

# Manor Training and Resource Centre Ltd

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**Inspection date**

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**Inspection number**

320956

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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:

- Information and communication technology
- Literacy and numeracy

Provision in sign language, business, administration and law, and education and training were not inspected.

## Description of the provider

1. Manor Training and Resource Centre Limited (MaTReC) is a voluntary sector training organisation and charitable company. It was founded in 1987 to provide training and education for adults within the Manor and Castle wards and surrounding areas of Sheffield. The main target groups are those who are unemployed, on low-income or lone parents. A board of directors support and monitor strategic direction. The chief executive and senior management team are responsible for the day-to-day management.
2. MaTReC provides training in information and communication technology (ICT), sign language, education and training, literacy and numeracy, and business administration and law. Provision is primarily based at MaTReC's two premises on the Manor Estate of Sheffield. MaTReC currently have 360 learners. Of these 79% are female and 17% are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
3. MaTReC are funded by the South Yorkshire LSC. According to LSC data, MaTReC recruited 78% of its learners from deprived areas during 2006/07. The 2004 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, placed Manor and Castle wards in the top 1% of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England. Sheffield Neighbourhood Statistics show that unemployment rates for the Manor and Castle areas are almost double those for Sheffield as a whole. According to the 2001 census, the percentage of people from minority ethnic backgrounds was 5.2% in Manor and Castle, compared with 9.1% for England and Wales as a whole. The proportion of people in each ward with no qualifications is nearly twice the national rate.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3

<b>Achievement and standards</b>	<b>Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
<b>Equality of opportunity</b>	<b>Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2</b>

## Sector subject areas

<b>Information and communication technology</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Literacy and numeracy</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

**Satisfactory: Grade 3**

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Retention is low on long courses, but retained learners make good progress. Overall provider data shows that in 2006/07, 84% of retained learners achieved their qualification and overall success rates for long and short courses were satisfactory.

5. The quality of provision is good. Most teaching and learning is good or better. Sessions are well planned and appropriately paced and most use a wide range of teaching strategies. Initial assessment effectively contributes to the development and use of individual learning plans. The provision strongly focuses on employability. Since the previous inspection, the provision has changed significantly to place more emphasis on long courses leading to nationally recognised vocational qualifications. Learning and personal support are good. All staff are supportive to learners and many good links with partners exist for specialist support.
6. Leadership and management are satisfactory and arrangements for equality of opportunity are good. Strategic direction focuses clearly on the needs of the local communities. Partnership working is very effective. The local training forum plans local provision well to meet community needs and avoid duplication. MaTReC's approach to equality of opportunity is inclusive. Barriers to learning are quickly and effectively resolved. However, the use and analysis of data is insufficiently developed. A good range of timely and accurate reports is available from the new system, but these are not analysed and used to improve the provision.

### Capacity to improve

#### Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. MaTReC is in a satisfactory position to make improvements. MaTReC have improved success rates enough to have their 'notice to improve' lifted, and success rates are now satisfactory. For level 1 long courses in 2006/07 success rates are 58% and on level 2 long courses are 59%. In-year retention for the current year has slightly improved compared with same point last year.
8. The quality improvement strategy in place has a good range of revised procedures. The course review process now promotes greater staff involvement, action-planning and frequent monitoring. The observation of teaching process is thorough and accurately confirms the quality of teaching. The proportion of good teaching is improving. Although the new paperwork has improved it does not record learner progress or attainment. Quality improvement arrangements are incomplete; target-setting for improvement is not established. The few complaints received are dealt with appropriately.
9. Trustees, directors and staff are adequately involved in the self-assessment process through joint conferences. The self-assessment report is suitably critical but is insufficiently evaluative and coverage of all key questions of the *Common Inspection Framework* is not systematic. Judgements are not always well supported by the evidence. Some of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report matched those found during inspection but some were found to be normal practice. Additional areas for improvement were found. Inspection grades were broadly similar to those in the self-assessment report.

