

REINSPECTION REPORT

Retail Motor Industry Training Limited Reinspection

20 May 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

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 over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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.

REINSPECTION REPORT

Retail Motor Industry Training Limited Reinspection

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the reinspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	3
Key findings	4

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	11
Quality assurance	13
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	15
Business administration, management & professional	20
Retailing, customer service & transportation	23

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Retail Motor Industry Training Limited (ReMIT) is wholly owned by the Retail Motor Industry Federation, the trade association representing and servicing 9,857 member businesses in the United Kingdom concerned with providing motor industry products and services. ReMIT was formed in 1983 and has been involved in government-funded training from this time. ReMIT is a limited company with a board of two executive members and six non-executive members from industry and education.
2. ReMIT provides work-based learning programmes for 5,570 young people in motor vehicle engineering, business administration and retailing, customer service and transportation. Advanced modern apprentices in motor vehicle engineering are the biggest single programme, with 87 per cent of learners in this category.
3. Training takes place in over 4,000 businesses with over 120 colleges working as subcontractors for off-the-job training. ReMIT also has its own training centre in Croydon that currently provides off-the-job training for about 5 per cent of the learners. ReMIT has six regional offices and a head office in London. The company has 330 staff, of whom 248 are full-time employees. There are 144 assessors and training co-ordinators.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

4. Of the 5,477 learners participating in ReMIT's engineering programmes, 38 are women, 4,843 are advanced modern apprentices, 503 are foundation modern apprentices and the remainder are following other work-based learning programmes. All learners are working for national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 2 and 3. Modern apprentices train as heavy vehicle, light vehicle, motorcycle and diesel technicians. There are also auto-electricians, refinishers, body repairers and fast-fit operators. ReMIT works with over 4,000 businesses including main dealerships, small garages, body repairers and franchised outlets. Learners are expected to achieve a foundation modern apprenticeship in two years and an advanced modern apprenticeship in three and a half years. They are recruited through direct contact, the Connexions service and through employers' recommendations. Learners can join the programme at any time, but most start between July and September. They take part in a pre-entry and post-selection initial assessment process. Induction is carried out in the workplace by ReMIT training co-ordinators with the aid of an induction workbook and CD-ROM. ReMIT subcontracts most off-the-job training to further education colleges, including key skills training. In some regions there are also ReMIT training centres including a new centre of technical excellence in Croydon. Learners attend off-the-job training on day or block release. Some of the block-release courses are residential. Most ReMIT staff are full time, with some part time and self-employed. An assessor or a training co-ordinator usually visits learners every six weeks in the workplace. Training co-ordinators are

RETAIL MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

responsible for pastoral care, health and safety, college liaison and assessing workplace suitability.

Business administration, management & professional

5. There are 29 advanced modern apprentices and four foundation modern apprentices on business administration programmes. Learners are employed in a range of independent and national retail motor companies. All training is on the job and some key skills training workshops have now been introduced. ReMIT employs assessors and training co-ordinators who are based in six regional offices. Staff are occupationally competent and experienced in the assessment process. Assessors visit learners in the workplace at least every four weeks. Training co-ordinators visit learners at least every 12 weeks to review their progress and provide support. Some learners are visited more frequently if required. ReMIT recruits learners specifically for employer vacancies and also supports learners who are already in employment and who want to achieve a modern apprenticeship.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

6. There are 36 advanced modern apprentices and 24 foundation modern apprentices on customer service programmes. Learners are employed in a range of independent and national retail motor companies. ReMIT employs assessors and training co-ordinators in five regions. In the other region assessment is carried out by a subcontracted company. All assessors are qualified and suitably experienced. Assessors visit learners in the workplace at least every four weeks. Training co-ordinators visit learners at least every 12 weeks to review their progress and provide support. Some learners are visited more frequently if required. Learners are recruited specifically for employer vacancies. ReMIT also supports employed learners who want to achieve a modern apprenticeship.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	7
Number of inspection days	67
Number of learner interviews	102
Number of staff interviews	111
Number of employer interviews	46
Number of subcontractor interviews	12
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	57
Number of partner/external agency interviews	3

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

7. At the previous inspection in September 2002, the quality of motor vehicle engineering training was found to be satisfactory. However, the quality of training in business administration, and retailing, customer service and transportation was found to be unsatisfactory. The quality of leadership and management was also unsatisfactory as were the arrangements for quality assurance and equal opportunities. At the end of the

RETAIL MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

reinspection process all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	4

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

Business administration, management & professional	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Retailing, customer service & transportation	4
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	4

Grades awarded at reinspection

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	2

Engineering, technology & manufacturing	2
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	2

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

RETAIL MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

Retailing, customer service & transportation	3
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

8. **Learners in the motor vehicle advanced modern apprenticeship programme gain good vocational skills.** They develop good working practices in a wide variety of national, regional and local retail motor vehicle dealerships and body repair organisations. Learners work alongside experienced and well-qualified motor vehicle engineers and workplace supervisors.

9. **The motor vehicle foundation modern apprenticeship programme has poor retention and achievement rates.** Of those learners who started between 2000 and 2002, many did not complete their frameworks or left early.

