

INSPECTION REPORT

Merseyside Accredited Childcare Training and Assessment Centre

10 December 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 and Jobcentre Plus programmes. 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
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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.

Overall judgement

Where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, **or**
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory.

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

INSPECTION REPORT

Merseyside Accredited Childcare Training and Assessment Centre

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Merseyside Accredited Childcare Training and Assessment Centre (MACTAC) is part of the Vauxhall Neighbourhood Council (VNC) which is a voluntary organisation working in the Liverpool inner city wards of Vauxhall and Everton. VNC provides a non-profit making nursery from its premises in Vauxhall. MACTAC was established in 1994 to provide training in childcare and education within the local community. It has a training centre in the Vauxhall region of Liverpool. MACTAC trains modern apprentices and learners working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in health and social care, specifically early years education. MACTAC also provides Jobcentre Plus programmes, such as New Deal for lone parents and a range of commercially funded training courses.

2. VNC is a limited company with charitable status, having 15 trustees drawn from the local community. The company is led by a chief executive and a board of four core staff. The operational side of MACTAC is managed by a centre manager, operations managers, and a course co-ordinator, with six team leaders responsible for different administration activities. The senior management team meets on a monthly basis and reports to the chief executive. The trustees meet every other month to discuss performance and development of the company.

3. MACTAC funds its training provision through Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills council, Jobcentre Plus and Merseyside early years partnerships. MACTAC moved to its purpose-built premises in March 2000. The Vauxhall area where MACTAC recruits its learners has a minority ethnic representation of 1.8 per cent, compared with 7 per cent for Liverpool and 9 per cent for England and Wales. The proportion of school leavers in Vauxhall achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above is low. In 2003 it was 30.9 per cent, compared with 46.3 per cent for England and Wales.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Health, social care & public services

4. MACTAC has 45 childcare learners. Twenty-seven are foundation modern apprentices, three are advanced modern apprentices and 15 are working towards NVQs. Thirteen of these are on a New Deal for lone parents programme. These clients had only begun their programme shortly before the inspection. It was, therefore decided not to award a contributory grade for this area. MACTAC provides training at the Vauxhall Millennium Centre where learners attend one day each week for background knowledge, individual support, and key skills training. Thirteen learners are employed, and the remainder are on work placements in local facilities including schools, nurseries and community settings. NVQ assessments are carried out by four of MACTAC's staff.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learner interviews	24
Number of staff interviews	21
Number of employer interviews	3
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	9

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, MACTAC's leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Its arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory, but its quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory. The quality of work-based learning in health, social care and public services is unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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		3
Quality assurance		4
Health, social care & public services		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Early years		
- Work-based learning for young people	32	4
- New Deal for young people	13	None

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

6. **Achievement rates in all programmes are poor.** No learners have completed modern apprenticeship frameworks and NVQ achievement levels are low. No learners have achieved their technical certificates or key skills qualifications.

7. Retention rates have improved. Of the 19 learners starting training programmes during the past year, 17 are still in training and nearing the completion of their programmes. This is an improvement on the previous year for which six learners of 23 starters remain in training.

8. Learners' portfolios demonstrate a good understanding of background knowledge and learners have developed a satisfactory level of skills.

Quality of education and training

9. **Support for learners is good.** They are well supported by MACTAC staff in the training centre and their work placements. MACTAC's staff respond quickly when problems are encountered by employers or learners. The provider frequently intervenes to support learners when problems develop in the workplace.

10. A significant number of learners are lone parents. MACTAC is supportive and flexible in its approach to meeting learners' training needs.

11. Learning sessions observed during the inspection were judged to be satisfactory or good. Sessions include schemes of work and lesson plans. Teaching staff are qualified and experienced.

12. The links between key skills and technical certificate training have recently been strengthened and are now satisfactory. The key skills tutor has begun to visit work placements to gather evidence from the workplace.

13. Resources are appropriate for learners' needs. The training facilities are good, and learners have satisfactory access to textbooks and a range of learning resources, including computers.

14. The support provided for learners in literacy and numeracy is inadequate. MACTAC staff do not have appropriate qualifications to support the learners with their literacy and numeracy training.