### Key strengths

- Good progress for many learners
- Good teaching and learning
- Effective focus on employability programmes
- Good learning and personal support
- Clear strategic direction

- Effective partnership working
- Very effective approach to inclusion

## Key areas for improvement

- Low retention on long courses
- Insufficiently effective strategies to improve learner outcomes
- Incomplete quality improvement
- Insufficient use and analysis of data

## Main findings

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Satisfactory: Grade 3**

10. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Most learners at MaTReC progress well through different courses and levels. Many have no qualifications when they begin courses. They start at entry level or level 1 and progress to level 2, mostly in vocational areas. A few progress to level 3. Learners concentrate well and make good contributions in class. Their standard of work is good. For instance, sign language learners use their signing skills expressively. Tutor training courses prepare learners well for progression to higher education.
11. Retention is low for long courses and below national averages for comparable groups of learners. In 2005/06 long course retention was 58.6%, 20.7% below the national average. By 2006/07 it had improved to 66%. Learners' reasons for leaving typically link to significant life events and are not related to their courses. However, most retained learners achieve their qualifications, and overall success rates are satisfactory. Recent

improvements have been made in both retention and success rates but it is too soon to judge trends. Success rates improved from 47.6% to 58% for entry level and level 1 and from 46.8% to 59% at level 2, from 2005/06 to 2006/07. Provider data for 2007/08 indicates further overall improvement. Success rates on short courses are high, but learner numbers on these courses are low and declining. No significant difference in achievement by learners from different backgrounds exists.

## Quality of provision

### Good: Grade 2

12. Teaching and learning are good. Almost all learning sessions observed during inspections were good or better. Tutors are knowledgeable, motivating and supportive. Initial assessment is particularly thorough and used effectively to develop personalised individual learning plans with set long-, medium- and short-term targets. Learners set themselves a personal target each week that tutors review and use to plan sessions. Tutors provide constructive and regular feedback on each learner's progress.
13. The range of provision effectively meets the needs of learners and employers. Since the previous inspection, provision changed from many short courses, to more demanding long courses leading to qualifications. Courses have a strong emphasis on vocational skill development. Many learners are seeking employment, updating their skills or planning to change their jobs. Some learners are supported by their employer to acquire specific work skills. Some specialised subjects, such as medical and legal text processing are available. Provision places a strong focus on skills for life. Learners who do not have level 2 literacy and numeracy qualifications are actively encouraged to take these alongside their vocational qualification. MaTReC has made good progress in embedding skills for life into ICT. The provision has good progression routes from entry level to level 2, but few level 3 courses are available.
14. Learners receive good support for learning and personal needs. The centre is welcoming and all staff have a supportive attitude to learners. A high proportion of staff were initially learners at MaTReC and provide good role models, readily sharing their experiences with learners. Staff contact learners promptly in the event of absence to support and encourage them to return. Information provided at enrolment is by subject specialists. A detailed initial assessment and interview process identifies learning and support needs from the start of the course. MaTReC is very responsive to meeting personal needs. They consider the location and timing of sessions, the availability of adaptive equipment and crèche provision. Good links with a range of local partner agencies assists with external and specialist support referrals. A recently appointed part-time, onsite, information advice and guidance specialist provides confidential advice.

## Leadership and management

### Satisfactory: Grade 3

#### Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

15. A highly committed board of trustees determines the strategy for MaTReC. Strategic direction focuses clearly on the needs of the Manor and Castle communities. However, over the last two years learner recruitment targets were significantly under-achieved, and the need to diversify has been identified. MaTReC's strategy attracts more learners from a wider geographical area. Currently 58% of learners are recruited outside of Manor and

Castle wards. Financial management is satisfactory. After a significant operational deficit in 2005/06, MaTReC returned a healthy surplus in 2006/07.