10. **The rate of progress and achievement of frameworks is slow in the motor vehicle advanced modern apprenticeship programme.** At the time of the reinspection only 19 per cent of the learners who started during 2000-01 had completed frameworks. However, a further 29 per cent of those who started then remain in training. Six per cent of the 1999 intake still in training have yet to achieve while 38 per cent have achieved.

11. **In business administration and customer service the achievement rate for modern apprentices is improving.** A high proportion of completions have been achieved in the recent past. Learners develop good skills in the workplace. Many learners are in job roles with full responsibility for the tasks they carry out.

12. **Overall framework achievement has been low in business administration and poor in customer service apprenticeship programmes during 2002 and 2003.**

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	4
Total	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	4

13. **Good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is carried out by ReMIT staff for motor vehicle advanced modern apprentices.** Regular visits to colleges are carried out by ReMIT staff. Employers plan training activity to reinforce aspects covered in off-the-job training.

14. **Teaching and learning for motor vehicle apprentices at ReMIT's Croydon centre is good.** Good practical illustrations and examples are used to support theory teaching and other training sessions.

15. **Resources are good in the workplace, at the ReMIT Croydon Training Centre and in colleges for motor vehicle engineering apprentices.** Some of the colleges which ReMIT uses are a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE). Workplaces are, in many cases, located in modern, purpose-built business parks and are equipped to a very high standard.

16. **Assessment and internal verification are particularly good for motor vehicle engineering apprentices.** Thorough review of evidence, regular observation, reviews and observations by employers and detailed assessment planning is carried out and reviewed every six weeks in the workplace.

17. **Motor vehicle apprentices receive particularly good support.** Assessors and training co-ordinators respond very effectively to individual learners' needs.

18. Internal verification is rigorous. Sampling is frequent, thorough and well planned. Sampling targets are met. Meetings between assessors and verifiers are well organised and frequent. Feedback is thorough and well recorded.

19. Employers are well informed and supportive. Experienced and qualified engineers provide training in the workplace. Many employers have significant experience of apprentice training and conduct regular progress reviews with learners. Some supervisors are currently teaching, or have taught, in colleges and others are qualified assessors and fully understand the qualifications.

20. Health and safety is well covered in the training provided by ReMIT. Arrangements to promote and maintain safe working in the workplace are managed well. There is effective revision of health and safety at progress reviews.

21. In all programmes recruitment procedures are carried out appropriately. Initial assessment and induction are provided satisfactorily for all new learners.

22. **Work placements provide good learning activities in business administration and customer service.** All learners are employed in major national motor vehicle dealerships that provide a wide range of experience in business administration and customer service.

23. **Staff make good use of key skills projects in business administration. Key skills projects are work-based and learners carry out their own research. There are insufficient key skills resources in retailing.**

24. Assessment and internal verification is satisfactory in business administration and customer service.

25. In business administration and customer service all learning takes place at work. **The learning activities for individual learners are not sufficiently well planned or identified.** Most learning is on the job, but job roles and tasks are not examined in sufficient detail by ReMIT staff to guide and plan training activity at work.

Leadership and management

26. **Leadership and management are good.** Clear direction is set for improving performance. Strategy is well planned and effectively communicated to managers and staff. Programme management is good in motor vehicle engineering and satisfactory in the non-technical training programmes.

27. **A wide range of effective internal communication is supporting change and improvement.** Employers and learners now receive good service from ReMIT staff.

28. **Good partnerships with industry and other external bodies enable ReMIT to provide good resources and training for learners.** Good collaborative work enables ReMIT to continuously improve training programmes and respond effectively to current and future industry requirements.

29. Business planning operates effectively and includes setting targets at various levels in the organisation. This includes individual targets for staff dealing directly with learners.

30. Management of subcontractors is effective. ReMIT has introduced comprehensive contracting arrangements for subcontractors including specified service levels.

31. ReMIT staff are appropriately qualified. Staff training and individual needs analysis is carried out periodically.

32. Management of additional literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. Initial assessment has been subject to review and has improved. Appropriate ways to assess and plan for learners with additional support needs are in place. ReMIT staff are quick to respond to learners.

33. **There has been a slow response by managers to improvement priorities in some programmes.** Some weaknesses previously identified have not been dealt with speedily enough. For example, the poor completion rates for foundation modern apprentices in motor vehicle engineering remain.

34. The strategy for managing non-technical programmes is ineffective. Recent changes to the way in which non-technical training programmes are managed are leading to improvement but have yet to impact fully on performance levels.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear direction set to improve performance
- wide range of effective internal communication channels to support change and improvement
- good partnerships with industry and other external bodies
- effective strategy to widen participation
- positive use of stakeholder survey and benchmarking to improve performance

Weaknesses

- slow response by managers to improvement priorities in some programmes

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Strengths

- good vocational skills development
- good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- good teaching and learning
- good resources
- particularly good assessment and internal verification
- particularly good support

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices
- slow rate of progress for some learners

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- improving achievement rates
- good development of learners' skills in the workplace
- good development and use of key skills projects

Weaknesses

- much slow progress during 2003
- low framework achievement rates
- insufficiently planned learning

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Strengths

- significant recent progress by learners
- wide variety of workplace learning activities
- good personal support

Weaknesses

- poor rate of framework achievements
- insufficient planning of learners' training
- insufficient key skills resources

