of learners and employers.

18. Equality is promoted well and MGTS work hard to attract under-represented groups by using marketing materials that promote learners from different genders and minority groups. They also effectively use existing learners from under-represented groups to talk to potential learners at careers events and schools as positive role models. Successful recruitment events have been organised aimed at attracting under-represented groups. For example, a day was held that aimed minority ethnic groups, where they could drive cars and gain some engineering and mechanical appreciation. Good recent links have been formed with a local college that takes learners with physical disabilities. There are good initiatives for learners from both establishments to work together on engineering projects such as wheelchair adaptations and enhancements. MGTS has good policies and procedures that comply with legislative requirements and help to protect staff and learners. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Staff are CRB checked and there are effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
19. There is not enough emphasis on the use of protective clothing in the training centre. A few learners were observed working in the training centre when they had forgotten to bring their boots or overalls. However, all other aspects of health and safety are strictly enforced and staff are well qualified and experienced in health and safety.

## What learners like:

- Team building and group working
- Informal but good delivery (Train to Gain)
- How well the training course was organised
- 'Being treated like an adult'
- 'The help I got from workmates'
- 'The whole of my experience at MGTS'
- Mix of practical and theory in the first year
- Good resources at MGTS
- 'Meeting new people and making friends'
- The good atmosphere in the training centre

## What learners think could improve:

- Limited time available for paperwork (Train to Gain)
- 'Would have liked to have the lessons at MGTS' (Train to Gain)
- 'The amount of contact with my employer in the first year'
- Shorter time in the drawing office
- More modern course videos and better video player
- 'Better storage space for folders while attending our day release course'

## Sector subject area

### **Engineering and manufacturing technologies**

#### **Outstanding: Grade 1**

#### **Context**

20. MGTS offer apprenticeship and Train to Gain training to 297 learners. Of these, 180 are advanced apprentices and 20 are apprentices. The remaining 97 are Train to Gain learners. In addition, there are 44 young apprentices. Training and development advisers visit learners every four weeks and conduct formal reviews every 12 weeks.

#### **Strengths**

- Very high success rates
- Good skills development
- Good progression
- Good on- and off-the-job training
- Excellent range and standard of resources
- Very good progress reviews
- Very effective monitoring of progress
- Good range of additional courses for apprentices

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Insufficient co-ordination of apprenticeship on and off-the-job training

#### **Achievement and standards**

21. Achievement and standards are outstanding, as identified in the self-assessment report. The success rate for advanced apprentices in 2006/07 is 83%. The apprentice success rate, for the same period, is 89%. For Train to Gain programmes, the success rate is 75% in 2006/07 and in 2007/08, currently stands at 95%. Learners develop good skills and are supported very effectively by experienced workplace supervisors and mentors who fully understand the requirements of the NVQ. Learners also have a very good understanding of their work activities and responsibilities. Train to Gain learners develop good additional skills that they effectively use in their employment. Learners progress fast; one apprentice's first full time post is as designate to a junior management post. Another learner is building vital components for a Formula 1 racing team.

#### **Quality of provision**

22. Teaching and learning are good. At MGTS, learners receive good training from appropriately qualified instructors with a wide range of industrial experience. Instructors encourage and motivate learners to carry out practical tasks independently with minimum supervision. Teaching in theory sessions is good and learners are constantly challenged. The training centre replicates an authentic workplace environment in which apprentices complete their NVQ Level 2 and technical certificate. There is good on site training for Train to Gain learners. Learners make good use of an excellent range of quality

engineering resources at work and in the training centre. In the centre, the equipment and workshop facilities are to a high standard and are used regularly by employers for specialist courses. The training resources include very good systems for analysing and testing hydraulics, electrical installations, and rapid prototyping. Most class rooms are well fitted out with smart-boards, laptops and good quality furniture. Training rooms for key skills training are well equipped with modern computers used to support learners' development. However, one teaching room, close to the workshops, is shabby and poorly furnished. The training workshops contain modern, very well equipped design offices, manufacturing cells, production lines, and maintenance areas.