16. Partnership working is very effective. MaTReC's chief executive chairs the local training forum, which plans local provision to meet community needs and avoid duplication. Expertise within the partnership is well used. Effective joint working ensures good progression opportunities are available to learners. Very strong links are well established with a wide range of community and voluntary organisations providing specialist support, employment and volunteering opportunities for learners. Links with employers are insufficiently developed and MaTReC have clear plans to resolve this.
17. MaTReC's approach to equality of opportunity is good. A strong culture of equality, diversity and inclusion are central to the way MaTReC works. Readily available, free childcare enables parents to access learning. Most learners have little previous educational experience or attainment. Barriers to learning are quickly and effectively resolved. An appropriate policy sets out MaTReC's commitment to equality and diversity and covers all relevant legislation. The policy is reviewed annually and monitored informally. Reports relevant to the recruitment of under-represented groups are now available, but analysis of performance by different groups is still undeveloped. MaTReC increased its recruitment from minority ethnic backgrounds by 14% from 2005 to 2007, but recruitment of male learners remains low. MaTReC's procedures for safeguarding vulnerable adults help minimise risks and identify appropriate actions to tackle concerns. Most staff have taken recent training in equality and diversity. Both centres are accessible to learners with restricted mobility.
18. Until recently, vacant posts and staff sickness diverted much senior management time to covering teaching and administrative functions. This has been resolved and appointed sector subject area co-ordinators are beginning to bring about improvements in the management of provision. Initial assessment is particularly effective in determining learning support needs and informing teaching delivery. Information learning technology is used to enhance learning and to respond to employer needs. Annual staff appraisals identify personal development needs and most staff are taking relevant training. Currently 80% of the tutors hold teaching qualifications. Thorough internal verification ensures the consistency of assessment decisions.
19. The use and analysis of data is insufficiently developed at all levels. New systems to support management information have recently been introduced and a good range of timely and accurate reports are available. However, these are not yet analysed and used to improve the provision. Many staff have insufficient skills to interpret the data. Learner attendance data is not systematically collected and reported to managers and directors.
20. Arrangements for quality improvement are incomplete. The quality improvement plan identifies areas for improvement but monitoring of progress is irregular and insufficiently thorough. Targets to improve learner performance are not routinely set. The use of benchmarking to bring about improvements is not well developed. Strategies to improve success rates are insufficiently effective. Learner feedback is thorough and carried out frequently. Analysis confirms a high level of learner satisfaction. Good improvements have been made to the self-assessment process for 2007/08.

## What learners like:

- 'It's made a difference to my life, restored my self-confidence and enabled me to achieve my potential'
- 'They make it so easy to learn, it's like a big family'
- 'The support system is amazing'
- 'It's been a springboard for me to move on in my work'
- 'MaTReC really value the diversity of learners who come here'
- 'I like the 'cottage college' scale, I'd be lost in a big college'
- 'It's local, I can walk here'
- 'I couldn't come to learn without the childcare'
- 'We get really helpful feedback from tutors about our progress'

## What learners think could improve:

- 'Some of the classrooms get too hot and uncomfortable and can be a little noisy'
- 'The availability of next stage learning. Very little is available above level 2'

## Sector subject areas

### **Information and communication technology**

**Good: Grade 2**

#### **Context**

21. Currently 119 learners account for 222 enrolments on four ICT courses. Of these 29% are male, 27% have a disability, 20% are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 8% are over 60 years old.
22. Provision is offered by one full-time and two part-time tutors. Courses range in duration from 60 to 220 guided learning hours and sessions take place during the evening as well as during the day.
23. All four courses, the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), Computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) Certificate and Diploma, and ICT for beginners are accredited. Courses range from entry level to level 2.

#### **Strengths**

- Good progress
- Particularly effective management of learning in workshops
- Good support for learners with additional needs

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Low retention rates on long courses

#### **Achievement and standards**

24. Achievement and standards are good. Learners make good progress. Most learners gain qualifications and progress quickly to higher levels. Many who have not used a computer before quickly gain in confidence and acquire valuable ICT skills that they use to improve job prospects. Learners' standard of work is good. Achievement is good for those who complete courses. Success rates on all courses have improved and are now satisfactory at

63% for 2006/07, with a further 12 learners awaiting results. Attendance during the inspection was good at 87%.