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- clear direction set to improve performance
- wide range of effective internal communication channels to support change and improvement
- good partnerships with industry and other external bodies
- effective strategy to widen participation
- positive use of stakeholder survey and benchmarking to improve performance

Weaknesses

- slow response by managers to improvement priorities in some programmes

35. Leadership and management are good, with clear direction set to improve performance. Strategy is planned well and communicated effectively to managers and staff. Improvement has taken place since the previous inspection in the way in which the provider is managed and priorities are set. ReMIT's corporate and business plans have been subject to wide discussion and review. Staff are clear about what is required of them at all levels. Operational management works well at regional level. Communications are good between corporate managers and regional managers. Teamwork in regional offices supports well-organised operations by the field staff who work with learners. Managers and staff are committed to contributing to the progress of and support for individual learners. Managers now have a much clearer vision and understanding of the requirements facing the provider in order for there to be successful outcomes for learners. However, some management action has not been sufficiently effective. For example, there has not been enough improvement in some of the smaller programmes, such as the foundation modern apprenticeship, which together with NVQ-only programmes, accounts for about 12 per cent of the learners in motor vehicle engineering.

36. A wide range of effective internal communication is supporting change and improvement. Communications are good and much improvement has taken place since the previous inspection. Employers and learners now receive a good service from ReMIT staff. There are regular director, regional manager, area manager and staff meetings to formally review learners' experience and plan areas for development. A weekly bulletin, e-mailed to all staff by the managing director, maintains effectively a strong sense of purpose about learners' progress, programmes and any other emerging issues. Groups of staff, both within regions and across regions, regularly meet to share good practices,

RETAIL MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

identify improvement plans and consider the impact on learners' needs. Internal verifiers, together with lead internal verifiers, meet and standardise effectively assessment practices and contribute to progress improvement strategies. There is good evidence that these strategies are leading to improvements in the training process and in improving retention. However, it is too early to fully evaluate the impact on framework achievement rates in the advanced modern apprenticeship programme.

37. Good partnerships with industry and other external bodies enable ReMIT to provide good resources, training and other activities for learners. This collaborative working helps ReMIT to continuously improve its training programmes and respond effectively to current and future industry requirements. This was an area of strength at the previous inspection and continues to be so. ReMIT works closely with manufacturers, automotive dealerships, employers, awarding bodies and support agencies. ReMIT uses industrial specialists to maintain up-to-date knowledge for staff and learners. The recently opened ReMIT training centre in Croydon is used effectively to respond to industry training requirements. Staff work closely with a range of industry specialists to support programme development. Links with employers have been recently enhanced with the introduction of an employer handbook. ReMIT staff have worked hard and with good results over recent months to review and re-establish with employers how their role is vital in the training and assessment process with learners.

38. Business planning operates effectively and includes setting targets at various levels in the provider including individual targets for staff dealing directly with learners. This process has much improved since the previous inspection. However, it is still relatively new and, although it is currently working satisfactorily, it is too early to fully evaluate its impact on learners' achievements. A management review of performance against targets is carried out regularly. Managers are able to compare performance effectively within the organisation, identify variances and set plans for continuous improvement. Management information and data analysis regarding learners' progress and achievement is now used much more effectively. Realistic plans and targets for improvement are in place.

39. Communication with subcontractors is effective. ReMIT has introduced comprehensive contracting arrangements for subcontractors including specified service levels. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when this was identified as a significant weakness. ReMIT has reached agreement with most subcontractors on the service levels expected. Most subcontractors' performance is now assessed at least once every three to four months. However, standards and targets are not established with all subcontractors in all parts of the country. Most subcontractors have responded well to ReMIT's drive to improve its service to learners. Areas of concern are closely monitored and supported. Contracts have been withdrawn from subcontractors that consistently fail to meet ReMIT standards.

40. ReMIT staff are appropriately qualified. Staff training and individual needs analysis is carried out periodically. Staff training and development is managed effectively. ReMIT has embarked upon a complete review of training needs in response to its current strategy and business objectives.

41. Management of additional literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. Initial assessment has been subject to review and has improved. Appropriate ways to assess and plan for learners with additional support needs are in place. ReMIT staff are quick to respond to learners. Individual plans are identified effectively. Each regional office operates effective procedures for managing additional support and uses a range of external support agencies. ReMIT supports learners with a range of additional needs, such as dyslexia, profound deafness and learning needs in literacy and numeracy. However, management information and analysis of the range of learning needs and the effectiveness of the additional support are not available routinely to managers.

42. Managers have responded slowly to improvement priorities in some programmes. Some weaknesses previously identified have not been dealt with speedily enough. Not enough work was carried out by management in 2003 to tackle weaknesses in some areas of training. For example, slow progress and insufficient key skills support in the main advanced modern apprenticeship programme were not effectively dealt with until recently. Retention rates and the achievement rates in the foundation modern apprenticeship programme remain poor.

