

# INSPECTION REPORT

**PETA Ltd**

**11 December 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 **learndirect** 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

PETA Ltd is a private training company based in Portsmouth. The New Horizons division of the company is responsible for publicly funded training for modern apprenticeships and national vocational qualifications (NVQs). It provides work-based learning in business administration, information technology, customer services and engineering. There are 198 learners following modern apprenticeships and other work-based learning programmes. Learners are either employed or have work placements in Portsmouth. Off-the-job training is provided at PETA Ltd's training centres and at local colleges of further education.

### Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The quality of work-based learning is outstanding in Life Skills and satisfactory in engineering and business administration. The leadership and management are satisfactory, as are the arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality assurance.

### GRADES

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

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

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

| Foundation programmes | 1 |
|-----------------------|---|
| Contributory grades:  |   |
| Life Skills           | 1 |

## **KEY STRENGTHS**

- strong sense of common purpose to serve the best interests of learners
- good internal communications
- strong partnerships with employers and the wider community
- effective staff appraisal and development
- some detailed and thoroughly applied quality assurance procedures
- good linking of equal opportunities with vocational training
- good induction of learners
- good key skills training for most learners
- well-planned and well-taught Life Skills and engineering programmes

## **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- insufficient use of target-setting for improvement
- insufficient use of the outcomes of self-assessment
- inadequate use of targets for developing equality of opportunity
- poor achievement and completion rates in some areas

## **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- clearer action points in minutes of meetings
- more detailed policy for equality of opportunity
- further development of promotional materials to aid widening of participation
- more opportunities to gain key skills qualifications for Life Skills learners
- greater consistency in the content and thoroughness of progress reviews for business administration learners
- more sharing of good practice between engineering assessors

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of five inspectors spent a total of 20 days at PETA Ltd (PETA) in December 2001. They interviewed 39 learners, had 21 individual meetings with PETA's staff and visited 11 workplaces, where they interviewed 10 workplace supervisors or managers. Nine learners' progress reviews were observed. Inspectors observed 10 training and assessment sessions, of which they graded six. They examined a range of documents, including 18 learners' portfolios of evidence, individual learning plans, learners' records, PETA's policies and procedures manuals, internal and external verification documents, PETA's business plans, staff development and review documents and promotional literature. New Horizons' self-assessment report and action plan of August 2001 were reviewed.

### Grades awarded to learning sessions

|  | Grade 1  | Grade 2  | Grade 3  | Grade 4  | Grade 5  | Grade 6  | Grade 7  | Total    |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Engineering, technology & manufacturing            | 0        | 0        | 0        | 3        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 3        |
| Business administration, management & professional | 0        | 1        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 1        |
| Foundation programmes                              | 0        | 0        | 2        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 2        |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>0</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>6</b> |

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. The Portsmouth Engineering Training Association was founded by local manufacturing companies in 1970, to provide themselves with a training facility. In 1982, it became PETA Ltd, a company limited by guarantee which is also a registered charity. Its initial work has been extended to include corporate training and consultancy to a wide range of public and private sector clients. It provides government-funded training for NVQs and other work-based learning, as well as the Life Skills element of the Learning Gateway.

3. An executive director manages PETA. The company employs 56 people in two divisions. New Horizons is the division responsible for government-funded work-based learning. It is run by a scheme manager and has 25 staff who provide training for 198 learners. PETA operates four training centres, three in Portsmouth and one in Havant. Training is funded by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Learning and Skills Council (LSC). PETA is also a learning centre for the local University for Industry (Ufi) learndirect hub.

4. The economy of east Hampshire has grown faster than that of the southeast of England and the United Kingdom as a whole. The economic buoyancy of the area is reflected in the density and variety of business activity which includes agriculture, advanced manufacturing, engineering, information technology (IT), tourism and leisure, and financial and business services. PETA draws its learners and employers mainly from within the travel to work area of Portsmouth. Most of the employers are in the engineering and manufacturing sectors, where employment levels have fallen. This has prompted PETA to extend its recruitment and training to smaller employers. In September 2001, the unemployment rate in Hampshire was 1.1 per cent, compared with the national and southeast of England averages of 2.9 and 1.5 per cent respectively. In Portsmouth, the unemployment rate was 2.1 per cent. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers in Hampshire achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 54.9 per cent and the national average was 50 per cent. However, the proportion in Portsmouth was 34.3 per cent.



