

Directorate of Educational and Training Services (Army) (DETS (A)) Army Apprenticeships

Inspection dates		25 February–1 March 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Employer

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The overall success rates are consistently high across the majority of programmes and effective actions have been taken to improve the achievement gaps of a small, but significant, proportion of learners in information and communication technology (ICT) and engineering.
- Learners develop good employability and personal skills. They demonstrate good, and often outstanding, practitioner skills in their sector areas.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are mostly good. Learners have the opportunity to share good practices with their peers and further improve their knowledge and skills.
- The DETS (A) Army Apprenticeship programme is led and managed particularly well. Senior staff provide clear and decisive leadership. Links with army units and subcontractors are strong, and self-assessment and quality improvement planning are thorough.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and a small proportion of training, particularly theory sessions, is dull and uninspiring.
- Too few instructors, particularly military instructors who are new, are sufficiently qualified and experienced in teaching to take full account of individual learners' needs.
- Not all reviews and learning plans are fully recorded, updated, and include clear targets for learners.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rigour of teaching and learning observations, across all of the provision, to clearly identify best practices and continuously improve delivery.
- Continue to implement a programme of staff development to further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the provision.
- Further improve the consistency and thoroughness in recording and updating of reviews and learning plans.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for apprentices at DETS (A) are good. Overall success rates have been high and well above national averages for three years across most sector areas. A high proportion of learners complete their programmes within the planned timescales. However, for a small, but significant, proportion of apprentices, outcomes were lower last year. This particularly applied to information and communication technology (ICT) apprentices based at the Army Foundation College (AFC), Harrogate, 16- to 18-year-olds on the advanced apprenticeship in engineering with the REME and aged 19 and over with the Army Air Corps. DETS (A) was quick to identify this and has taken effective action to reduce identified gaps in success rates. Early signs are that these gaps are closing and timely success rates for these apprentices are improving. There are few differences between the success rates of those from White British and minority ethnic groups. A very small difference in outcomes between male and female apprentices last year is currently being addressed. Functional skills success rates are high.
- Apprentices achieve a high level of skills, confidence and proficiency in their military abilities and trade application. They make significant, and often rapid, progress in the development of their employability knowledge and skills, particularly in health and safety. They develop their professional knowledge well in most areas, and in many cases they are encouraged to discuss topics with their peers, gaining insights into different ways of working in a military setting. They demonstrate an extensive range of good and often outstanding skills in the army's training centres and outside in the field before joining their regiment on operations. Apprentices adopt highly safe working practices in a complex variety of vocational skills within the military context.
- Attendance and punctuality are particularly good and apprentices enjoy their learning. The development of English and mathematics skills is mostly good across the provision. The standards of written work are also generally good and apprentices take pride in the production and presentation of their portfolios.
- There are clear progression pathways for apprentices, and in some trades, such as catering, the apprenticeship gives them instant promotion and additional pay. Many learners describe how they now have the confidence to take on greater responsibility and indicate that the apprenticeship has given them the self-assurance that they will have a nationally recognised qualification to help them find work when they leave military service.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are mostly good, and sometimes outstanding, although in a small proportion of theory sessions, mainly those delivered by military instructors, teaching and learning are boring and lacklustre. Those staff who are fully qualified teachers are generally the most confident at using a wide range of teaching strategies to engage their learners. Current apprentices are making good progress.