43. The strategy for managing non-technical programmes is ineffective. Recent changes to the way in which non-technical training programmes are managed have yet to impact fully. These are small programmes currently but are part of ReMIT's future growth strategy. A decision was taken to change the way in which non-technical programmes are managed. However, at the time of the reinspection this had not had time to be fully implemented. Programme management of business administration and customer service is not sufficiently developed. Management information systems and review of performance for these programmes have been unsatisfactory, but are now improving. The retention and achievement rates for these programmes remain poor. However, very recent management action has led to some improvements and more learners are now achieving than in 2003.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

44. ReMIT has an effective strategy for the promotion of equal opportunities and to widen participation and social inclusion. The overall approach to equal opportunities has significantly improved since the previous inspection. The commitment is supported by a strategic level national equal opportunities working group that reports at board level. The group is chaired by a senior manager and reports directly to the quality assurance director. The working group meets four times a year and reviews, against targets, strategy, policy and performance. The membership consists of a champion from each region. New initiatives are discussed at these meetings and plans developed for implementation. Sharing of good practice is also a key feature of these meetings. All members of the group have been trained to provide equal opportunities training for their staff colleagues, learners and employers, although this has not yet taken place. However, the course contents have been piloted successfully and reviewed. New guidelines have been produced to improve the way field staff are able to help employers promote equal opportunities.

45. ReMIT has a comprehensive and detailed equal opportunities policy. Procedures are reviewed annually by the equal opportunities working party and changes made are implemented promptly by the human resource department. Copies of the policies and procedures are issued to new staff during a specific section of their induction programme. This also includes a detailed explanation of the importance of target-setting for the recruitment of young women, young people from minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities. The monitoring of performance against targets and current legislation is discussed. Learners are issued with a CD-ROM that contains their induction material. This includes equality of opportunity policies that incorporate bullying and harassment, and various exercises they have to complete on equality of opportunity. An induction folder supports this CD-ROM. All employers are issued with a manual that also has copies of the provider's equal opportunities policies. The record of progress review includes a specific section for recording responses from learners to prepared questions designed to reinforce and raise awareness of equality of opportunity. Staff are provided with training and a detailed set of guidelines to follow. Learners' understanding and knowledge of rights and responsibilities in the workplace is generally good.

46. Targets for increasing participation are set and the monitoring of performance is carried out thoroughly. Targets for recruitment to motor vehicle programmes of young women, people from minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities are identified as guidelines by the national steering group. These are then used at regional level together with more local analysis to more carefully identify relevant targets, locations and groups. Field staff are given individual targets to achieve based on the area assessment. Performance against these targets is monitored monthly using specifically designed management information reports, and field staff receive updates and feedback on their progress. Managers review regional targets and contribute to national reviews.

47. ReMIT has implemented many positive initiatives to widen participation. Awards and presentation ceremonies are used to create positive role models and to inspire young people to become involved in training and achievement. Regional and national awards are presented annually to learners who meet a set of criteria. These can include those learners having made the most progress, those having overcome personal or workplace barriers or have overcome a disability and achieved their learning goal. The winners are well publicised in the local, national and trade media. Winners are presented as role models in publicity and through careers evenings and motor shows. Much of the new publicity material includes pictures and write-ups on these individuals and is used to promote young women into training. To support this initiative ReMIT hosts training events for women advisers from the careers services, providing taster days in garages. They experience and learn what the industry is like with a view to passing on this message to school leavers. Much work is currently under way with young offenders in institutes to encourage them to join in-house training programmes and when released to continue their training with an employer. Young women are encouraged to enter careers in the engineering industry in a variety of ways including direct mail shots to girls' schools and specific careers events. However, recruitment of women to the motor vehicle programme has declined over the past two years and is currently below the ReMIT target figure.

48. Promotion and publicity to minority ethnic groups is good. Posters are displayed in community centres along with leaflets and contact names. ReMIT has placed appropriate adverts in minority ethnic newspapers and on local radio programmes. Recruitment leaflets have been printed in a number of languages to ensure parents can be involved in discussing motor vehicle options with their children. ReMIT participates in a partnership with two colleges to identify barriers to education and training for this group of people and to provide solutions. Mailings are sent to schools in areas with minority ethnic pupils.

49. ReMIT has played a significant part in the development a new purpose-built engineering training centre in Bradford specifically aimed at minority ethnic young people. It is linked to a secondary school and aims to involve 14-16 year old pupils in vocational training. A number of other Bradford schools and neighbouring authorities have also expressed interest in sending pupils on courses. The training centre aims to provide level 1 vocational training courses. These and some other community-based initiatives are at an early stage. It is too early for evidence and evaluation of the impact on widening participation to be available. Recruitment generally of minority applicants to the motor vehicle programme has steadily improved over the past three years and is currently above the company's target figure. However, further work is required to improve the recruitment of people with disabilities to the motor vehicle programme. Although the figure has risen steadily over the past years, the current figure is below the company's target.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 2

50. Good use is made of surveys to improve levels of service to learners, employers and other stakeholders. Benchmarking is used effectively to support continuous improvement. ReMIT has effectively developed and implemented a good approach to collecting feedback from learners, parents, employers, subcontracted colleges and staff. A specialist external agency is used to survey stakeholders on an annual basis. Managers make good use of this data and actions and improvements are identified. Views are thoroughly evaluated and results are compared with previous questionnaire results to enable measurable improvement plans to be defined. ReMIT uses benchmarking very effectively. Performance of other work-based providers is scrutinised and trends identified leading to better-informed decision-making and target-setting. Training methods and key training processes used in the motor industry are also considered and used to improve ReMIT processes. ReMIT has made improvements across many of its processes since the previous inspection and in some cases changed them.

