

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Defence Munitions Gosport

20 August 2001



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 in New Deal options. 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 training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's *learnirect* provision
- adult and community learning
- training given by the Employment Service under the New Deals.

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.

## Inadequate provision

A provider's provision will normally be deemed to be less than adequate where

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

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. The overall judgement as to whether the provision is adequate or inadequate is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

## SUMMARY

### The provider

Defence Munitions Gosport is a Ministry of Defence establishment. Its function is to maintain, process, store and distribute ammunition and weapons, primarily for the Royal Navy. The depot provides craft apprenticeships in mechanical and electrical engineering for young people.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of the learners. More specifically, the work-based training in engineering are satisfactory as are the leadership and management of the defence munitions apprenticeship scheme at Gosport.

### Work-based learning for young people

At the time of the inspection, there were 15 advanced modern apprentices in training at the Gosport depot. Retention and achievement rates on the apprenticeship programme are good. Assessment in the workplace is well planned and thorough, but many learners have an inadequate understanding of the national vocational qualification (NVQ) and of key skills. Records of learning plans are unsatisfactory and some plans fail to take account of learners' achievements before joining the training scheme.

### Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a well-established framework for the training of learners and the training is managed effectively to meet the current and projected business needs of the depot. Staff have worked hard to minimise the disruption to training brought about by the organisational changes recently imposed on the depot. Workplace supervisors are not adequately involved in the assessment of learners' competence against NVQ and key skills criteria. The training programme is not sufficiently flexible to provide for the specific needs of individual learners. Monitoring of equality of opportunity in the workplace is inadequate.

## GRADES

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

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	3

### KEY STRENGTHS

- high achievement rates
- comprehensive and thorough assessment of level 3 NVQ
- well-managed schemes of training

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- inadequate individual learning plans
- little or no recognition of learners' previous achievements
- inadequate involvement of workplace supervisors in NVQ and key skills training
- inadequate checks on the impact of equal opportunities policies

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better communication between staff on learners' progress at level 3 NVQ
- better planning of the development and assessment of key skills
- creation of a clear quality assurance cycle
- closer monitoring of the standard of service from main subcontractor

## THE PROVIDER AND ITS CONTEXT

1. Defence Munitions (DM) Gosport is located on a 450 acre site on the western shore of Portsmouth harbour. The depot provides a wide range of ammunition and weapon maintenance activities, and processing and warehousing facilities for explosive and non-explosive stores. Its main tasks include the servicing of guided weapons, engineering support, explosives maintenance, calibration, small arms and gun processing, and storage. Despite the significant reduction in the number of staff employed at DM Gosport in recent years, the annual intake of learners has been maintained at eight or nine. The modern apprenticeship programme in engineering maintenance is run alongside the Ministry of Defence (MOD) standards based apprentice training (SBAT) scheme. The apprenticeship is arranged over three phases and lasts between 32 and 42 months. Training over the first 15 months is subcontracted to a local college. The remainder of the programme is given over to on-the-job training in planned work placements across the DM Gosport site. The training team comprises an apprentice training manager and two apprentice training officers. Learner training is funded through a contract with the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

2. DM Gosport recruits new learners mainly from the local authority districts of Fareham and Gosport. Fareham is an affluent urban area with many small and medium-sized businesses. The town of Gosport has one major road serving the area and public transport facilities are poor. There is a ferry boat service for foot passengers to Portsmouth. The running down of the large naval and MOD establishments, which have been a traditional feature of this area, and the closure of several large manufacturing companies, have increased the levels of social and economic deprivation. In June 2001, the unemployment rate was 1.9 per cent in Gosport, 0.9 per cent in Fareham and 1.5 per cent in the Hampshire LSC area. However, earlier in the same year, the unemployment rate in certain parts of Gosport was as high as 9 per cent and youth unemployment in Gosport as a whole is the highest in southeast Hampshire. In a recent skills audit, 33 per cent of the economically active population of Gosport were identified as having no qualifications. In 2000, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 43 per cent in Gosport and 55 per cent in Fareham compared with 49.2 per cent nationally. At the time of the 1991 census, minority ethnic groups represented approximately 1 per cent of the population of Gosport and Fareham and 2.6 per cent of the population of Portsmouth compared with the national average of 6.2 per cent.