## Work-based learning for young people

5. In engineering, achievement and retention rates are satisfactory for NVQ learners and advanced modern apprentices, but retention rates for foundation modern apprentices are poor. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of their work, particularly in practical sessions, and portfolios of evidence often contain work of a good standard. In business, achievement and retention rates for modern apprenticeships are poor. Since 1999, no foundation modern apprentice has completed the apprenticeship framework and 61 per cent have left the programme early. Since 1998, only 9 per cent of advanced modern apprentices have completed the framework and 38 per cent have left the programme early. Achievements for NVQ learners are better, with 34 per cent achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan. Learners often make good progress through the different levels of the business qualification. The proportion of learners on Life Skills courses who either gained a job with training, progressed into further training or completed their planned training, was 89 per cent in 1999-2000 and 76 per cent in 2000-01. Learners receive excellent preparation for employment and the proportion gaining work rose from 16 per cent in 1999-2000 to 24 per cent in 2000-01.

6. Learners receive a good induction in preparation for their programmes of study. There is an appropriate emphasis on health and safety and equality of opportunity. Learners are well supported throughout their programmes, by staff who share the aim of doing their best for learners. Training is particularly well planned in engineering and Life Skills and this is reflected in the standard of individual learning plans. The training is often good and inspectors observed no unsatisfactory learning sessions. Key skills are taught effectively and integrated with vocational training for level 2 NVQs in engineering. In business administration, there are imaginative key skills projects. Resources to support learning are always at least satisfactory. Practical resources in engineering are particularly good. The range of trainers' experience and qualifications in this area is also a strength. Learners benefit from the effective working relationship between PETA and employers, which ensures they have plenty of learning opportunities.

7. Most assessment is planned well and carried out efficiently. In engineering, assessment carried out in the workplace is unplanned and inefficient. Progress reviews are not used to set targets for learners. Internal verification in engineering is inadequately planned. The verification of individual engineering assessments is thorough, but there is no system for ensuring that an appropriate range of assessments is verified. In business administration, progress reviews are conducted satisfactorily. Internal verification is carried out to a plan, but the range of evidence sampled is too narrow. Progress reviews for learners on Life Skills programmes are well managed.

## Life Skills

8. Learners achieve well. Eighty-nine per cent of starters in 1999-2000, 76 per cent in 2000-01, and 32 per cent so far in 2001-2002 have either gained a job, progressed to further training, and/or have achieved the targets in their individual learning plans. PETA is committed to helping learners on Life Skills courses gain formal qualifications and to building their confidence and self-esteem. Learners are given good preparation for employment. Rates of progression into employment increased from 16 per cent in 1999-2000 to 24 per cent in 2000-2001. In addition, 21 per cent of learners in 1999-2000 and 23 per cent in 2000-2001 progressed to further training.

9. Learners are provided with a secure learning environment. Training starts with a clear and comprehensive induction programme. Learners benefit from carefully prepared and effective individual learning plans. There are regular progress review meetings at which plans are adapted if necessary. Very good use is made of learners' work placements, where learners are closely monitored and supported.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

## Grade 3

10. The Portsmouth Engineering Training Association was founded by local manufacturing companies in 1970. As PETA Ltd, a company limited by guarantee, it retains its structure of member companies, with a governing council of directors drawn from these companies. An executive director manages PETA. New Horizons is the division of PETA responsible for government funded work-based learning. It is managed by a scheme manager, who reports to the executive director. PETA's other division offers a wide range of courses and services to the corporate sector. PETA is also a learning centre for the local Ufi learndirect hub. The company employs 56 staff, of whom 52 are permanent, full-time appointments. Twenty-five staff work in the New Horizons division, of whom 23 are permanent, full-time employees. New Horizons operates within the context of the company's strategy, budget and business plans, but has its own mission statement, working instructions and procedures. It receives financial services from PETA's management accountant and other specialist advice from corporate services' staff, including health and safety and human resource management. There are four vocational training centres, one for administration and IT, one for engineering and two for Life Skills. Each has its own manager, budget, contracts and claims administration. Each centre has its own trainer/assessors, of whom there are eight. The executive director of PETA has overall responsibility for company policies. The New Horizons manager is responsible for policies within the division, including those for quality assurance. PETA has an annual training plan. The company first carried out self-assessment in 1998. Its most recent self-assessment report was produced in August 2001, and a detailed action plan has been developed to deal with the weaknesses identified there.