15. **Learners' work is not assessed enough.** Most foundation modern apprentices have been on programme for more than 12 months, but only five have completed more than

two units. Four New Deal clients have been on programme for at least eight months, and none has completed a unit. Most learners do not understand the NVQ assessment process sufficiently. Most learners are unclear about when they will be assessed, or the range of evidence required for their qualifications.

16. **Target-setting is weak.** Learners do not understand their progress or what they need to do to complete their qualifications. Learners' targets are insufficiently challenging and do not motivate the learners to progress. Learners have insufficient understanding of their targets, or how they can be achieved.

17. Staff involved in training do not have an overview of learners' progress in all components of their programme, and do not have targets to allow them to assess the effectiveness of training programmes. Staff have recognised this problem and have recently developed a new learner monitoring sheet. This combines all aspects of the programme to enable staff and learners to monitor progress.

Leadership and management

18. Managers give a high priority to staff training. **The quantity and quality of staff development at MACTAC is good.** Staff development is linked directly to the organisational objectives, the business plan and staff appraisals.

19. The recent appointment of a new training centre manager has improved MACTAC's approach to the management of training. Retention rates have improved significantly from 43 per cent last year, to 88 per cent of learners nearing the end of their programmes in the current year.

20. MACTAC manages its resources efficiently. A realistic overall budget is used effectively by senior managers.

21. Data is used satisfactorily to produce a range of reports for the managers and board members. However, this data has not been used to set targets for the retention and achievement of learners.

22. Communications are satisfactory. The general management team meets on a regular basis to discuss progress. Regular contact takes place with the employers and stakeholders.

23. Health and safety is managed satisfactorily. There are regular health and safety checks on employer and work-placement premises.

24. **Key elements of training such as key skills, the progression award and NVQ training are not co-ordinated** sufficiently and are operating almost independently of each other. Not enough attention is given to improving achievement levels.

25. **MACTAC's assessment strategy is poorly planned.** Assessments do not take place frequently enough. Learners' progress is not monitored sufficiently to contribute to the

planning of training. Internal verification is not planned or managed effectively.

26. Arrangements to provide literacy, numeracy and language support are ineffective. The provider has no written strategy to deal with the level of support required by the learners.

27. MACTAC has a comprehensive diversity and equal opportunities policy and procedures, to deal with discrimination and sexual harassment.

28. Data is collected about learners' ethnic backgrounds and disabilities they may have. Insufficient information is recorded about learners with additional learning needs, such as those having dyslexia.

29. **MACTAC has developed a range of good initiatives to widen participation by the local community.** The provider is working effectively with small, hard-to-target groups within the community to remove obstacles to learning.

30. Staff recognise the significance of their role in working with learners who are disadvantaged in educational terms. MACTAC responds to learners who require flexible learning facilities to accommodate their childcare needs.

31. Equality of opportunity is reinforced and monitored in the workplace during the learners' monthly progress reviews. Feedback from learners is analysed and appropriate responses are made.

32. Equality of opportunity is regularly discussed at MACTAC's general management meetings. When problems are identified, appropriate actions are generated.

33. **The quality assurance framework is not established sufficiently.** Some key procedures are incomplete and not sufficiently established to have had any effect on the learners' experiences.

34. **Internal verification is unsatisfactory.** MACTAC has no overall strategy for internal verification. The provider does not conduct sufficient monitoring and observation of assessments.

35. The self-assessment process satisfactorily identifies many of the provider's strengths and weaknesses, but over-emphasises its strengths in establishing a grade. Staff have been trained in producing a self-assessment report. Learners, employers and the provider's staff have all contributed to the process. The development plan is not specific enough to initiate and pursue improvements, with no key performance indicators to measure progress.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good staff development programme
- good initiatives to implement changes
- good initiatives to widen participation by the local community

Weaknesses

- poor planning of training
- incomplete quality assurance framework

Health, social care & public services

Early years

Strengths

- good individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor achievement levels
- insufficient assessment
- weak target-setting
- insufficient internal verification