25. Learners adopt safe practices. Good systems are used to monitor health and safety, particularly for learners with disabilities, who are consulted about risk assessments for procedures such as fire evacuation.
26. Retention rates on long courses are low as identified in the self-assessment report. In 2003/04, retention rates on level 1 long courses were very low at 37%. This improved to 72% in 2005/06, but provider data for 2006/07 shows a dip to 62%. Overall long course retention rates fell from 72% in 2005/06, to 64% in 2006/07, just below the 2005/06 national rate of 68%. However, achievement rates are high; 91% of retained learners on long courses achieved their qualification in 2006/07. Previously, most learners were on short courses. This is no longer the case, and most learners are now on long courses. However, in 2006/07 success rates for the 29 learners who started short ICT courses were high at 90%.

### Quality of provision

27. Teaching and learning are good. Particularly well managed ICT workshops support a diverse range of abilities and an array of units for different qualifications. Tutors very effectively use a wide range of teaching methods, for example, paired and small group work to discuss topics such as the advantages and disadvantages of email systems. Learners work is purposeful and well organised. Good opportunities exist for learners to develop literacy and numeracy skills that are reinforced through ICT teaching. ICT rooms contain a good range of posters containing literacy and numeracy support material.
28. Tutors support learning well and keep detailed records of learners' aims and progress. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Learners complete learning records after each session and identify personal learning goals for the following week. Tutors provide comprehensive written feedback on these records and provide extra practise material in response to learners' requests. Resources are satisfactory. Learners find teaching materials easy to follow and use them effectively. Teaching accommodation is suitable and accessible. Computers are up-to-date and reliable, although some rooms have insufficient desk space to lay out materials.
29. The range of provision is satisfactory, with clear progression routes through qualifications that learners clearly understand. The centre is convenient for learners to access and most are able to walk there. Sessions are held throughout the day and evening to suit learners with childcare or work commitments. Provision is flexible. When learners are unable to attend their usual session they can attend a session from a similar course held at another time. Teaching sessions provide good opportunities to develop work related skills. However, no courses above level 2 are available.
30. Provision for learners with additional needs is good. Learners are able to use a range of adaptive technology. Support needs are identified during discussions between tutors and learners. For example, one learner identified the need for magnified screen software and enlarged learning materials, which were provided. Tutors and centre staff are friendly and welcoming. Learners with health problems attend regularly. For example, one learner with mental health problems achieved almost 100% attendance over the year. Another learner successfully resumed learning after a gap of three years owing to ill health. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Information leaflets are clearly written and learners

understand them. Interviews with subject specialists at enrolment ensure that learners are on appropriate courses and thorough induction enables them to quickly understand how workshops operate. Many learners appreciate and make use of the free crèche provision.

### **Leadership and management**

31. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The small team of tutors regularly share ideas for improvement. All have appropriate qualifications and experience of standard office applications. Effective work with a range of partner organisations provides help and guidance for learners with disabilities and for those seeking employment. The use of management information data is satisfactory. MaTReC has recently introduced new ways to monitor attendance but it is too early to assess the impact of these.
32. Promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Policies are clear and supported by displays of equality of opportunity material. Commitment to include all learners and attract learners from a range of backgrounds is strong. Skills for life are well promoted through successful work to integrate skills for life learning into ICT.
33. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. Courses are reviewed by the tutor and learners to contribute to an action planning and to promote improvement. All tutors are observed teaching annually. The links between the observers' recommendations and the actions to improve have been clarified by recent improvements in the revised observation record. Recommendations for development are included in appraisals. The self-assessment process and report are satisfactory. The self-assessment process is inclusive and all tutors are involved. The report broadly reflects inspection findings. Areas of improvement have been accurately identified but some strengths were not recognised.

## **Literacy and numeracy**

### **Good: Grade 2**

#### **Context**

34. MaTReC offers literacy and numeracy courses at entry level, level 1 and level 2. All learners work towards qualifications within the national framework. Currently MaTReC has 168 enrolments; 86 on literacy courses and 82 on numeracy courses. This comprises 116 learners of whom 97 are female. Each week seven literacy sessions and six numeracy sessions take place, timetabled to provide morning, afternoon and early evening sessions. All learners attend part-time, most attending one two-hour session each week.