51. The quality assurance strategy, policy and procedures are well defined. Since the previous inspection, ReMIT has introduced various systems to support the continuous improvement of the learners' experience. Staff have clear guidelines, although these are still new. Standard procedures for each stage of the learners' progress throughout their training programme are specified. All staff have a clear view of the standards required of them. However, the quality assurance system has yet to fully impact on all processes. For example, variations in stated service delivery remain with subcontractors that in

RETAIL MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

some cases are slow to respond. The quality assurance procedures have yet to impact across all programmes, particularly non-technical. Internal audit processes are defined and are beginning to be used effectively. The impact of the recently introduced method has yet to be fully realised. However, managers and staff are aware of this and are working well towards ensuring that procedures meet ReMIT's high standards.

52. Self-assessment is effective. Stakeholder survey results are used and staff have further opportunities to input into self-assessment through national, regional and specific group meetings, for example equal opportunities and continuous improvement. ReMIT has introduced a programme for reviewing all of its quality assurance processes and has also used external consultants to seek greater clarification of areas for improvement. Self-assessment links to the development plan that is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-related. Many of the key strengths and weakness identified during inspection have been identified by ReMIT. However, the self-assessment report in some cases is not adequately detailed. The self-assessment process did not specifically tackle some programmes; for example, customer service and foundation modern apprenticeships in engineering were not subject to any detailed analysis of strengths and weaknesses.

53. The application of internal verification is good in engineering and satisfactory in customer service and business administration. There are very clear, recently introduced guidelines and procedures. Internal verification meets awarding body requirements. Ten per cent of learners are using a paperless portfolio and learners have been able to present evidence using a wider range of methods. The paperless portfolio will be used for all new starts from September 2004. The provider has dedicated regional lead verifiers who monitor internal verifiers and assessors to maintain consistency of assessment. At the time of the previous inspection not all regions had the required number of verifiers in place, and ReMIT's newly introduced procedures for internal verification were delayed in a few cases. Verifiers and assessors meet regularly to share good practice. Internal verification plays a constructive part in promoting learners' progress. ReMIT's internal verifiers and assessors are well qualified, and regular training takes place to maintain currency with industry and awarding body requirements.

54. The implementation of quality assurance procedures with subcontractors is satisfactory and steadily improving. This has much improved since the previous inspection. ReMIT has established effective service agreements and review processes with most subcontractors, although there is some variability in the impact across the different regions. Teaching and learning are subject to review with subcontractors. ReMIT specifies performance levels with subcontractors, although further development is still required with some to achieve more effective review of individual learners' progress in off-the-job training. Subcontractors' retention and achievement rates are now considered but here again more work is required to fully establish meaningful targets with subcontractors.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	5477	2

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good vocational skills development
- good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training
- good teaching and learning
- good resources
- particularly good assessment and internal verification
- particularly good support

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices
- slow rate of progress for some learners

Achievement and standards

55. Advanced modern apprentices gain good vocational skills. They are employed as apprentices in a wide variety of national, regional and local retail motor vehicle dealerships and body repair organisations and develop good working practices. Learners work alongside experienced and well-qualified motor vehicle engineers and workplace supervisors. Learners are encouraged to learn at work. In some cases they carry out complex tasks, sometimes to a higher standard than required by the occupational standards. Some learners in the first year of their apprenticeship carry out complex diagnostic tests and major repairs to prestige vehicles. Other learners work to critical deadlines on the heavy goods vehicle fleets for major supermarkets. Learners attend manufacturers' courses and take additional qualifications, such as product briefing courses for new models, paint manufacturers' courses and master technician programmes. Work produced by the learners is of a good standard. They and their employers achieve a high standard of health and safety practice and good housekeeping.

56. The foundation modern apprenticeship programme has poor retention and achievement rates. Many learners who started between 2000 and 2002 have not completed their frameworks and many left early. Improvement is evident in the programme performance since mid-2003. Fewer learners have left early in the current

RETAIL MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

year, compared with similar stages in previous years. Recent measures introduced by ReMIT include better pre-screening of learners, a newly introduced induction pack, more frequent support, and more effective monitoring of leavers in the initial stages of training.

57. The rate of progress and achievement is slow for advanced modern apprentices. Key skills support arrangements and some other aspects of programme management were ineffective during the period 1999-2002, impacting on the third- and fourth-year learners' rate of progress. Only 19 per cent of the learners who started in 2000-01 have completed frameworks, although a further 29 per cent of those who started are still in training. Six per cent of the 1999 intake still in training have yet to achieve, while 38 per cent have achieved. There is slow progress in the foundation modern apprenticeship programme. Twenty-seven per cent of those who started in 2001-02 have yet to complete the framework. Recent improvements have been introduced and are beginning to impact on slow progress. The rate of progress for many first- and second-year learners is satisfactory and in a few cases good and very good. Historically there has been slow progress with key skills achievement for many learners, but the current arrangements with subcontracted colleges are working effectively and progress and achievement are improving. Many first-year learners have completed their key skills or are scheduled to complete them within the next three months.