- The majority of learners progress rapidly in acquiring relevant trade skills and knowledge soon after joining the apprenticeship programme. They are prepared well for the rigours of applying their knowledge in the demanding and often dangerous environment of the army. Military and civilian instructors work well together in most sector areas to provide a wide range of technical skills which can be readily applied on deployment. Assessment is also good, with most carried out by observing apprentices in their workplace, effectively capturing everyday activities as evidence of their competence.
- Resources for teaching and learning are good and often outstanding. Mock-up environments, such as field kitchens and mobile ICT units, provide excellent simulated experiences for learners in a safe and secure environment. Information technology is used well to support learners, and work is currently underway to provide a virtual learning environment to support apprentices better when away from centres. Catering apprentices use tablet computers highly effectively to support all aspects of their learning. Apprentices at the Army Air Corps also use these well to provide complex information for helicopter maintenance.
- Expectations are high and apprentices have significant responsibilities when deployed in the field army and on 'operations'. Learners are clearly made aware of, and benefit from, a wide range of support. Welfare support is particularly good and wide ranging, including access to the army padres and welfare charities. This helps the apprentices when they have personal problems and issues that affect their learning. Particularly high levels of welfare support are provided for apprentices who are young, from overseas or away from home for the first time. Induction is thorough, although some apprentices report that this is often unexciting and heavily reliant on PowerPoint presentations. In the better inductions, learners take part in memorable and engaging activities, which effectively introduce them to their apprenticeship programme.
- Initial advice and guidance are particularly effective in helping learners decide their choice of trade. Apprentices are clear on the details of their programmes and progression routes, including promotion and study in higher education. Additional support is delivered effectively, with apprentices having access to specialist staff, including educational psychologists where needed, to assist them with any learning difficulties.
- Initial assessments are robust and information is used well for recruitment and selection. This is effective in placing learners in the right type of career. The results of initial assessment are detailed but are not always shared with instructors, restricting their ability to plan learning which meets individual learner needs. The quality of recording of progress reviews is variable across the provision. While some are very detailed, with clear measurable targets, others are far too brief. Feedback to learners following assessments and tests is good. Apprentices are clearly told what they have done well and what they need to do to improve, although in ICT this is not always clearly recorded.
- Functional skills sessions are mostly taught well, and clearly emphasise the importance of problem solving and the use of technology. Functional skills are often delivered at the outset of the apprenticeship programme to help learners apply English and mathematics in other aspects of their training. In a small proportion of functional skills sessions, however, some learners were not appropriately challenged.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well throughout the provision. Instructors have an awareness of the need to include equality and diversity in training sessions and, in some cases, effectively use topical events in the media to promote discussion. Some functional skills lessons use diversity topics to help apprentices to develop their speaking and listening skills.

<p>Engineering</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Teaching, learning and assessment in engineering are good, which contribute to the high success rates. Most training sessions are well structured and make good use of ICT to enhance the learning of complex military practices, although a small proportion of theory sessions observed were less stimulating. In the better sessions, effective use is made of advanced computer-based simulation packages, and highly sophisticated military equipment is used to teach fault finding and repair.
- Carefully planned assignments further develop apprentices’ understanding and practical skills, and the majority of apprentices make swift progress. Feedback on the standard of apprentices’ work is clear and effective. Errors in spelling and grammatical English are corrected appropriately and developmental comments assist apprentices in improving their work. Initial assessment is thorough and detailed. Standard tests are used to assess numeracy, literacy and aptitude levels. Individual support is provided where required and is effective at improving apprentices’ learning.
- The teaching of functional skills is good. The sequence of delivery has recently changed with functional skills taught from the beginning of the programme, resulting in a significant improvement in learners’ progress this year. In some locations, support for functional skills is excellent with extended opening hours and one-to-one tuition using the latest e-learning packages.
- Resources are outstanding and used well. Workshops and laboratories are fitted with the latest tooling, machinery and computer software. Apprentices are trained on hi-tech military machinery and aircraft, including servicing and maintaining tanks and armoured vehicles. Apprentices make effective use of digital photography and of written records to evidence skills acquisition.
- Assessors are supportive and highly experienced. They use their military experience well to assess knowledge and practical skills. When on operational duties, apprentices routinely access assessors via e-mail and text.
- The monitoring of apprentices is thorough and tracking of progress is detailed. Apprentices are assessed regularly. Assessors provide clear verbal and written feedback. Realistic and achievable targets are set in most progress reviews, although not all. Employers in the corps do not always contribute to the apprentices’ progress review.
- Health and safety are rigorously promoted throughout the programme. All apprentices undertake health and safety risk assessments before starting practical tasks. These are discussed in detail during reviews and after assessment.
- Safeguarding is good and apprentices understand, and make use of, the army’s extensive welfare support. Equality and diversity are promoted well through posters and during induction, and are fully integrated into daily working practices. Apprentices attend Military Awareness Training twice a year which includes equality and diversity, manual handling and health and safety.

<p>ICT for practitioners</p> <p>Apprenticeships</p> <p>Learning programmes for 16-18</p> <p>Learning programmes for 19+</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- The quality of teaching learning and assessment in ICT is good, resulting in good outcomes for learners. Success rates are high and are above national averages. Learners acquire very good workplace skills in ICT and relate them well to the military context.
- Both military and civilian instructors are good role models. They are knowledgeable and experienced in ICT and how this is applied in the army. Training sessions are stimulating and interesting for learners who work hard to understand some of the more complex technical

aspects of computer technology. There are highly effective links between the military training and the apprenticeship programme. Learners use standard office software confidently and have a good understanding about how this is applied in their work.