## THE INSPECTION

3. Three inspectors spent a total of 12 days with DM Gosport in August 2001. Inspectors interviewed nine of the current learners and four learners who had recently completed their training. They visited six work-placement areas on the Gosport site, met seven workplace supervisors/apprentice masters, and interviewed the assessor, internal verifier and five other staff from DM Gosport. Inspectors also visited two local colleges and met the heads of engineering to discuss subcontracted training. Inspectors examined 17 learners' personal files, eight portfolios of NVQ and key skills evidence, contracts, policy statements, internal and external verifiers' reports, assessment plans, minutes of meetings, promotional materials, induction packs, the latest self-assessment report and action plan. They also observed and graded two level 3 NVQ assessment sessions.

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	1	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	15	3

4. DM Gosport offers advanced modern apprenticeships in mechanical and electrical engineering for young people aged between 16 and 21. There are 15 learners currently doing the training programme. Applicants to the programme have an initial assessment, which incorporates diagnostic profiling techniques. The offer of an apprenticeship is based on performance in these assessments, GCSE results and evidence of other previous education or training. Learners receive a formal induction session at the Gosport depot and at the local further education college conducting the off-the-job training. Training is divided into three phases. During phase 1, learners attend a local college on a full-time basis, for one year, to complete a level 2 (foundation) NVQ in engineering manufacture. The level 2 NVQ is assessed and internally verified by college staff. Phase 2 training starts with a further 3 months full time at the college to develop skills required under the SBAT scheme, such as advanced machining or the use of radar and sonar equipment. Phase 2 training continues with a further week's induction into learner skills and the MOD workplace. The learners are then placed in different departments in the Gosport depot, and these are normally changed on a three-monthly basis. Learners are supervised and trained in the workplace by experienced craftsmen, who are designated apprentice masters. Learners' competences at level 3 NVQ are assessed in the workplace by an apprentice training officer, and a member of the human resources training team carries out the internal verification. All learners attend day-release courses, such as first or national certificates in engineering, at one of two local colleges, over the duration of the apprenticeship. Learners also receive resource and initiative residential training, designed to promote teamwork and improve self-confidence. During all phases of training, the progress of learners is monitored against DM Gosport's SBAT scheme. Progress is reviewed formally every six weeks by an apprentice training officer and by the appropriate apprentice master at the end of each period of on-the-job training. Over the last four years, all learners have gained employment on completion of their apprenticeship. The numbers employed within MOD establishments, however, has fallen recently, following the major restructuring which has taken place. Shortly before the inspection six learners completed the final stage of their training programme. Two have taken jobs with other organisations, two have been offered full-time contracts at the Gosport depot and the other two have been placed on casual contracts at the depot.



The following table shows the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of inspection.

Work-based learning for young people										
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)										
	1997-98		1998-99		1999-2000		2000-01		2001-02	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number that started	10		10		9		9		0	0
Still in training	0	0	0	0	8	89	7	78	0	0
AMA framework completed	8	80	6	60	0	0	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 2 completed	9	90	10	100	8	89	0	0	0	0
NVQ level 3 completed	8	80	6	60	0	0	0	0	0	0
Left without completing the framework	2	20	4	40	1	11	2	22	0	0

## STRENGTHS

- high achievement rates
- comprehensive and thorough assessment at level 3 NVQ
- wide range of opportunities for additional training

## WEAKNESSES

- poor understanding of NVQ and key skills requirements by most learners
- inadequate individual learning plans
- inadequate recognition of learners' previous achievements

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better communication between staff on learners' progress at level 3 NVQ
- better co-ordination of learners' progress reviews
- better planning of the development and assessment of key skills
- earlier assessment of learners' achievements at level 2 NVQ

5. As identified in the self-assessment report, achievement and retention rates for learners are high. Twenty learners started the programme between September 1997 and September 1998. Of these, 70 per cent have completed their individual learning programmes and the advanced modern apprenticeship framework. Between September 1997 and September 1999, 29 learners have taken the level 2 (foundation) engineering course and the overall achievement rate is 93 per cent. The average retention rate on

the apprenticeship programme over the last four years is 76 per cent.