Quality of education and training

58. Good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training is carried out by ReMIT staff. Regular visits to colleges are carried out and employers are encouraged to plan training activity to reinforce aspects covered in off-the-job training. Many do this and learners training is planned effectively. ReMIT staff also arrange with employers to move learners when specific skills training is required or when certain work is in short supply. In some cases, learners move to another site or arrange for short periods with other employers. For example, one motor vehicle retail dealership cannot provide sufficient experience on manual gearboxes and has arranged for this to be provided elsewhere. Most employers are well informed of the content of college courses and receive regular feedback on learners' progress. In some cases college reports are detailed and give recommendations of practical work, which should be carried out before the next college block. One major manufacturer has rearranged the schedule for the blocks of off-the-job training following review with on-the-job trainers and ReMIT staff. Off-the-job training is satisfactorily arranged and all learners are following approved technical certificates and other accredited courses.

59. Teaching and learning at ReMIT's Croydon centre is good. Learners relate well to the lecturers, the good practical illustrations and examples used to support theory teaching and other training sessions. Learners also respond well to the computer-based delivery of the theory training and the content of the training materials. They are tested at various stages of their training blocks to confirm learning and understanding. Learners make good progress and produce a high standard of work. Although a classroom assistant provides key skills support, there is currently no member of staff with qualifications to provide additional learning support.

60. Resources are good in the workplace, at the Croydon training centre and in colleges. Some colleges used by ReMIT are a CoVE. Workplaces are, in many cases located in modern, purpose-built business parks and are equipped to a very high standard. A full range of diagnostic and technical equipment is provided in mechanical workshops with computer-controlled paint mixing and body repair jigs in body and paint shops. Staff involved in training are skilled and well qualified with good relevant industrial experience. Employers' staff are well trained, qualified and experienced. The training centre in Croydon, which opened in September 2003, is ReMITs own centre of technical excellence. This is a purpose-designed centre with spacious workshop areas equipped with a range of current industry standard motor vehicle repair and other garage equipment. Well-appointed classrooms adjoin each workshop and are equipped with current electronic training aids to enhance the learners' experience. A well-equipped diagnostic suite is used for both theory and practical training. A wide range of the latest industry equipment is in place within the training centre, but there are not enough vehicle components to use as physical training aids.

61. Assessment and internal verification are particularly good. Thorough review of evidence, regular observation, reviews and observations by employers, and detailed assessment planning are carried out and reviewed every six weeks in the workplace. On-the-job training is clearly identified with criteria and standards specified well. Targets are clear and concise and all parties get a copy of the action plan. In one region the action plan targets are put into the plastic wallet on the cover of the learners' portfolio, which is kept at work. In another workshop learners' progress and training activity planned are well displayed and used well to review progress. Assessment is based on a good variety of evidence including substantial observations in the workplace, review of job cards and expert witness testimony. In one region there has been a successful introduction of computer-based paper-free portfolios following a successful pilot scheme. This now used by approximately 10 per cent of learners with more to follow. This has improved and extended the range of learners' evidence. Evidence now includes video clips showing the learner working on tasks and provides good evidence for the range and standard of jobs done. Plans to extend the paper-free approach are in place with the intention that by September 2005 all learners will be involved.

62. Learners receive particularly good support. Assessors and training co-ordinators respond very effectively to individual learners in meeting their needs. Individual learners are visited at work and at college regularly by ReMIT staff. Training co-ordinators and assessors are accessible out of hours. Visits are sometimes arranged to meet the needs of learners on night shifts or working at weekends. Progress reviews are detailed for on-the-job learning and learners are set clear targets. These are reviewed on the next visit and plans made with new targets identified. Most employers are fully involved in the review process and are given detailed feedback by training co-ordinators. In a very small number of cases reviews are unsatisfactory, records are not sufficiently detailed and do not contain challenging targets. However, the quality assurance process identified these and action was taken. All learners have individual learning plans with appropriate detail covering the NVQ requirements, on-the-job training activities and suitable targets. However, targets for off-the-job training are often too broad to enable a thorough and

RETAIL MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

objective assessment of the learners' progress.

63. Internal verification is very rigorous. Sampling is frequent, thorough and well planned. Sampling targets are met. Meetings between assessors and verifiers are well organised and frequent. Feedback is thorough and well recorded. Each region has a lead internal verifier who reports to the national standards manager at head office. Standardisation and sharing of good practice takes place effectively. Internal verifiers' roles are clear and provide for good, objective quality assurance of the assessment practices that take place.

64. Employers are well informed and provide good support. Experienced and qualified engineers provide training in the workplace. Some employers are currently teaching, or have taught, in colleges and others are qualified assessors and fully understand the qualifications. Some employers have significant experience of apprentice training and conduct regular portfolio reviews with learners. Most employers have a positive timekeeping system to monitor college attendance and some visit colleges on a regular basis.

65. ReMIT has a learner liaison manager at the Croydon centre to support all learner issues. A range of support measures for learners is in place within the training centre, many of whom are away from home on block release. Individual learner reviews are carried out weekly to ensure learners are being supported both from a training and a pastoral aspect. The accommodation officer oversees learners' welfare and is responsible for providing transport to and from the centre and ensuring their block-release accommodation is of a high standard. Parents are invited to view both the accommodation and the centre. The accommodation officer is available to learners out of hours and all learners have a contact mobile telephone number. The female facilities officer has attended a women's mentoring programme and is available to support all young women learners. The accommodation officer supports learners by, for example, arranging for temporary medical and dental cover for all learners when on block release.