- Learners benefit from particularly good support. Civilian instructors liaise well with their military counterparts to ensure learners have ready access to appropriate aspects of ICT in their workplace which enables them to achieve quickly. Instructors provide good additional support outside normal working hours to learners who struggle. In particular, they provide excellent support to learners who are identified as at risk of redundancy, helping them complete their framework before leaving the army.
- Assessment practices are thorough and supportive. Instructors are experienced and well qualified assessors, and most are either qualified teachers or currently working towards a teaching qualification. The quality of feedback to learners following assessment is mostly clear and detailed, although some feedback is too brief.
- Practical training sessions are particularly good and engage learners well. Learners enjoy learning new ICT skills relevant to their work roles and benefit from simulated environments that replicate their work in the field army. Functional skills tutors and military instructors liaise well, identifying and providing extra support in English and mathematics when needed. Theory teaching, however, is more variable and learners find some theory sessions delivered by military instructors, dull and uninspiring.
- Progress reviews are mostly well managed and clearly record what the learner has done and what they should achieve by the next review date. However, a minority of reviews are poorly recorded with insufficient short-term targets, and in some cases action points carried forward for too long. Individual learning plans are completed at the start of the programme but, in some cases, not updated throughout the course. Learners do not have ready access to their learning plan.
- Reinforcement of equality and diversity is mostly good, although practices vary between different subcontractors. In the best instances, equality and diversity are promoted through imaginative integration into functional skills sessions, involving learners in meaningful discussions. However, not all reviews record this well.

Hospitality and catering

Apprenticeships

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding, contributing to very high success rates which are well above national averages. Military catering skills are cross-mapped particularly well to the chefs' apprenticeship. Apprentices' attendance and punctuality are excellent. Their exemplary behavior, passion for cooking and immaculate professional dress is an acknowledgement of the high standards expected by their instructors. Apprentices are prepared well to be able to work at the highest levels in professional catering. They are able to celebrate their achievements at an annual awards dinner.
- Apprentices rapidly achieve exceptionally high standards in food preparation and cooking. They show the utmost levels of skills, particularly in areas such as butchery and larder work, as well as cake decorating, chocolate and sugar work, where they demonstrate fine piping skills, moulding and modelling techniques. They also acquire a good knowledge of handling different types of foods.
- Practical cookery lessons are meticulously planned and training kitchens are well appointed with the latest catering equipment. Military and civilian instructors work together well in many sessions and this provides good opportunities to share good practices in teaching and learning. Both military and civilian instructors are highly qualified and are expected to complete a full

teaching qualification. Group sizes are small enough to provide good opportunities for individual tuition. There is strong emphasis placed on health, safety and food hygiene. Learners hone their practical cookery skills outside in field training and in cookery competitions before joining their units.

- Functional skills and additional learning support are particularly good and well planned, and functional skills sessions are varied and interesting. Learners have access to a particularly good range of welfare support.
- All apprentices are given a tablet computer for the duration of their course which develops good independent learning. These are updated centrally and learners enjoy using them. They are used effectively to complete homework, revise for examinations and to support learning. Through the tablet computers, learners are able to readily access a particularly wide range of learning materials, timetables, recipes with photographs, catering books, manuals and applications for functional skills. In addition, they can watch staff demonstrating food preparation and cooking techniques through interactive videos, and speedily access the latest information about their course or the catering profession. At the end of their course, apprentices are encouraged to purchase their own tablet computer which can be uploaded free with much of the information available. Staff make good use of computers in training sessions. Most lesson plans are highly detailed and updated regularly, although a few are not.
- Assessment practices and feedback to learners are good. Initial assessment is detailed and effective. Information is shared with instructors and suitable support provided. Reviews are mostly thorough, although some are insufficiently recorded.
- Equality and diversity are thoroughly reinforced and good use is made of functional skills sessions to promote this further. When learners are deployed on overseas 'operations', they are able to continue their apprenticeship through good support provided by work-based assessors.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior staff at DETS (A) provide clear and decisive leadership, and vigorously pursue excellence to ensure that only the best practices are developed and adopted. There has been a determined approach to achieve maximum participation to the apprenticeship programme for new recruits to the army. With the recent inclusion of the infantry, there is high participation in apprenticeships and almost all trades are represented, with new trades and professions being developed. Senior military leaders tenaciously pursue the aim to have apprenticeships across all trades.
- Senior leaders have made considerable investments to ambitiously provide a 'whole life' experience of training and development for all soldiers. A progressive and highly effective programme is available to instructors involved with the apprenticeship programme. The instructor development programme is effectively supporting their continuous professional development. The army has made considerable investments to support the professionalisation of the instructor role by encouraging military and civilian instructors to gain nationally recognised qualifications in teaching, although not all military instructors currently complete a full teaching award. In addition, standards for the achievement of functional skills have been clearly defined and included as prerequisites for senior career posts. Promotional prospects rest upon all army staff having functional skills at an appropriate level, dependent on the seniority of the post.
- Managers are thorough in their approach to evaluating the performance and quality of the apprenticeship programme. DETS (A) has made good progress to improve success rates and outcomes since the last inspection. Particularly good tracking and monitoring of learner progress are done through a wide range of meetings across the full contracting chain. A clear tiered system of meetings which monitor the progress of learners by trade, qualifications, contracts and assigned staff is instrumental in highlighting where shortfalls are likely to happen, with senior military staff holding subcontractors to account to address identified issues. All subcontractors have regular programme review meetings, outcomes of which are fed into army-wide meetings.