### STRENGTHS

- a strong sense of common purpose to serve the best interests of learners
- good internal communications
- strong partnerships with employers and the wider community
- effective staff appraisal and development
- good linking of equal opportunities to vocational training
- some detailed and thoroughly applied quality assurance procedures

### WEAKNESSES

- insufficient use of target-setting for improvement
- insufficient use of the outcomes of self-assessment
- inadequate use of targets for developing equality of opportunity
- some poor achievement and completion rates for learners
- inconsistently applied internal verification

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- clearer action points in minutes of meetings
- more detailed policy for equality of opportunity
- further development of promotional materials to aid widening of participation

11. PETA faced considerable financial difficulties in the late 1990s. Through an effective recovery plan, the current senior managers and council have ensured that there is a secure foundation on which to build effective training. Staff share a common sense of purpose, to provide the best possible service to learners.

12. Communications between all staff are very good and are helped by clear organisational structures which staff understand. Senior managers encourage a spirit of debate and open discussion. The executive director holds meetings where staff representatives can raise any issue. The bi-monthly 'Staff Update' is a valuable source of information. Formal meetings ensure that important issues are discussed and resolved. The monthly managers' meeting, chaired by the executive director, focuses on strategy and business performance. New Horizons's manager holds weekly meetings with training centre managers and these managers hold monthly meetings with staff at which they plan, monitor and review programmes, consider operational issues and resolve problems. Most meetings are minuted, but the records do not always have sufficient action points, with timetables to enable progress to be monitored.

13. Managers are given data about learners and on financial matters promptly, and they monitor the company's position against contractual targets. However, the self-assessment report recognises that there is insufficient setting of targets for improvement, especially in relation to learners' achievement rates. This has hampered efforts to improve achievement and retention, which in some areas are unsatisfactory.

14. Staff development and appraisal are particularly thorough. All staff have an annual development review with their line manager at which objectives are agreed. Salaries are related to performance against these targets. Development plans contribute to the well-thought out and executed company training plan. There is very thorough evaluation of the outcomes of training.

15. There are strong, well-established partnerships between the company and local employers, enabling them to work together for the benefit of learners. PETA works with a range of large and small employers, many of whom are its members. New members regularly become involved in training. Trainer/assessors work closely with employers to ensure that learners are able to gain evidence for all aspects of their qualification and that they have a wide range of work experience. Links with the wider community are equally effective and the Life Skills centre makes particularly good use of these to help learners. There is excellent co-operative working with local schools. For example, a project with 10 schools will give their pupils access to modern computer-related engineering equipment and training, including industrial standard hardware and

software. Excluded school pupils attend PETA for vocational training. The executive director is actively involved in the work of local training associations and lobby groups. The senior roles of PETA's council members ensures that there is a realistic appreciation of the training needs of employers and that the work of the company is widely known.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

16. PETA ensures that learners grow in confidence in a safe and secure climate where the importance of self-respect and respect for others is constantly stressed. The foundation for this is based on good procedures during the initial interview and induction of applicants and reinforced throughout their learning. Staff use individual reviews to regularly check that learners feel safe and secure in their training and whether they are aware of any discrimination or bullying against themselves or others. In Life Skills, learners express particular pride in the posters that they each produce on the theme of equality of opportunity and mutual respect. As well as teaching about good equal opportunities practice, designing the posters encourages the development of communication and IT skills. In discussions with inspectors, learners showed a genuine understanding of, and appreciation for, the values of mutual respect and equality of opportunity promoted by PETA.

17. Learners' activities and experience are effectively monitored during workplace reviews. However, there are few checks on practice within the workplace before learners arrive. Employers are asked to confirm that they have an equal opportunities statement, but there is no checking of actual policies, practices and procedures relating to bullying, harassment or workplace culture.

18. PETA's staff affirm their commitment to equality of opportunity but the company's policy is not sufficiently detailed or explicit. PETA has adopted an equal opportunities statement and many aspects of the policies relating to staff and learner discipline, grievance and employment selection represent good practice. Nevertheless, a detailed equal opportunities policy has not been written. There are too few targets set in terms of equal opportunities. For example, there are no quantitative measures or targets used for monitoring whether PETA is recruiting employees representative of the local community, or widening participation among learners.

19. Most of PETA's internal paperwork clearly demonstrates its commitment to equality of opportunity, but promotional materials contain only minimal statements relating to this commitment. They do nothing to encourage applications from under-represented sections of the community. The visual images used in promotional materials reinforce rather than challenge existing vocational stereotypes.

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

20. PETA has some very detailed and thoroughly applied quality assurance arrangements, based on an international quality assurance standard. Detailed planning, a policy, procedures, forms and records manuals, together with divisional working instructions, help PETA to carry out the arrangements. Managers use the company's paperwork extensively to help assure quality in the process of training. Some working instructions for key areas of quality assurance are to be updated to come into line with the requirements of the LSC, such as those for monitoring the achievement rates of learners. The company is developing its use of surveys of learners' views to provide valuable information and contribute to debate.

