

Mode Training Ltd

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 53411

Name of lead inspector: Sheila Willis HMI

Last day of inspection: 9 October 2009

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. Mode Training Ltd (MTL) was established in 1997. MTL works with 62 employers who are located in Liverpool and its surrounding areas. It provides hairdressing training for 138 young people and adults on apprenticeship programmes. Thirty-three learners aged 14 to 16 from 12 local schools attend the centre from between one and five days each week on an alternative curriculum programme delivered in partnership with Liverpool Education Authority. Learners attend the centre for one day each week. The programmes last between 12 and 24 months. The centre director has overall responsibility for strategic management, equal opportunities and safeguarding and is supported by a team of 12 staff.
2. MTL contracts with Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in hairdressing. Greater Merseyside is made up of six local authority areas, the largest being Liverpool with a population of 435,500. Skill levels in Greater Merseyside remain relatively low with 60.8% of the working age population holding level 2 qualifications compared to 66.5% in England. In 2008, 5.8% of people in the North West and 8.6% of people in Liverpool were unemployed compared to 5.4% in England. In 2008, 40.1% of young people in Liverpool achieved five or more GCSE's A* to C including English and mathematics, compared to 47.8% in England.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2007/08
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	21 learners
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	87 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 1
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject areas	Grade
Hairdressing	2

Overall effectiveness

3. The overall effectiveness of MTL's provision is good. Training programmes are managed well. Staff are highly motivated, well trained and are strongly committed to improving the provision. Most apprentices who start the programme successfully complete it but not all do so within the planned time. Learners on the 14 to 16 provision achieve very well and most go on to further training, education or employment at the end of their programme.
4. Teaching and learning are good and learners enjoy the training. Tutors use a variety of learning methods that learners enjoy but do not use information technology often enough in sessions. Assessment is fair. Progress reviews are regular, thorough and set clear targets for apprentices to achieve. All learners apply good health and safety practices in the training salon. Learners say they feel safe and well supported and the formal arrangements to safeguard all learners are good.
5. MTL provides learners with a range of programmes that they can progress through if they choose to as their skills develop. The information, advice and guidance available to learners gives an overview of career choices and the next steps they can take to gain higher level qualifications. Learners discuss at their progress review what they would like to do next but tutors do not formally

record this discussion to allow learners to reflect upon their career options and choices and review them at the next meeting.

6. Equality and diversity promotion is good. Policies and procedures are carefully explained to learners at the start of their programme. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated. Equality and diversity are promoted to learners throughout their programme in teaching and learning sessions and at progress reviews. Managers use the results of learner and employer questionnaires well to decide upon and implement changes that will improve training.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are high. Overall success rates on the apprenticeship and the advance apprenticeship programmes are high and on the 14 to 16 programme very high. However, although timely success rates on apprenticeship programmes are satisfactory and above sector averages, they are between 10% and 20% lower than overall success rates.
- Teaching and learning are good. Learners enjoy their training in the workplace and in the MTL centre. Tutors plan learning sessions well and use a variety of activities that interest and motivate learners.
- Learners feel safe and MTL's staff endeavour to ensure learners are safe in the training centre and at work. Learners understand their rights and responsibilities at work. MTL's safeguarding procedures are good.
- The provision meets the needs of learners and employers well. The range of courses is appropriate and takes account of the needs of learners and employers and provides learners with clear progression routes.
- Learners develop good practical hairdressing skills. Learner portfolios contain an appropriate range of evidence. Learners develop good literacy, numeracy and key skills. However, tutors do not consistently correct spelling and grammatical errors on learners' written work to help them recognise and learn from their errors.
- The care, guidance and support learners receive to help them attain their learning goals are good. The support and guidance that learners receive to help them deal with personal problems are excellent.
- Senior managers within the organisation provide strong and dynamic leadership. Staff contribute very effectively to positive change, leading to timely and effective improvements for learners.
- MTL's approach to implementing and continuously refining and improving quality improvement processes both within the organisation and with partner networks is outstanding. All aspects of the provision have significantly improved since the last inspection.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Good emphasis is placed on the promoting of equality and diversity and learner safety during training and at learners' progress reviews. MTL's strategies to encourage people in the local

community who are not engaged in education, training or employment to participate in training are good.

- MTL offers good value for money. The quality of resources are good and they are used effectively and continuously improved in response to learner views.
- Information, advice and guidance for learners on their next steps in training, education and employment are satisfactory. However, individual information, advice and guidance sessions are informal and not recorded at key points in the learner's training programme.

What does MTL need to do to improve further?