66. Health and safety is well covered in the training provided by ReMIT. Arrangements to promote and maintain safe working in the workplace are well managed. There is effective revision of health and safety and equal opportunities at reviews with learners. A selection from a standard set of prepared questions is used and answers are recorded. Initial assessment and induction are carried out satisfactorily. Learners with basic skills requirements are provided with support by subcontractors. English for speakers of other languages is also arranged where required.

Leadership and management

67. Training at the Croydon centre is well managed with a dedicated curriculum manager ensuring staff and resources are fully utilised and learners receive good training. Training is monitored by an external agency and a development programme is in place to tackle issues identified during teaching and learning observations. There are plans to extend the training centre to accommodate more learners and more

equipment. Staff training is satisfactory, and an experienced staff member mentors all new staff until they are judged competent to visit employers and learners on their own. Field staff also keep their technical knowledge up to date.

68. Effective strategies for improvement have been developed to tackle identified weaknesses. However, there remains slow progress by some learners and there are still low framework achievement levels, particularly in the foundation modern apprenticeship programme.

Business administration, management & professional

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	33	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- improving achievement rates
- good development of learners’ skills in the workplace
- good development and use of key skills projects

Weaknesses

- much slow progress during 2003
- low framework achievement rates
- insufficiently planned learning

Achievement and standards

69. Achievement rates are improving. A high proportion of completions have been recently achieved. Between October 2002 and January 2003 few completions were achieved. However, since then there has been a considerable increase of almost four times as many as in the previous 12 months. Learners still in training are also achieving at a much faster rate than previously. A third of the existing learners are near to completion.

70. Learners develop good skills in the workplace. Many learners are in job roles with full responsibility for the tasks they carry out. They demonstrate competence in, for example, carrying out reception duties effectively, and confidently dealing with enquiries from colleagues and customers. Some learners have been at work for some time and have been promoted into job roles that require them to work on their own initiative and solve problems. Learners’ work in portfolios is of an acceptable standard or better. One learner’s portfolio has been submitted for a national award. Good evidence of job performance is presented with good employer contribution.

71. The rate at which learners achieve has been slow overall. Many learners have been in training longer than the planned duration of their programme. Some of the current advanced modern apprentices have been on the programme for over 26 months. One of the nine foundation modern apprentices has been on the programme for over two years.

72. Framework completion rates are low. Of the 74 advanced modern apprentices who

started between 2000 and 2002, only 13 completed the framework. A small number of learners were initially put on inappropriate programmes and transferred, which accounts for some of the leavers. In other cases poor decision-making took place by ReMIT about the range and level of work available. This has been tackled and remaining learners are now in job roles and locations which enable them to collect sufficient evidence to meet the qualification standards. A number of learners who had reached the end of their programme had not received sufficient key skills training and did not submit any evidence.

Quality of education and training

73. Many learners are on good work placements in major national motor vehicle dealerships that provide a wide range of experience in business administration. Many learners hold responsible positions in accounts, information technology departments and offices dealing with relatively complex tasks such as vehicle warranty enquiries and administration. Employers provide effective on-the-job training for learners to gain knowledge and skills necessary for specific tasks. Some employers provide in-house training events and workshops that enhance learners' knowledge and experience. Until very recently, insufficient attention was given to these activities by ReMIT staff for assessment and evidence purposes. Many learners move around different departments in order to increase their knowledge and experience.

74. Key skills projects are well developed by ReMIT staff. Learners benefit from a good approach to learning key skills in the workplace. In one region the use of key skills work-based projects has motivated learners and increased their achievements. Regular discussions between employers and learners take place and are facilitated by the ReMIT key skills trainer. A work-related theme is considered based on requirements in the workplace. A project aim and plan is drawn up and agreed. Learners carry out their own research and analysis using web-based resources, other materials, and information from colleagues through interviews and questionnaires. Learners present project results well using good presentation techniques. In one example, discussions on equal opportunities are initiated during key skills communication sessions. Learners discuss and debate various topics and gather relevant evidence for their key skills portfolios as well as gaining further knowledge and understanding of equal opportunities.

75. Assessment and internal verification are satisfactory. Learners receive regular four-weekly visits from their assessor and additional visits are arranged if required. Assessors support learners effectively. ReMIT continues to support learners who have exceeded their planned learning time.

76. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced. Many staff have been issued with a laptop computer and those staff who are piloting the paper-free portfolio have been issued with digital cameras in order to photograph evidence sheets and learners carrying out duties in the workplace.

77. Appropriate attention is given to checking learners' knowledge and understanding of

RETAIL MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

health and safety and equal opportunities matters at progress reviews. Appropriate targets are set during reviews. Initial assessment is satisfactory, although not enough recent use has been made of the current ReMIT standard initial assessment process as very few new learners have been recruited in this last contract year. There are some learners involved with the paper-free portfolio method of assessment and are making satisfactory progress. The learners involved with this new form of recording evidence are well motivated and eager to participate. Learners are assessed to establish any basic skills support requirements and suitable support is required where necessary.