6. During on-the-job training at the depot, learners work alongside experienced and skilled workplace supervisors. They acquire an understanding of a wide range of assembly and disassembly techniques and are given ample opportunity to develop the associated practical skills. Procedures to be used during servicing and maintenance of the weapon assemblies are clearly defined and learners' work is closely monitored by the apprentice masters. There are comprehensive and thorough assessment arrangements for learners working towards their level 3 NVQ. Evidence of learners' competences is obtained from three sources. The primary source of evidence is direct observation of learners' performance in the workplace. This is supported by statements in the SBAT log books that are signed by the apprentice masters and by learners' written records of workplace activity. All assessments are formally planned with learners and recorded. Each learner receives a minimum of one observational assessment in each department and a few weeks after this assessment, the assessor examines learners' written records. Most assessments are carried out during the third year of the training programme although, recently, the amount of assessment carried out in the second year has been increased. The assessor keeps a record of each learner's progress towards their NVQ and discusses this with the learner. However, learners are not provided with a copy of the 'tracking chart' recording their progress. Information on learners, however, is not formally shared with the apprentice training officer who conducts the six-weekly reviews or with the apprentice masters who review learners' progress against the SBAT scheme at the end of each stage of on-the-job training. At present, the various reviews of progress are not sufficiently co-ordinated.

7. Learners are able to carry out a range of additional level 2 NVQ units during the first year of off-the-job training. Currently, learners are studying for a range of qualifications on a day-release basis at local colleges, including craft and technician awards. Learners are encouraged to progress beyond the level prescribed in the apprenticeship framework. Some of the present learners plan to progress to higher national certificate programmes and supervisory management courses. In some instances, learners are able to achieve such qualifications after completing their apprenticeship. Learners are also encouraged to take part in additional training during their on-the-job training. Much of this is directly related to their current departmental duties. However, most training events are of benefit to all learners and offer them opportunities to gain experience and/or certificates in a wide range of occupational settings, thereby increasing their employment prospects. There is additional training in firefighting, operating overhead pendant cranes and forklift trucks, stress management, electricity at work regulations, truck tyre fitting and information technology skills. Learners also take part in two residential training events designed to increase self-confidence and to promote good teamwork. The logbooks completed during these residential courses are used to provide evidence of the acquisition of key skills. Learners have been successful in MOD national engineering hand-skills competitions. The wide range of training opportunities was described in the self-assessment report.

8. Most learners have a poor understanding of NVQ and key skills requirements. They

are unable to identify activities relevant to NVQ or key skills assessment until late in the third year of the training programme. Learners and workplace supervisors rely mainly on the assessor to identify suitable assessment opportunities. Most learners are not able to cross-reference their evidence to NVQ standards. Not enough is done to develop learners' understanding of evidence gathering in relation to the required competences during the first year of off-the-job training. Learners do not take responsibility for their level 3 NVQ portfolios of evidence until a late stage in the programme. Learners and workplace supervisors are confused by the proliferation of documents and logbooks associated with the NVQ, key skills and the SBAT scheme. As recognised in the self-assessment report, the development and assessment of key skills require better planning to ensure that all involved in the training programmes are fully aware of how the development and assessment of key skills are to be integrated with the various stages of on- and off-the-job training.

9. The individual learning plans for learners are not detailed enough and they are not systematically updated. The results of initial assessments are not recorded and the target qualifications listed within the plan are restricted to those funded by the local LSC, or previously by the Hampshire Training and Enterprise Council. Training plans give the same target date for completing each NVQ unit and the target date for each key skills unit is the same as the date given for the completion of the apprenticeship. No record is made of any additional qualifications achieved. All learners follow the SBAT scheme but this is not acknowledged in the learning plan. Similarly there is no record of the personal and team development residential training which learners carry out. In some learning plans, the units taken at level 2 are incorrectly identified. Courses and other forms of training, which learners follow at college, are not recorded in their plans.

10. There is inadequate recognition of learners' previous achievements when planning training programmes. For example, one new learner had previously achieved a level 2 (foundation) engineering NVQ at a particular college but was then required by staff at the subcontracted college to repeat the same course when he started his apprenticeship. Another learner was made to repeat several level 2 units that he had previously completed. Another who had achieved an intermediate general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) in engineering, which included key skills at level 2, was required to repeat the key skills work during the apprenticeship. Learners do not receive a formal assessment of each unit as they complete it. The formal assessment of all the level 2 foundation engineering NVQ units is delayed until an unacceptably late stage in the first year of off-the-job training.