- Improve timely success rates to bring them in line with overall success rates by continuing to implement improvement strategies and rigorous target setting at learner progress reviews.
- Review the current information technology policy, to ensure safe learner internet usage and evaluate which internet sites should have restricted access.
- Further develop and refine management information systems to provide better information on the performance of different groups.
- Formally record information, advice and guidance interviews at key points in the learner's journey to individually focus learners on their progression routes.
- Improve attendance at enrichment activities to ensure all learners gain benefit from them.
- Check and correct grammatical and spellings errors on learners' written work, to help learners recognise their errors and improve their literacy skills.
- Carefully plan and extend the use of information technology during lessons to add more variety and interest for learners.
- Share MTL's training plans with employers to enable them to consolidate the skills their learners are developing at MTL.
- Broaden learners' experiences by extending their opportunities to attend external competitions and exhibitions.
- Develop a clear strategy to implement and formalise a policy on sustainable development that supports the existing environmental practices exhibited by learners and staff.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- The one-to-one support provided by tutors.
- The time staff give to help with learning and other support needs.
- The warm welcome for new learners on their first day.
- The alteration of training times in winter to allow learners to finish earlier so that they do not go home in the dark.

- Being treated like adults and learning in an adult environment.
- The enjoyable learning sessions.
- The ability to work at your own pace through the qualification and complete it earlier.
- The very relevant targets tutors set and regularly monitor to help learners progress and achieve.

What learners would like to see improved:

- The lack of hairdryer holsters and the sometimes unreliable hot water system in the training salon.
- The amount of practical hairdressing demonstrations in the training centre.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- The excellent support provided by MTL staff.
- The competent and professional approach of MTL staff.
- The regular and effective communication with MTL staff.
- The flexibility of MTL, recognising and adapting to salon business needs.
- The informative and useful learner progress reviews that fully involve and keep employers well informed of learner progress, targets and support needs.
- The high standards of learners' work and the good progress they make.
- The excellent support and commitment provided to learners on the 14 to 16 programme to help them succeed.

What employers would like to see improved:

- The insufficient access to a formal off-the-job training schedule so that employers can link their training more closely to topics covered at the centre.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

7. MTL demonstrates outstanding capacity to make and sustain improvements. Since the last inspection, MTL has made significant improvements to the provision. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been rectified and many are now strengths of the provision. Overall success rates have shown good improvement over three years and are high on apprenticeship programmes and very high on the 14 to 16 provision. Timely success rates have improved and are above sector averages.
8. Management of the provision is strong and highly effective. Company priorities are clear and improvement targets ambitious. Through well focused investments in staff training, staff have developed the skills needed to improve programme management, the quality of provision and learner success rates.
9. Quality improvement processes are strong. The comprehensive and responsive quality assurance system, identified as a strength at the last inspection, continues to be improved and strengthened. MTL is committed to quality improvement and the sharing of good practice. Through an outstanding collaborative partnership between six local hairdressing providers, the observation of teaching and learning and self-assessment processes and practices have significantly improved the provision. The self-assessment process is inclusive and makes good use of learner and employer feedback to inform the judgements in the report. The report is critical, analytical and accurate. Development planning is thorough and actions are precise, timely and lead to good improvement.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

10. Overall success rates are high. On apprenticeship, advanced apprenticeship and the 14 to 16 programmes, rates have improved significantly over three years. In 2007/08, overall success rates on the apprenticeship programme were 78% and on the advanced apprenticeship programme, 82%. Success and retention rates on the 14 to 16 provision are very high at 97%.
11. Timely success rates are satisfactory. Rates have shown year on year improvement and are now slightly above national average. MTL have implemented a range of strategies to continue to align them more closely with overall success rates.
12. Learners develop good practical hairdressing skills at MTL and at work. Learner portfolios contain an appropriate range of evidence. Learners develop good literacy, numeracy and key skills. Tutors do not consistently correct spelling and grammatical errors on learners' written work to help them recognise and learn from their errors.

13. Learners have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work. MTL provides additional training on learner rights and responsibilities which is outside the requirements of the apprenticeship framework.
14. Actions taken by MTL to ensure that learners feel and are safe, are good. Learners know who to speak to at MTL if they feel that they, or other learners, are at risk. Health and safety training is effective and learners have a good understanding of safe working practices and how to apply them in their work. Health and safety monitoring arrangements of employers' premises is thorough. The health and safety officer and assessors are appropriately trained.
15. The progression rate for apprentices on to higher level programmes is satisfactory and improving. On the 14 to 16 provision, progression is good with 40% of learners progressing onto MTL's apprenticeship programme. The remainder progress on to education programmes at other providers or into employment.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