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT MERSEYSIDE ACCREDITED CHILDCARE TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTRE:

- the friendly approachable staff
- good on-the-job training
- flexible training programmes
- the help given to obtain textbooks and equipment
- meeting friends at the training centre

WHAT LEARNERS THINK MERSEYSIDE ACCREDITED CHILDCARE TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTRE COULD IMPROVE:

- the planning of training
- the number of staff
- the information on likely completion dates

KEY CHALLENGES FOR MERSEYSIDE ACCREDITED CHILDCARE TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTRE:

- introduce strategies to improve achievement levels
- improve target-setting and monitoring of learners' progress
- improve co-ordination of all aspects of the training programme
- further develop quality assurance procedures
- improve measuring of progress towards meeting the objectives in the development plan
- maintain good level of individual support for learners

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

Strengths

- good staff development programme
- good initiatives to implement changes
- good initiatives to widen participation by the local community

Weaknesses

- poor planning of training
- incomplete quality assurance framework

36. The quantity and quality of staff development for all MACTAC staff is good. Managers give a high priority to staff training. In the past year, 12 staff have attended 227 days of training. Training is focused on learners' needs and the professional development needs of staff. Staff development is directly linked to the organisational objectives, business plan and staff appraisals. Recent staff development has been focused on key skills training, internal verification, literacy and numeracy provision, health and safety, and the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act 2000. All core staff have attended key training events. Seventy per cent of the provider's staff either have a teaching qualification, or are working towards one. The directors give their full support to staff development and provide sufficient financial resources. However, MACTAC does not allocate a specific budget for staff development.

37. MACTAC has introduced good initiatives to implement changes. The recent appointment of a new training centre manager has improved MACTAC's approach to the management of training. Retention rates have improved significantly, from 43 per cent last year, to 88 per cent of learners nearing the end of their programmes in the current year. MACTAC has successfully changed the culture of its training provision to one of high expectations. For example, many learners now come regularly to the training centre to complete their assignments. They receive good help and support from tutors. The focus of quality assurance has begun to change from contract compliance to continuous improvement. The company has begun to seek learners' views about the quality of their learning experiences. Learners are now more empowered and feel valued. MACTAC responds to learners' feedback promptly and effectively. For example, the company has obtained new operating system software to help learners improve their information and communications technology skills. Weekly key skills workshops have recently been developed to enable learners to seek help and complete their assignments. Learners are invited to evaluate and grade all taught sessions.

38. Achievements are celebrated through regular newspaper articles in the local community newspaper. The board members take a keen interest in the welfare and

MERSEYSIDE ACCREDITED CHILDCARE TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTRE

needs of learners. Many of them are known personally to the board members. Board members and the chief executive are associated with many influential local strategic partnerships which they use to the advantage of the learners and residents of Vauxhall. They give clear strategic direction, and support the training aspects of the company. The post of training centre manager is funded from VNC funds.

39. MACTAC manages its resources efficiently. Senior managers use a realistic overall budget effectively. Staffing levels are appropriate for the number of learners. Learning accommodation is satisfactory, the main training site is modern, spacious and provides a good learning environment.

40. Data is used satisfactorily to produce a range of reports for managers and board members. However, this information has not been used to set targets for retention and achievement. MACTAC has recently started to monitor and analyse the destination of those learners who leave before completing their programmes, and has used the information to introduce strategies to improve retention rates.

41. Communications are satisfactory. The general management team meets on a regular basis to discuss progress. Minutes of meetings are well recorded, and acted upon. A range of additional meetings take place regularly and keep all MACTAC's staff informed of its strategic priorities. The company liaises regularly with employers and stakeholders.

42. Health and safety is managed satisfactorily. Regular health and safety checks are conducted of employers' and work-placement premises. The company provides appropriate personal protective equipment to the learners and monitors its use. Health and safety issues are discussed regularly at management meetings.