21. The self-assessment process is not fully used as an aid to improvement. Staff make valuable contributions to self-assessment judgements and work with managers on their centre's contribution. The report contains many judgements with which inspectors agree. However, there are few judgements about the quality of training or achievement rates. The action plan fails to set sufficiently clear targets for improvement in these areas. Quality assurance has not brought about consistent improvements in achievement rates, some of which are unsatisfactory. Learners and employers are not sufficiently involved in the process of self-assessment. Quality assurance is discussed at team meetings, but not as part of a planned and coherent cycle. The company has done some initial work on linking business planning to self-assessment in order to bring greater cohesion to action-planning.

22. Internal verification forms a major part of PETA's quality assurance strategy. In engineering the verification process is conducted thoroughly, although it does not take place to a planned programme. In business administration, it is planned and works satisfactorily, although there is insufficient observation of assessment and assessors receive some unhelpful feedback. Internal verification provides some helpful information on the quality of training, but there is no systematic observation of training. There are productive regular meetings of assessors and internal verifiers.

**Good Practice**

*The executive director holds regular, thoroughly planned briefings for all staff. The agenda normally covers the company's financial status, the work of the corporate services' division, quality assurance, Investors in People, the work of PETA's council, the business plan and future challenges. Staff are able to take part in discussions and feel that their views are considered.*

**Poor Practice**

*PETA's council gives insufficient consideration to the draft self-assessment report for the New Horizons division. It does not review or validate the report before publication.*

## AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 3

| Programmes inspected                 | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Work-based learning for young people | 79                 | 3                  |

23. There are 49 advanced modern apprentices, 20 foundation modern apprentices and 10 young people working towards NVQs on other work-based learning programmes. All the learners are employed and they are following programmes in either electrical and mechanical engineering, electronic and mechanical assembly or electrical installation. Learners' work locations range from small independent businesses to large international companies and provide them with training in various engineering and manufacturing occupations including aviation, air conditioning, cosmetics and motor racing. Learners are recruited through schools' careers events, PETA's open evenings for teachers and careers advisers, and by advertising in the local press. In addition, each PETA trainer is given responsibility for liaison with, and recruitment through, a local careers office. PETA provides employers with a list of applicants and the results of their initial assessment tests. Employers interview and select learners for employment and training. Mechanical engineering learners attend PETA's engineering training centre for 20 weeks, and electrical engineering learners attend for 13 weeks. Both groups work towards a level 2 NVQ before progressing to employment. When learners have achieved a level 2 NVQ, and are in employment, they start training in the workplace towards a level 3 NVQ. They also attend one of a number of further education colleges for one day each week to work towards a craft or national certificate. Some advanced modern apprentices attend the training centre for four days each week, over a period of 26 weeks, in addition to attending college to study for a national certificate. The training centre has an engineering programme manager. There are four instructor/assessors, one of whom is a senior instructor with responsibility for training and assessment in the training centre. The trainer/assessors visit learners in the workplace to carry out progress reviews and assessment. There are two registered internal verifiers and one instructor is working towards the qualification. Modern apprentices achieve key skills qualifications as an integral part of their initial off-the-job training for the level 2 NVQ. Some learners, transferred from other training providers and going directly into employment, work towards achieving key skills throughout their training.

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

| Work-based learning for young people    |                     |   |         |    |           |    |         |    |         |    |
|---|---------------------|---|---------|----|-----------|----|---------|----|---------|----|
| Foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA) | 1997-98             |   | 1998-99 |    | 1999-2000 |    | 2000-01 |    | 2001-02 |    |
|   | No.                 | % | No.     | %  | No.       | %  | No.     | %  | No.     | %  |
|   | Number that started |   |         | 7  |           | 23 |         | 50 |         | 6  |
| Still in training                       |                     |   | 0       | 0  | 3         | 13 | 13      | 26 | 4       | 67 |
| FMA framework completed                 |                     |   | 4       | 57 | 1         | 4  | 1       | 2  | 0       | 0  |
| NVQ level 2 completed                   |                     |   | 4       | 57 | 2         | 9  | 14      | 28 | 0       | 0  |
| Left without completing the framework   |                     |   | 3       | 43 | 13        | 57 | 31      | 62 | 2       | 33 |