#### **Strengths**

- Good teaching and learning
- Particularly good initial and diagnostic assessment
- Good tutor and peer support

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Low success rates at entry level

#### **Achievement and standards**

35. Learners make good progress towards qualification aims and against personal learning targets. Targets are recorded on detailed individual learning plans following thorough initial and diagnostic assessment. Learners develop social skills, which they are able to apply to other aspects of their work and personal lives, such as an understanding of the use of formal and informal language. Learners increase their confidence and self-esteem and participate fully in sessions. Tutors provide encouraging and useful verbal and written feedback on homework. Standards of work are good.
36. Success rates on long courses at levels 1 and 2 are satisfactory. In 2006/07, success rates at level 1 were 66% and at level 2, 67%. Success rates for the 25% of learners at entry level are low. In 2006/07, retention on entry level courses was 54% and achievement 50%. Success rates were 24%.

#### **Quality of provision**

37. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors are enthusiastic and well organised. Detailed session plans provide a good foundation for individual sessions. Learners are clear about how the session content relates to their personal targets and qualification aim. Tutors use a wide range of resources, including many items from everyday life. Tutors are skilled at motivating learners to participate fully in sessions and enjoy learning. Learning is reinforced regularly.
38. Arrangements for initial and diagnostic assessment are particularly good. Following thorough assessment, individual targets are recorded in detail on individual learning plans. In some sessions, tutors use the individual learning plan as a basis for discussion activities and encourage learners to share their targets and learning experiences with the rest of the group.

39. Tutors use a range of learning tasks to motivate learners, including computer-based activities. In numeracy, an extended activity entailed learners working collaboratively, to plan, draw to scale and equip a garden plot. This provided opportunities for learners to develop several numeracy and literacy skills through a single activity. Learners work as individuals, in pairs and in small groups, and this contributes to their growing self-confidence. They are encouraged to develop speaking and listening skills. In the better sessions, tutors are quick to suggest alternative approaches to consolidate learning. In some sessions, where no interactive whiteboard is available, whole group activities are restricted. Some tutors make little input to the whole group and occasionally sessions become fragmented. When tutors are required to supervise new learners completing diagnostic assessments during teaching sessions, they sometimes find it difficult to meet the needs of all learners.
40. Programmes meet the needs of learners well. Local people return to learning and overcome barriers that would prevent them from joining courses outside the area. Crèche facilities enable lone parents to join classes, which they would not otherwise be able to. Staff are committed to opening up further learning opportunities and many learners progress to other courses. All learners are encouraged to take up both numeracy and literacy. Many achieve at level 1 before progressing to level 2. Tutors enable learners to decide for themselves which topics to cover. When possible, tutors discuss literacy and numeracy in contexts relevant to learners' jobs. For example, teaching assistants compare fractions in the adult curriculum with fractions in the national curriculum for the children with whom they work.
41. Tutor and peer support are good. Tutors provide good personal support and are sensitive to learners' needs. Tutors give supportive and unobtrusive confidential feedback from diagnostic assessments ensuring learners have good awareness of their strengths and areas for improvement. Particularly thorough induction and initial assessment learners receive detailed information and encouragement and they develop the confidence to achieve. In teaching sessions, tutors create a relaxed learning environment where learners feel comfortable to ask for help. Tutors are quick to offer praise for achievements. Learners often work collaboratively where they interact well, support each other positively and demonstrate good communication and interpersonal skills.

### **Leadership and management**

42. Tutors work well together to develop the provision and to share good practice to improve teaching and learning. Communication is good. Most tutors have specialist qualifications and have experience in teaching adult learners. Staff training on embedding in vocational areas has been provided through the quality improvement programme, and successful embedding work has been carried out in ICT. The promotion of equality and inclusion is good. Some tutors plan opportunities for learners to discuss and develop group ground rules. This generates mutual respect and helps learners develop self-esteem as well as speaking and listening skills. Tutors are clear about their role in providing a range of evidence for the self-assessment report, including encouraging student completion of end of course evaluations and providing data about attendance and achievement. However, they are less clear about the overall self assessment process.