43. Training is poorly planned. Key elements of training, such as key skills, the progression award and NVQ training are not co-ordinated sufficiently and operate almost independently of each other. Not enough attention is given to improving achievement levels. Almost 42 per cent of the learners are out of funding and continue to make slow progress. MACTAC's assessment strategy is poorly planned, with infrequent assessments. Learners' progress is not monitored sufficiently to contribute to the planning of training. Learners are not fully aware how much progress they are making or when they will complete their qualifications. Their progress reviews are infrequent and ineffective. The reviews are generally pastoral in nature and not sufficiently focused on achievement. Target-setting is weak. Learners' qualification achievement targets are the same as the end of funding dates. This does not take into account learners' abilities, their motivation and any opportunities to make faster progress. Internal verification is not planned or managed effectively.

44. MACTAC's arrangements to provide literacy, numeracy and language support are ineffective. It has no written strategy to deal with learners' literacy and numeracy support needs. The initial assessment process has recently been improved to include a screening test to identify learners who need support with literacy and numeracy. However, this information is not used to plan the overall support required by individual learners, the nature of the support and how it is to be evaluated. Learners who request support for

their literacy and numeracy skills, are referred to another external provider. Learners' progress and the quality of support given are not monitored sufficiently. So far, only five learners have been referred to other providers. MACTAC's staff do not have sufficient awareness, knowledge, or skills to identify learners who may need support with literacy and numeracy.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

45. MACTAC has a comprehensive diversity and equal opportunities policy which includes information about the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Procedures exist to deal with discrimination and sexual harassment. However, the policies and procedures are written in over-complex language. This factor was identified at the annual review of the diversity and equal opportunities policy and action has been taken to amend the policy. Learners and staff are given copies of MACTAC's equal opportunities policy at their induction. Learners are aware of the company's bullying, complaints and appeals procedures. They have insufficient understanding, however, of the wider implications of equal opportunities in the workplace, or their legal rights in relation to equality of opportunity.

46. Access to the training centre is good, and a lift is available for access to all training areas. An access audit has been conducted. MACTAC has responded to problems identified by the audit with a variety of adaptations to premises, to ensure that all learners are able to access training facilities.

47. MACTAC has developed a range of initiatives to widen participation by the local community. The company is working effectively with small hard-to-target groups within the community to remove obstacles to learning. Projects have included the introduction of taster days and short courses for minority ethnic groups at community venues, introducing training to learners who may not otherwise have considered this route.

48. Staff receive training in equality of opportunity and diversity matters. They have a clear understanding of the needs of people from different cultures and social backgrounds, as well as people with disabilities. They also recognise the significance of their role in working with learners who have previously been disadvantaged in educational terms. MACTAC responds to learners who require flexible learning programmes to accommodate their childcare needs.

49. The MACTAC training centre displays highly visible information reflecting cultural diversity and reinforcing equality of opportunity and social inclusion. Equality of opportunity is reinforced and monitored in the workplace during the learners' monthly progress reviews. Feedback from learners is analysed and appropriate responses are made. When problems have been identified in the workplace, MACTAC has responded quickly.

50. The organisation collects data about learners' ethnic backgrounds and disabilities, but not enough information is recorded about the learners with additional learning needs, such as those with dyslexia. MACTAC has used this data to set targets to widen

participation by minority ethnic groups and resolve the gender imbalance within the childcare sector. However, MACTAC has not been successful in increasing the number of learners from under-represented groups.

51. Employers receive information about equality of opportunity in an information pack issued by MACTAC. However, the pack does not give employers enough information about what MACTAC expects of them. Most employers have insufficient understanding of their responsibility to ensure that learners are protected by equal opportunities legislation. Equality of opportunity is discussed regularly at the general management meetings, where problems have been identified, appropriate actions have been taken.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

52. Recently, MACTAC has produced a detailed quality assurance framework which includes a new policy and procedures manual. This gives clear guidance to staff about some key training process and procedures, such as observations of teaching and learning, internal verification and learners' feedback. A quality audit takes place on a regular basis. This focuses on compliance rather than the effectiveness of the procedure or its effect on the learner. There is no analysis of these findings which could be used systematically in programme planning.