| 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 | 17  |         | 17 |           | 45 |         | 14 |         | 7   |
| Still in training                     | 2                   | 12  | 8       | 47 | 23        | 51 | 9       | 64 | 7       | 100 |
| AMA framework completed               | 11                  | 65  | 3       | 18 | 0         | 0  | 0       | 0  | 0       | 0   |
| NVQ level 2 completed                 | 17                  | 100 | 11      | 65 | 0         | 0  | 10      | 71 | 0       | 0   |
| NVQ level 3 completed                 | 11                  | 65  | 3       | 18 | 0         | 0  | 5       | 36 | 0       | 0   |
| Left without completing the framework | 4                   | 24  | 6       | 35 | 22        | 49 | 5       | 36 | 0       | 0   |

| NVQ Training                                     |                     |   |         |    |           |    |         |    |         |    |
|--|---------------------|---|---------|----|-----------|----|---------|----|---------|----|
| NVQ Training                                     | 1997-98             |   | 1998-99 |    | 1999-2000 |    | 2000-01 |    | 2001-02 |    |
|  | No.                 | % | No.     | %  | No.       | %  | No.     | %  | No.     | %  |
|  | Number that started |   |         | 17 |           | 13 |         | 6  |         | 4  |
| Still in training                                |                     |   | 3       | 18 | 4         | 31 | 2       | 33 | 1       | 25 |
| Individual learning plan completed               |                     |   | 5       | 29 | 4         | 31 | 0       | 0  | 0       | 0  |
| Left without completing individual learning plan |                     |   | 9       | 53 | 5         | 38 | 4       | 67 | 3       | 75 |
| NVQ level 1 completed                            |                     |   | 0       | 0  | 3         | 23 | 0       | 0  | 0       | 0  |
| NVQ level 2 completed                            |                     |   | 12      | 71 | 3         | 23 | 0       | 0  | 0       | 0  |
| NVQ level 3 completed                            |                     |   | 1       | 6  | 0         | 0  | 0       | 0  | 0       | 0  |



## STRENGTHS

- particularly good practical training resources
- well-planned training
- good integration of key skills training with level 2 NVQ
- diverse range of staff skills and experience
- strong emphasis on health and safety

## WEAKNESSES

- inadequate planning of internal verification
- poor assessment practice in the workplace
- low retention rate of foundation modern apprentices
- insufficient target-setting in learners' progress reviews

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better integration of key skills training with work-based learning for foundation modern apprentices
- further develop the sharing of good practice between assessors
- further assist small companies to develop on-the-job training programmes

24. Practical training resources at PETA's training centre and in workplaces are good. The training centre has fully equipped workshops, including computer numerically controlled (CNC) machinery. There are plenty of adequate computers. A new flexible learning centre provides learners with a computer training area to help develop their key skills. The training centre also has a quiet area for individual support or guidance in portfolio development, or for learners preparing for practical training and assessments. Workplaces have good-quality, up-to-date equipment.

25. Engineering training is well planned. It covers all elements of the NVQ programme and gives sufficient time for learners' skills and knowledge to develop. Learners receive effective on-the-job training, working with suitably skilled and experienced employees to develop occupational skills and experience. There is a good range of employers from various fields of engineering and this allows learners to be placed where their interests lie. Some employers have individual training programmes linked to NVQs, allowing learners to progress through different departments. In the training centre, the ratio of instructors to learners is good. There are good working relationships. Learners enjoy their training and have the confidence to talk to instructors and ask questions. Initial assessment results are used effectively to develop individual learning plans and improve training. Practical training tasks are well devised and improve learners' skills, knowledge

and understanding. Learners produce work of a good standard. Assessments are well planned and are carried out by experienced staff when learners have completed all tasks competently.

26. The integration of key skills training with engineering training in the centre is good and most level 2 NVQ learners achieve key skills awards. The quality of key skills evidence is good and it is well recorded. This is not the case for learners in the workplace. Their evidence is not always cross-referenced to key skills units and most workplace supervisors have little understanding of key skills qualifications.

27. Instructors and trainers are well qualified and have a particularly wide range of experience in engineering. This gives flexibility by allowing individual staff to train and assess across most areas of engineering. Staff motivate learners with their high degree of commitment. Most staff have qualifications in teaching or have attended instructor training courses. Most are qualified assessors. Recently appointed staff have individual development plans. Staff who are trained specialists in health and safety check work placements before learners use them. The engineering programme manager is qualified in diagnostic profiling and provides advice and support to staff on how to write individual learning plans. Instructors who have completed key skills training pass on their knowledge to colleagues and introduce them to the key skills 2000 award. Some instructors have completed the basic skills teaching qualification.

28. Learners are given a comprehensive induction to their programme. Health and safety issues are given a high priority and the potential dangers associated with engineering are recognised. Learners demonstrate good practice in the workplace. Advance checks on work placements cover a comprehensive range of health and safety issues. Placements are formally checked every year for compliance and the visiting assessor routinely monitors health and safety during progress reviews. Employers reinforce health and safety at learners' induction to a work placement and learners carry out an introductory safety assignment.