#### Good Practice

*One learner is currently supported by DM Gosport to participate in the Prince's Trust Volunteer Programme. The personal objectives for the learner are to focus on the needs of others and to recognise that all members of a team can contribute to overall team performance. The learner is developing evidence for key skills as he works with a range of disadvantaged groups.*

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT****Grade 3**

11. DM Gosport is one of three units constituting Defence Munitions South. Defence Munitions, with its headquarters in Bath, is part of the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO), run from Andover. Although DM Gosport now has some delegated powers, it remains an MOD establishment and is therefore subject to many of the regulations laid down by the MOD. DM Gosport was re-accredited as an Investor in People in July 2001. The human resources manager at DM Gosport is responsible for training, and the apprenticeship scheme is run on a day-to-day basis by two training officers. One training officer manages the level 3 NVQ assessment, the other is responsible for liaison with subcontractors, the planning of workplace training and learners' progress reviews. A third member of staff is the internal verifier for NVQ assessments. DM Gosport is an accredited centre for the engineering awards carried out by learners. Because of the recent reduction in staff resources, the administration support for the training officers is limited to approximately one day each week. Further administration support is provided by business studies undergraduates on work placement at the depot. Two of the 420-strong workforce at DM Gosport are from minority ethnic groups. Over the last three years, all entrants to the apprenticeship scheme have been men from non-minority ethnic groups.

**STRENGTHS**

- well-managed schemes of training
- well-resourced training programme
- good equal opportunities policies and statement of intent

**WEAKNESSES**

- inadequate involvement of workplace supervisors in NVQ and key skills training
- inadequate checks on the impact of equal opportunities policies

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- streamlining the complementary training schemes
- closer monitoring of the standard of service from the main subcontractor
- collaboration with other local training providers to maintain the breadth of training
- creation of a clear quality assurance cycle
- more thorough internal verification of level 3 NVQ

12. Training, using the SBAT scheme, is well established at DM Gosport and follows a national scheme of training agreed by the MOD and the engineering awarding body. The requirements of the advanced modern apprenticeship programme have been added

to the SBAT scheme. The overall training programme is managed to meet the predicted workforce needs of the depot. High standards of performance and behaviour are expected of the learners. The overall training programme has recently been reviewed to determine where there is duplication, or out-of-date material which would justify changes. At times, learners find it difficult to make sense of the overlapping demands of the different assessment schemes.

13. The training programme is well resourced. Despite the loss of around 40 per cent of the staff at DM Gosport over a two-year period, there is a commitment to recruit eight learners a year, providing a total of 24. The three training officers are appropriately qualified. There are adequate numbers of workplace supervisors, and good levels of equipment and resources for on-the-job training. The subcontracted colleges are similarly well equipped for off-the-job training. University students on placement in the human resources section perform some useful work in support of apprenticeship training. They have completed particular investigations as part of their coursework, and have produced some helpful reports.

14. The organisational changes which DM Gosport has undergone in the last two years have involved significant disruption and uncertainty. The effects of these on the apprenticeship scheme have included, frequent changes of workplace supervisor, a reduction in the number of training placements available, uncertainty about job prospects at the end of training, and uncertainty about the duties of staff taking on new jobs. Learners have inevitably been affected by lowered morale, in some business units, but those completing phase three are now satisfied to have obtained employment, and gained skills and qualifications. Staff have worked hard to overcome the effects of continuing change.

15. From September 1999, the contract for off-the job training was reallocated by the MOD, Bath, to a local further education college. A training officer makes weekly visits to the college, and college staff attend bi-monthly board meetings at DM Gosport to discuss learners' progress. College and DM Gosport staff also have monthly 'contract' meetings. Nevertheless, there have been some difficulties in the relationship with the college, which have yet to be fully resolved. There is not enough recognition of the prior qualifications of learners, or their individual needs for training and learning support. There have been issues of indiscipline among learners, who sometimes appear confused by the contrasting demands of the education and working environments. The internal verifier from DM Gosport has not systematically checked the arrangements for level 2 NVQ assessment and verification carried out at the college. An action plan to remedy identified weaknesses in training is being formally monitored by a group of staff from the DM Gosport training section and the college. First-year learners now return to the training centre at DM Gosport for four days each year to strengthen the links with their employer. The residential initiative training is subcontracted to a private company. This training is well organised. Learners enjoy it, and see the value of the challenge it offers.