53. The quality assurance framework is not established sufficiently. Some key procedures are incomplete and not established sufficiently to have had an effect on the learners' experiences. For example, the company has no quality assurance process to ensure that the contracted provision of literacy and numeracy training is carried out to an agreed standard. The observation of teaching and learning is a relatively new process. It covers tutorials, assessments and teaching and learning sessions. It does not grade lessons, and observations are infrequent. The observers have no training in observing lessons, and grades are not moderated to ensure consistency. Observations have no clear rationale and objectives, and insufficient feedback is given to tutors. Not all tutors evaluate their own teaching, and when it is done, it is superficial. They do not identify what worked well and why, and how they can improve their practice. The company has no process to ensure that individual learning plans, assessments and progress reviews are completed to an agreed standard. Schemes of work and lesson plans are being standardised, but there are still inconsistencies

54. Internal verification is unsatisfactory. MACTAC has no overall strategy for internal verification. Insufficient monitoring and observation of assessments is being done. Learners' slow progress has not been linked to some of them completing their training without collecting sufficient evidence to meet the awarding body's standards. Most learners have not had their work internally verified, a situation which has been identified by the company. Additional staff are currently being trained to increase the number of internal verifiers.

55. The self-assessment process is satisfactory in identifying many of the company's strengths and weaknesses. It does, however, over-emphasise its strengths when establishing a grade. MACTAC's staff have undergone training in producing a self-

assessment report and are sufficiently aware of the importance of the process. The self-assessment process includes contributions from all the company's staff and feedback from learners and employers. The resulting development plan is not specific enough to initiate and progress improvements. MACTAC has not dealt satisfactorily with the qualitative issues such as poor target-setting, achievements and developing the curriculum to meet learners' needs. The development plan is repetitive and contains no key performance indicators to measure progress. It does not analyse the weaknesses and detail how these can be resolved. The actions proposed to deal with the weaknesses identified in key skills training, progress reviews, support for literacy, numeracy and language skills, and weak co-ordination of apprenticeship programmes, are ineffective.

56. Tutors' views are sought informally, but MACTAC has no effective system, such as course evaluation, to allow them to find out how they could improve their practice. There is no process for sharing good practice outside routine exchange of information. For example, the good work done in the commercial training facility offered by the company is not shared with the publicly funded learning programmes.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Health, social care & public services

Health, social care & public services		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Early years		
- Work-based learning for young people	32	4
- New Deal for young people	13	None

Early years

Strengths

- good individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- poor achievement levels
- insufficient assessment
- weak target-setting
- insufficient internal verification

Achievement and standards

57. Achievement rates are poor. Modern apprenticeship framework completion is very poor. Fifty-five learners began training programmes during the past two years, 32 are still in training, but none has completed the framework.

58. NVQ achievement rates are low. Of all learners who began government-funded programmes only four have achieved their NVQs. Fourteen learners are due to complete their programmes within the next month. Seven of these learners have achieved two units or less. Of the 17 learners retained in the previous year only six have completed three units or more.

59. Retention rates have improved. Of the 19 foundation modern apprentices starting training programmes last year, 17 are still in training and nearing the completion of their programmes, an improvement on the previous year for which six learners out of 23 starters remain.

60. MACTAC introduced the technical certificate towards the end of the training programme. Tutors have now started to focus on this aspect of the training programme, but none of the current learners has fully completed the technical certificate. Thirteen learners have recently passed the technical certificate tests.

MERSEYSIDE ACCREDITED CHILDCARE TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT CENTRE

61. None of the learners has achieved all their key skills qualifications, although eight have recently passed the application of number test and nine have passed the communication test.

62. Learners' portfolios demonstrate a good understanding of background knowledge. The portfolios do not provide sufficient evidence of skills development, although learners have developed satisfactory skills.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced apprenticeships																
	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts					5											
Retained*					1											
Successfully completed					0											
Still in learning					3											

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships																
	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	4		19		23											
Retained*	0		2		5											
Successfully completed	0		0		0											
Still in learning	4		17		6											

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training																
	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03											
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	1		1		2											
Retained*	0		0		0	0										
Successfully completed	0		0		0	0										
Still in learning	1		1		0	0										