29. Internal verification does not work to an overall plan or ensure that a representative range of assessment and units is sampled. In spite of this, the process of internal verification works well. Observation of assessors' performance and sampling of portfolios is well recorded. Verifiers make accurate judgements and give good feedback to assessors.

30. Assessment of learners in the workplace is unplanned. There is insufficient observation of learners by qualified assessors, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. There are no work-based assessors and PETA's assessors observe learners during workplace reviews only if suitable work is underway. Some learners do not know the assessment procedures sufficiently well. Portfolio evidence is examined during workplace visits but it is not formally assessed or the outcomes recorded. Some learners have had no evidence assessed for six months. Assessment relies mainly on learners collecting evidence from work, signed by workplace supervisors as witnesses. Portfolio evidence is poorly referenced to NVQ units. A qualified assessor does not

countersign the decisions made by unqualified assessors.

31. The retention rate for foundation apprentices on the level 2 NVQ is poor. PETA started on the new national framework in 1998 with seven learners. Of these, 57 per cent completed their qualification and 43 per cent left early. In 1999, of 23 starters, 57 per cent left without completing and 9 per cent achieved a level 2 NVQ. In 2000-01, of 50 learners, 28 per cent achieved level a 2 NVQ and 62 per cent left without gaining a qualification. During this period training was offered to non-employed learners. PETA paid for most learners to reach the level 2 NVQ but employers could not be found for them to continue. In 2001-02, there were six starters and 33 per cent have now left the programme. Other achievement and retention rates are satisfactory.

32. Trainers do not set measurable short-term targets to encourage and motivate learners. Progress reviews are carried out in the workplace every four to six weeks. They are carefully recorded and include information on how learners are progressing at college and at work. Following their reviews, learners are expected to collect more work records but are not given specific targets linked to NVQ or key skills units. There is often no reference to portfolios, especially if learners forget to bring them to the meeting. Some reviews are carried out in noisy workshops and within earshot of other learners and employees. The only involvement of some employers is to sign a copy of the visit report.

#### Good Practice

*The particularly good links, which PETA has with a variety of engineering employers, considerably aid the progress of learners. PETA works closely with employers to arrange suitable learning programmes.*

#### Poor Practice

*The role and status of the workplace supervisors who sign off learners' work are not recorded in the portfolios.*

**Business administration, management & professional****Grade 3**

| Programmes inspected                 | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Work-based learning for young people | 64                 | 3                  |

33. There are 64 learners, of whom 24 are advanced modern apprentices, 20 are foundation modern apprentices and 20 are on other work-based learning programmes. Fifty-one learners are employed. There are 47 learners working towards NVQs at levels 1,2 and 3 in business administration. Twenty learners are working towards level 1 and 2 NVQs in using IT, four are working towards level 2 and 3 NVQs in customer service and there are two learners working for NVQs in management at level 3. They follow integrated programmes of business administration, IT and customer service. Units are chosen to enhance learners' employability. The 19 level 1 NVQ learners all have additional learning and/or social needs and 14 have both. Learners are instructed and supported by five staff in the commercial training centre who have appropriate training, qualifications and occupational experience. Learners are recruited through the careers service, direct from schools and colleges, through newspaper advertisements, by referrals from employers and through cold-canvas telephone calls. There is a fortnightly recruitment day when applicants attend the training centre and are given initial assessments, including the basic skills agency's literacy and numeracy tests and PETA's own assessments. The results are used in conjunction with interviews to identify appropriate training courses. All learners are placed with an employer before they start their learning. The employers include hospitals, accountants, a credit company, a graphics design organisation, small engineering firms and a local borough council. Learners are visited at their workplaces within the first two weeks of their employment. They attend off-the-job training one day each fortnight. All NVQ learners attend the centre for five days each week until they are assessed as being ready for a work placement. Placements are chosen to support the learner and provide a basis for development and may last from a few weeks to a maximum of six months. NVQ assessments and learners' progress reviews are carried out in the workplace every four to six weeks. Learners' progress is also reviewed fortnightly in the training centre. Here, they undertake a variety of occupational tasks and projects and also carry out work for one or more of the staff in the centre. Inspectors considered that most of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report were normal practice. They identified additional weaknesses.