16. Teaching and learning are good. Sessions are well planned and tutors have good classroom management skills. Tutors identify good opportunities for learners to develop literacy and numeracy skills in hairdressing theory sessions. Tutors plan lessons well to keep learners interested. However, tutors' use of information learning technology (ILT) to present information in an alternative way is limited. Individual tuition and the checking of learners' understanding are good. Assessment is fair, timely and reliable.
17. Learners' progress is monitored well at their progress reviews. Short-term targets are precise and reviewed and agreed with the learner and the employer. An overview of MTL's training schedule is not shared with employers, restricting the employer's ability to plan their in-salon training to support learners' training in the centre.
18. The provision meets the needs of learners and employers well. Learner surveys show a high degree of learner satisfaction and enjoyment with the learning programmes.
19. The range of courses is appropriate and provides learners with clear progression routes. Enrichment activities are well planned and offer learners a range of programmes including manual handling, drug and alcohol awareness and healthy eating. These programmes are well received and learners report changes in their behaviour and practices as a result. A minority of learners are unable to attend these sessions but MTL has well developed plans to improve attendance and extend the programme of activities. MTL celebrates learners' success with an annual hairdressing show where learners showcase their skills to employers. However, MTL could do more to raise learners' awareness of vocationally relevant external exhibitions and competitions.

20. Learners benefit from MTL's excellent links with schools, employers and some community groups. Some learners on the 14 to 16 provision who have a poor attendance record at school have effectively improved their attitude to school and learning.
21. The care, guidance and support learners receive to help them attain their learning goals are good. In particular, the pastoral support that learners receive is excellent. Learners receive appropriate information, advice and guidance about their next steps in training, education and employment in taught group sessions. However, individual information advice and guidance sessions are informal and not recorded at key points in the training programme.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

22. Senior managers within the organisation provide strong and dynamic leadership. Staff contribute and are responsive to positive change, leading to timely and effective improvements for learners. Performance data are used well to set ambitious improvement targets that are regularly monitored and measured. Learner and employer views are used particularly effectively to review performance. Resources are good. Staff training is prioritised to respond to government requirements, business needs and to improve the skills and experience of the workforce.
23. Good investment in technology has improved data management and made more efficient use of staff time. However, systems are not yet sufficiently refined to analyse the performance of different groups effectively.
24. Arrangements for safeguarding young people are good. Safeguarding arrangements are well embedded. Staff are well trained and have a good understanding of safeguarding and child protection issues. Learner representatives have also received the same training as staff and are contributing to changes in learner safeguarding information to ensure it is at an appropriate level and written in language they can understand. MTL works well with partners to provide risk assessments to protect vulnerable young people. The lines of responsibility are clear. The centre director is the designated safeguarding person with three other managers who deputise the role in the centre director's absence. All staff have undergone enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks that are updated every three years and recorded in a central register. The safe use of information technology policy and guidance is clear and appropriate. Safeguards to stop learners accessing inappropriate internet sites are not established but learners are given clear guidance and are always supervised when using the internet.
25. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Equality and diversity policies and procedures are carefully explained to learners at the start of their programme and regularly promoted and reinforced in training sessions and at learner progress reviews. Good emphasis is placed on the promotion of equality

and diversity and learner safety during learners' progress reviews. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated. The complaints procedure is clear. Issues and actions taken are clearly recorded. All staff participate in annual equality and diversity training that has recently been accredited externally. Plans are in place for all learners to participate in this training as part of their programme. Strategies to widen participation in training for under-represented groups are good. Staff have good links with community groups and regularly attend career and other events held locally. Links with local charities have developed learners' understanding of diversity and widened their experience of working with physically disabled clients in a commercial hairdressing setting.

26. MTL is particularly inclusive, as demonstrated through its user engagement strategy. The views of learners are used well to inform improvements. Staff engender an atmosphere of mutual respect that learners are very responsive to. The acknowledgment and celebration of learners' hairdressing skills are good and demonstrated by displaying only learners' high quality work around the centre. Commercial standard poster sized photographs of learners' work produced by a professional photographer are displayed naming the learner that produced the image. Learners' self-esteem and pride in themselves and other learners is increased.
27. MTL's approach to implementing quality improvement processes is strong. The continuous refining and improving of practice has effected significant improvement in the provision. Staff demonstrate a strong sense of collective accountability and responsibility. Quality processes and audit systems are particularly thorough and very effective.
28. Partnership working to improve the overall quality of provision is outstanding. Through the Merseyside Hairdressing Forum, a peer review group of six training providers has worked together and shared systems and procedures. Their endeavours to develop best practice have significantly improved the observation of teaching and learning and self-assessment process. Work practices at MTL have been refined and are highly effective.
29. MTL offers good value for money. The quality of resources are good and they are used effectively to meet the requirements of learners. Staff and learners are responsive to using resources in a sustainable way. However, there is no formal policy outlining MTL's approach to sustainable development.

Information about the inspection

30. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's centre director, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
31. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Mode training Ltd

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	171	33	n/a	n/a	138
Part-time learners					
Overall effectiveness	2				
Capacity to improve	1				
Outcomes for learners	2	1			2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	3				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a				
Quality of provision	2	2			2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2	2			2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	n/a				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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