78. Learning activities for individual learners have not been sufficiently well planned or identified. Most learning is on the job, but there is not enough evidence in records that job roles and tasks have been considered in sufficient detail by ReMIT staff to guide and plan the sequence of training activity at work. Records of past reviews rarely consider or plan specific on-the-job training activity. There are some recent changes which are improving this. However, the focus in the past has been too much on assessment requirements. Individual learning plans do not contain enough information about the nature of the on-the-job training or the activities learners need to do to achieve units and elements of competence. Many learners get additional training from employers but this is not always identified, recorded or co-ordinated with the occupational standards associated with the NVQ. However, ReMIT has recently introduced an employer handbook and visiting ReMIT staff are now beginning to involve employers more in planning and reviewing training rather than just assessment.

Leadership and management

79. Very recent changes have been made in the management of the programme that have led to improvements in management target-setting, the pace of learner progress and the way in which their programmes are now managed. However, these changes have only very recently been implemented.

80. There is now a management structure in place that enables satisfactory reporting on programme performance. However, the amalgamation of business administration management with other bigger non-technical programmes has reduced the amount of specialist support given to staff. There are not enough dedicated resources for business administration at local level. Currently, management information is satisfactory and has recently improved, enabling better management decision-making and improved monitoring of learners' progress.

81. Quality assurance procedures are in place and are operating satisfactorily, although the impact of this on learners has only very recently been evident. Equal opportunities is satisfactory and learners and employers are regularly involved in reviewing practical aspects of the ReMIT approach to equality of opportunity.

Retailing, customer service & transportation**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	60	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- significant recent progress by learners
- wide variety of workplace learning activities
- good personal support

Weaknesses

- poor rate of framework achievements
- insufficient planning of learners' training
- insufficient key skills resources

Achievement and standards

82. Learners' have made significant progress in unit and framework achievement. Since January 2004, many have achieved units of competence, key skills awards and full frameworks. In January 2004, many learners had not completed much key skills work in portfolios. Likewise, there were very few units of NVQs completed or assessed. This has changed and assessors and learners have worked well to improve achievements. Assessment visits are more frequent and many more learners than previously have achieved units towards their NVQs and key skills. In most instances the standard of learners' work is high with a good range of work evidence to support their knowledge and understanding.

83. Framework completion rates are poor. Of those learners who joined the programme between 2000 and 2002, 120 advanced modern apprentices have left and only 19 completed their frameworks. Before January 2004, not enough work had been carried out to establish the progress learners had made towards completion. In most cases many learners exceeded the expected time taken to complete their programme.

Quality of education and training

84. Learners' skills are developed well through a wide variety of workplace learning activities. Most employers provide effective on-the-job training. ReMIT has good working relationships with good retail motor dealerships that in many cases provide their own in-company training. Some learners have been promoted following completion of their qualification. Learners demonstrate good skills at work in, for example, effectively

RETAIL MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

working with computerised stock control systems.

85. Personal support for learners is good. Assessors provide learners with advice and guidance on a range of vocational, career and personal matters. Assessors and training co-ordinator visits learners in the workplace at regular and frequent intervals with additional visits arranged when required. Assessors are flexible in making appointments. Assessors respond well to learners' individual needs. Employers also provide learners with good support. In some cases, for example, they provide individual on-the job coaching. There is effective communication between ReMIT staff and workplace supervisors. Health and safety training for learners is effective and well monitored.

86. Learners' understanding of their induction is satisfactory. They have a comprehensive understanding of their modern apprenticeship framework and a good understanding of equal opportunities and health and safety. Initial and continuous assessment practices are satisfactory.

87. The planning of individual learning programmes is unsatisfactory. All learning is at work except for some individuals who attend key skills workshops. Not enough attention is paid to the nature of the learners' job role and the sequence of activities they experience at work. Insufficient detail is recorded. Individual learning plans list only units and target achievement dates. Plans are updated with revised completion dates when reviews take place. However, not enough information has been collected about on-the-job training. There is no detailed individual plan to identify what training is required. Key skills training and preparation for external assessments are not planned effectively. For example, one learner was entered for an external key skills assessment without any preparation and was unsuccessful.

88. Resources to support key skills learning are insufficient for most learners involved in customer service training programmes. The availability of key skills materials is inconsistent, although in some regions key skills trainers have developed good resources for learners. ReMIT has identified resources as an issue and has recently compiled a list of resources available in each region and is developing a centralised resource facility for staff to access through the intranet.

Leadership and management

89. Between October 2002 and December 2003, not enough effective development took place to improve the customer service programme. In January 2004, a dedicated manager responsible for all non-technical qualifications was appointed and senior managers also began to prioritise improvement work for this programme. Since then much work has been carried out to improve the provision and learners are making better progress. However, there are insufficient specialist resources to fully support staff involved in the customer service programmes.

90. The monitoring by managers of programme performance and learner progress is now satisfactory. The management of health and safety and the promotion of equal

RETAIL MOTOR INDUSTRY TRAINING LIMITED REINSPECTION

opportunities are effective. Staff are clear about their roles, but in one region staff do not fully understand their specific responsibilities involved in the subcontracted assessors role. Staff training and development is satisfactory. Health and safety and equality of opportunity are managed effectively.

91. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory and in place but have not yet had sufficient impact. The recent improvement to the programme has come about mainly by prioritising specific action rather than from quality assurance audits or continuous improvement plans. The self-assessment report identified some of the strengths and weaknesses identified at the reinspection. However, customer service programmes were not specifically scrutinised or identified in the current report and weaknesses were not fully reviewed in the self-assessment report.