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

| Work-based learning for young people       |                     |   |         |   |           |    |         |    |         |    |
|--|---------------------|---|---------|---|-----------|----|---------|----|---------|----|
| Foundation modern apprenticeships<br>(FMA) | 1997-98             |   | 1998-99 |   | 1999-2000 |    | 2000-01 |    | 2001-02 |    |
|  | No.                 | % | No.     | % | No.       | %  | No.     | %  | No.     | %  |
|  | Number that started |   |         |   |           | 16 |         | 19 |         | 22 |
| Still in training                          |                     |   |         |   | 1         | 6  | 4       | 21 | 15      | 68 |
| FMA framework completed                    |                     |   |         |   | 0         | 0  | 0       | 0  | 0       | 0  |
| NVQ level 2 completed                      |                     |   |         |   | 9         | 56 | 2       | 11 | 0       | 0  |
| Left without completing the framework      |                     |   |         |   | 15        | 94 | 13      | 68 | 7       | 32 |

| Work-based learning for young people     |                     |   |         |    |           |     |         |    |         |    |
|--|---------------------|---|---------|----|-----------|-----|---------|----|---------|----|
| Advanced modern apprenticeships<br>(AMA) | 1997-98             |   | 1998-99 |    | 1999-2000 |     | 2000-01 |    | 2001-02 |    |
|  | No.                 | % | No.     | %  | No.       | %   | No.     | %  | No.     | %  |
|  | Number that started |   |         | 11 |           | 4   |         | 13 |         | 17 |
| Still in training                        |                     |   | 0       | 0  | 2         | 50  | 6       | 46 | 16      | 94 |
| AMA framework completed                  |                     |   | 3       | 27 | 1         | 25  | 0       | 0  | 0       | 0  |
| NVQ level 2 completed                    |                     |   | 8       | 73 | 4         | 100 | 1       | 8  | 0       | 0  |
| NVQ level 3 completed                    |                     |   | 4       | 36 | 3         | 75  | 1       | 8  | 0       | 0  |
| Left without completing the framework    |                     |   | 8       | 73 | 1         | 25  | 7       | 54 | 1       | 6  |

| NVQ Training                                     |                     |   |         |    |           |    |         |    |         |    |
|--|---------------------|---|---------|----|-----------|----|---------|----|---------|----|
| NVQ Training                                     | 1997-98             |   | 1998-99 |    | 1999-2000 |    | 2000-01 |    | 2001-02 |    |
|  | No.                 | % | No.     | %  | No.       | %  | No.     | %  | No.     | %  |
|  | Number that started |   |         | 13 |           | 23 |         | 27 |         | 16 |
| Still in training                                |                     |   | 1       | 8  | 0         | 0  | 6       | 22 | 13      | 81 |
| Individual learning plan completed               |                     |   | 8       | 62 | 8         | 35 | 11      | 41 | 0       | 0  |
| Left without completing individual learning plan |                     |   | 4       | 31 | 15        | 65 | 10      | 37 | 3       | 19 |
| NVQ level 1 completed                            |                     |   | 6       | 46 | 12        | 52 | 11      | 41 | 0       | 0  |
| NVQ level 2 completed                            |                     |   | 6       | 46 | 2         | 9  | 0       | 0  | 0       | 0  |
| NVQ level 3 completed                            |                     |   | 1       | 8  | 0         | 0  | 0       | 0  | 0       | 0  |

## STRENGTHS

- good induction of learners
- good progression for learners within their training
- good key skills training, with innovative projects
- good learners' understanding of equality of opportunity, regularly confirmed

## WEAKNESSES

- low achievement and completion rates for modern apprentices
- inadequate involvement of learners in assembling their portfolios of evidence

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- greater consistency in the content and thoroughness of progress reviews
- wider range of evidence sampled for internal verification

34. Learners' induction is comprehensive and well structured. They can readily recall the content of their induction. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Learners are introduced to the basic rules and their own responsibilities. To reinforce learning, an induction checklist is completed and signed by learners and instructors. On their first working day, learners have induction sessions at the training centre. Health and safety is given a high priority. Equal opportunities is explained in some detail using handouts which give examples of different aspects of grievance, discipline, bullying and harassment. The structure of an NVQ is clearly explained. Learners are told about the importance of key skills training and the way in which it will be given. They are introduced to the use of IT and shown the centre's computer suite. Their responses to a post-induction questionnaire help to plan future inductions.

35. Key skills training is successfully integrated with learners' target qualifications. Where evidence from the workplace is difficult to identify and gather, valuable and innovative key skills projects are used. For example, learners research the company that employs them. They prepare computer presentations to communicate their findings to their colleagues and assessors, and to invited guests including their employers. Presentations are of an excellent standard, with a high level of detail. Other projects include devising and planning a day's visit to a notable local site or building and planning the reorganisation of the commercial centre's reception area. Learners show an interest in the projects and are enthusiastic about their presentations. Initial assessment does not yet fully test all key skills, particularly in IT.