23. Assessors and verifiers are appropriately qualified and experienced to perform their roles. Assessment is satisfactory and the monitoring of learners' progress is very effective as identified in the self-assessment report. Assessment by direct observation and by expert witness testimony is frequent and well documented. Assessors give clear written and verbal feedback after observations to enable learners to improve their competences. Portfolios are comprehensive and the range of evidence is diverse. MGTS very effectively monitors the progress of learners and identify learners at risk of falling behind targeted completion dates. These learners are promptly supported so that they complete in a timely fashion. Very good progress reviews take place every 12 weeks, although learners are visited in the workplace every four weeks. Challenging but realistic short and long-term targets are set and closely checked at the next review. Learners take the lead in identifying and assessing progress recorded as a percentage for each unit. Employers are also fully involved in ensuring timely completion. There is very good and informative feedback from assessor and employer. Reviews include a very innovative approach to develop understanding of equality and diversity. Initial assessment is satisfactory with a pre-selection assessment, a key skills assessment and an assessment by subcontracted colleges. This does identify some additional support needs although there is no structured diagnostic testing for other learning disabilities.
24. The programmes are outstanding in meeting the needs of learners and employers. Learners' routine work is well planned to match the requirements of the programmes and their need to provide evidence of competence. Learners welcome the opportunity to achieve nationally recognised qualifications. As identified in the self-assessment report, learners are aware of the progression routes available to them and progression onto higher qualifications is good. Advanced apprentices are encouraged to progress to higher national certificates and degrees. MGTS advisers continue to monitor and progress higher qualifications even though they are in addition to the framework. This year, all apprentices progressed to advanced apprenticeships. There is a good range of additional courses accessed by apprentices in their first year. These include an excellent equality and diversity module, manufacturing learning, healthy living, pneumatics team building and manual handling. These significantly broaden the learners' preparation for industry.
25. Guidance and support for learners is outstanding. Employers have good training programmes which provide a variety of experiences for learners. There is excellent support from managers, mentors and work colleagues that enable learners to progress quickly. Staff support learners to maintain or develop their personal effectiveness skills. Instructors fully understand learners' needs. They encourage and motivate learners to carry out practical tasks independently with minimum supervision. Learners are proud of their work and skills developed during training.

## Leadership and management

26. Leadership and management are outstanding. There are very good communications with employers. Staff meet regularly to review learner progress. Monitoring software is used to very good effect to ensure timely completion. However, MGTS do not fully coordinate the delivery of on- and off-the-job training. For example, planning for technical certificate delivery does not take into account the timing or duration of practical training given by employers or within the training centre. Good staff development has significantly improved awareness and understanding of equality and diversity and learners' understanding is enhanced in progress reviews. This was a weakness in the previous inspection report. Training and development advisers keep employers well informed of learners' progress. Planning of the apprenticeship and Train to Gain programmes is good. Targets for completion are set and reviewed at management meetings. Managers now monitor retention and completion rates on apprenticeship programmes more effectively which was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection report.

## Annex

## Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship programmes** managed by MGTS Ltd **2004 to 2007**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	#	#	56%	#	47%
		timely	#	#	33%	#	26%
	05-06	overall	#	#	54%	#	48%
		timely	#	#	35%	#	31%
	06-07	overall	40	88%	70%	83%	66%
		timely	#	#	44%	#	41%
Apprenticeships	04-05	overall	#	#	52%	#	42%
		timely	#	#	26%	#	19%
	05-06	overall	#	#	56%	#	50%
		timely	#	#	36%	#	32%
	06-07	overall	62	90%	67%	89%	62%
		timely	62	90%	45%	89%	40%

\* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

\*\* Provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

# data is considered to be unreliable

Success rates on **work-based learning Train to Gain programmes** managed by MGTS Ltd **2006 to 2008**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	2006-07	overall	40	75%
		timely	28	70%
	2007-08 (7 months)	overall	21	95%
		timely	16	76%

**Note:** 2007-08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first 3 months or greater of the LSC contract year

\* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

\*\* Provider qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

\*\*\* Includes 'Train to Gain' long course NVQ provision, but not 'Skills for Life'