16. It has been difficult to plan the three-monthly changes of work placement during the off-the-job phase of training because of staff changes, and the slimming down or removal

of some functions at the depot. There are currently enough placements, but there has been little effort to investigate the possibility of placements at neighbouring MOD establishments to ensure a suitable breadth of training for all learners. There is no local mechanism for collaboration, although at national level there is a committee which exists to allow good practice to be shared between MOD establishments. Apprentice masters are central to the success of the on-the-job training in the workplace. Workshops, with training staff, have been held to make them aware of the demands of the role including the need to understand the modern apprenticeship framework and the requirements of NVQ and key skills assessment. However, the workshops are not well attended. Apprentice masters are committed to the supervision of specialist training in their workshops, and to the well-being and progress of their learners, but they are content to leave the planning and assessment of NVQ and key skills work to the apprentice training officers. There are no qualified assessors amongst the apprentice masters.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 4**

17. There are policy statements about equal opportunities and diversity from all levels of the organisation, including the MOD, and senior staff at DM Gosport have made clear their intentions about the way staff in the workplace should treat each other. There are also clear grievance procedures. Learners are introduced to the policies and procedures during induction. There are easy-to-read guides, as well as more complex policy documents. Many staff have received equal opportunities awareness training. The last awareness raising session for apprentice masters was three years ago. Non-supervisory staff were asked to undertake a form of interactive learning programme. Few applications for apprenticeships come from women, people with disabilities or from minority ethnic groups. An attempt was made this year to distribute information more widely to under-represented groups, although the content and style of this information was not reviewed by the establishment's communication specialists. Data on applicants are collected but no analysis has been done, as a means of identifying a recruitment strategy. The range of applicants has not significantly altered over recent years, except that more learners have been drawn from one-year full-time courses in local colleges. Not enough is done to cater for the different needs of individual learners. Some learners who need additional learning support have not received it, or have done so very belatedly, despite the ample information which is available about their abilities. The lack of arrangements for recognising prior learning discriminates against older entrants, who are more likely to have relevant work experience or qualifications. The spirit of the equal opportunities policy in the depot is challenged by the type of graffiti, reading material and posters seen in several workshops, and managers show inadequate awareness of the potential for offence in such matters. The impact of equal opportunities policies is not adequately monitored or reviewed.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 3**

18. There is a strong emphasis on quality control in the working environment because of the nature of the work which is carried out. Procedures and regulations cover most aspects of working life. Safety procedures are particularly detailed. The MOD personnel manual sets out policies for all aspects of staff management, including the operation of apprenticeships. Some learners find it hard to adjust to this style of work discipline and find themselves at the wrong end of some firm disciplinary measures. There is no clear framework for quality assurance of the training. However, the small number of learners ensures that matters relating to the quality of provision are dealt with satisfactorily. Many of the pieces of a quality assurance system are in place, but they have not been brought together into an annual quality cycle with a clear structure. The apprentice board, chaired by the production manager, oversees the operation of the programme. It has broad representation, including a learner, a trades union representative and members of the subcontracted college. The board provides a useful forum for the exchange of information about the training. It receives reports on the progress of the apprenticeship scheme, and agrees actions for improvement and development, though not as part of an agreed quality assurance cycle. Recently, reviews of learner opinion have been conducted at the end of each phase of training. However, the failure of the college to comply with the terms of the contract in the training it supplied was not picked up for some time. The internal verification of level 3 NVQ involves some direct observation of assessment in the workplace to supplement the scrutiny of final portfolio evidence, but the overall verification process is not planned systematically enough and records are not detailed enough.

19. The first self-assessment report in the apprenticeship scheme was produced in March 2000. It followed the structure presented in 'Raising the Standard' and identified strengths and weaknesses clearly. The second self-assessment report was written in May 2001, on the basis of the 'Common Inspection Framework', failed to identify strengths and weaknesses clearly, although the associated development plan referred to significant strengths and weaknesses identified through self-assessment. Inspectors agreed with the grades for engineering, and for leadership and management, awarded by DM Gosport. The self-assessment report did not award separate grades for equality of opportunity and quality assurance and did not give enough attention to these aspects of provision.