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

Quality of education and training

63. Support for learners is good. They are well supported by MACTAC's staff, in the training centre and in their work placements. MACTAC's staff respond quickly when problems are encountered by employers or learners. The company frequently intervenes to support learners when problems develop within the workplace. MACTAC ensures that learners have a placement immediately when they join the programme. Several learners have been found alternative work placements when problems have arisen in the workplace. Learners are included as full members of the team in their placements and are given access to the full range of tasks required to gain the necessary skills. One learner who is having problems with mathematics has been enrolled on a course funded by MACTAC. A significant number of learners are lone parents, and MACTAC is supportive and flexible in its approach to providing their training. Learners' children are allowed to stay at the training centre during school holidays, to enable learners to continue with their training programmes.

64. The planning and delivery of learning is satisfactory. All the learning sessions observed during the inspection were satisfactory or good. Teaching staff are qualified and experienced. They have schemes of work and lesson plans. The technical certificate was introduced towards the end of the programme. Current learners who switched to the new award part way through their training have encountered difficulties. The delivery of training has been changed recently to prevent learners duplicating work for the technical certificate, key skills and the NVQ. The timetable has been amended to ensure that all learners receive individual tutorial support.

65. The links between key skills training and technical certificate delivery have recently been strengthened and are now satisfactory. Every effort is made to deliver the key skills training in a way that is interesting and relevant to learners. The tutor uses the health and safety information effectively as part of key skills project work. The key skills tutor has recently begun to visit work placements to gather workplace evidence.

66. Resources are appropriate for learners' needs. The training facilities are good, learners have satisfactory access to textbooks and a range of learning resources, including computers. MACTAC has a good employer base of 30 employers that provide a range of work placements for learners. Staff resources have been focused on the delivery of the technical certificate. Assessment and internal verification have been under-resourced.

67. Arrangements to assess learners' literacy and numeracy skills during their induction are adequate. Most learners' support needs are appropriately identified and learners are working at the correct level of qualification. However, the additional support in literacy and numeracy provided for learners is inadequate. MACTAC's staff do not have the appropriate qualifications to support learners with their literacy and numeracy needs. When support is required, it is provided by arrangement with another provider. Learners' progress is not monitored and the support received is not evaluated.

68. MACTAC does not assess learners' work sufficiently. Most foundation modern

apprentices have been on programme for more than 12 months, but only five have completed more than two units. Four New Deal clients have been on programme for at least eight months, although none has yet achieved a unit. Most learners do not have sufficient understanding of the NVQ assessment process. Most of them are unclear about when they will be assessed, or the range of evidence required for their qualification.

69. Assessment decisions are usually based on observation and verbal questioning, with some reflective accounts. Insufficient assessment observations are carried out. Some assessment judgements have been made on insufficient evidence. In some cases, awarding body requirements for observation have not been met. However, the assessment observation process observed during inspection was satisfactory. Recently, staff have been given clear guidance about how to monitor learners' progress and a new monitoring system ensures that assessments take place earlier in the programme.

70. Target-setting is weak. Learners' progress reviews are detailed and cover health and safety and equality of opportunity, but they do not set or monitor short- or medium-term targets. Learners do not understand their progress or what they need to do to achieve their qualifications. Their targets are not challenging enough and do not motivate them to make progress. Learners have insufficient understanding of their targets or how they can be achieved. Staff involved in training do not have an overall appreciation of learners' progress in all components of their programmes, and do not have targets to measure the effectiveness of training programmes. Staff have recognised this situation and have recently developed a new monitoring sheet. This combines all aspects of the programme to enable staff and learners to monitor progress. Staff are not set retention and achievement targets by management.

Leadership and management

71. MACTAC has not provided sufficient internal verification during the past year. Many assessments have not been verified until the end of the learners' programmes. The internal verification that has been carried out has not been thorough enough to identify any problems with assessment. The process has not identified the slow progress being made by learners, or the narrow range of evidence being used. A satisfactory internal verification sampling plan now exists and some sampling has been done. Internal verification resources have been reviewed and two assessors are now working towards the internal verification qualification.

72. The training centre has a suggestions box to encourage learners to give feedback about improvements to the programme.