- The army provides apprentices with high levels of skills in a wide range of trades. Course and programme design is good and the provision is under constant scrutiny and development. The majority of apprentices fully understand the progress they have made on their learning programmes and what they have to do to achieve. Both military and civilian instructors have up-to-date knowledge of their trades and are fully conversant with military standards. Resources are used effectively to support teaching and learning. Technology is often used imaginatively, particularly in supporting learners' achievement.
- Observations of teaching, learning and assessment are carried out at least annually by subcontractors on most activities, including reviews, induction and functional skills delivery. The quality of these is variable with some lacking detail and insufficient focus on the quality of provision. Military trade training, which is delivered by army staff, is subject to a military system of internal and external validation. This does not sufficiently focus on the quality of teaching and fails to give a clear judgement on learning. Feedback following some observations is weak and there is insufficient identification of good practices to share with others.
- Self-assessment and quality improvement planning have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good. They provide managers and senior military staff with a clear plan for development. The self-assessment report successfully draws on the views of learners, unit and corps staff and subcontractors, and uses data particularly effectively to provide a clear and evaluative account of the provision. They accurately identified that actions were required to address a drop in success rates for ICT apprentices in Harrogate and the small proportion of engineering apprentices at the REME and Army Air Corps, and these have started to improve.
- The army promotes equality and diversity well. A wide variety of learners, with an extensive range of abilities and needs, undertakes apprenticeships with the army, and individual support needs are mostly well catered for to enable them to achieve. DETS (A) monitors the progress of different groups of learners carefully. The army takes its responsibilities for welfare and safeguarding extremely seriously and provides a safe environment for all apprentices. The army meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Directorate of Educational and Training Services (Army) (DETS (A)) Army Apprenticeships

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Engineering	2
ICT for practitioners	2
Hospitality and catering	1

Provider details

Directorate of Educational and Training Services (Army) (DETS (A)) Army Apprenticeships

Type of provider	Employer
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 11685
	Part-time: 0
Quality Mentor (Army Apprentices)	Ms Sue Rowley
Date of previous inspection	March 2009
Website address	www.army.mod.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	-	-	-	723	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	2,729	6,610	1,193	4,780	-	-

Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A
Number of community learners	N/A
Number of employability learners	N/A
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nord Anglia Education ▪ Wiltshire and Somerset Colleges' Partnership Ltd ▪ Army Catering Training Trust ▪ DEFLOG VQ Trust Ltd ▪ Babcock International Group ▪ PDM Training and Consultancy Ltd ▪ Royal Artillery Centre for Personal Development ▪ South Cheshire College (TQ Education)

Additional socio-economic information

Since 1992 the Directorate of Educational and Training Services (Army) (DETS (A)) has formed part of the Adjutant General's Corps of the British Army. Their remit is to direct and develop the general education of soldiers and officers including the provision of qualification opportunities. Under the leadership of its Director, a Brigadier, DETS (A) is also responsible for Army Apprenticeships. Led and managed by a Colonel, Army Apprenticeships are overseen by a small team of military and civilian staff based at Army Headquarters (HQ), Andover. All apprentices are soldiers recruited from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, as reflected across the British Isles.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Neil Edwards HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and nine additional inspectors, assisted by the Quality Mentor (Army Apprentices) as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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