36. Learners progress well from level 1 NVQ training to level 2 courses, and in some instances to foundation and advanced modern apprenticeships. Over the past nine

months, two of the seven learners who started on level 2 NVQs have progressed to a modern apprenticeship. One of these learners originally started on level 1 NVQ training. The level 1 NVQ learners all have additional learning and/or social needs and receive support to enable them to progress from in-house training to a work placement. The possibility of progress to other levels of training is increased because business learners at different levels are given some of the common elements of their training together, by the same team of instructors.

37. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report that learners have a good understanding of equal opportunities. This is regularly checked by using a comprehensive and detailed questionnaire. Learners comment that this keeps the issues in the forefront of their thinking. Additionally, during progress reviews, learners are asked to read some questions and statements and comment on their correctness or their legality. They are prompted and guided until they have a good grasp of the issues involved.

38. Achievement and completion rates for modern apprenticeships are often poor. This weakness was not recognised in the self-assessment report. Of the foundation modern apprentices who started in 1999-2000 and 2000-01, none has yet completed the requirements of the framework and most have left the programme. For 2001-02, 32 per cent of learners have already left without completing the framework. For advanced modern apprentices, achievement and retention rates in 1998-99 were poor. They improved for learners starting their programme in 1999-2000, but 54 per cent of those starting in 2000-01 have already left without completing the framework. Achievements for NVQ training are better, with 52 per cent of learners achieving their NVQs to date and 20 learners still in training.

39. Most progress reviews are carried out thoroughly. Discussions are frequently detailed, but they pay too little attention to learners' motivation, commitment, attitude to management, aims and ambitions, and their degree of general satisfaction. Staff obtain a lot of information about learners' progress, but it is not always recorded in sufficient detail on learners' progress review sheets. Assessors maintain records of learners' achievements of individual NVQ units, but this is not always communicated to learners. The results of progress reviews are not always passed on to employers.

40. Learners are not sufficiently involved in building their portfolios of evidence. Portfolios are kept at the training centre. Assessors collect learners' evidence during workplace visits, judge it, mark it and insert it in portfolios. Staff identify gaps in the evidence and make arrangements with learners to carry out workplace observations to remedy these, but learners do not actively participate in managing this aspect of their programme. Many learners have to rely on their assessor to let them know what stage they have reached in their NVQ. Portfolios reveal little or no assessment of evidence and units are not signed off when they meet the qualification standards.

41. There is a planned programme of internal verification. Internal verifiers observe assessors carrying out assessments, questioning learners, or during a workplace

observation. However, most sampling for internal verification is done in the training centre and concentrates on portfolio evidence. PETA recognises the need to extend the range of samples for internal verification. Revised sampling sheets for internal verification are being tried out, with a view to bringing them into use in the near future. These will extend the sampling and provide more detailed feedback on action points.

#### Good Practice

*For a key skills project, learners are asked to study a floor plan of the reception area of the training centre, and to carry out a number of tasks and calculations. These include measuring the angles between walls, the length of walls and the volume of rooms. In addition, learners plan the layout of furniture in the room, work out the wall area and the number of tiles needed to cover it and finally calculate the cost of carpeting the area, using a range of carpet qualities and prices. Through using the training centre reception room, the learners can visualise the task more easily.*



## Foundation programmes

## Grade 1

| Programmes inspected | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Life Skills          | 55                 | 1                  |

42. There are 55 learners following the Life Skills training programme, which operates at centres in Portsmouth and Havant. Most learners are aged between 16 and 19 and all are referred to PETA by local careers advisers. PETA has an inclusive recruitment policy and accepts all eligible applicants, space permitting. A significant proportion of learners have personal and emotional problems which are barriers to them entering employment and some also have moderate learning difficulties. Learners are assessed when they join the programme and an individual learning plan is formulated. The main aim of training is to enable learners to progress into employment, or to vocational training which will lead to employment. The main areas of learning include skills for independent living, jobsearch, building confidence and self-esteem, communication, IT and numerical skills. Learners judged to be ready to undertake work placements are encouraged to apply for their own, but they may also be found work placements by PETA. Learners are entered for wordpower and numberpower qualifications and, where applicable, computer literacy and information technology units. In many cases the successful outcome for a learner will be in terms of personal growth and development and not in formal qualifications. Learners attend their training centre for a minimum of 16 hours each week and receive a training allowance as long as they attend regularly. Learners are supported by the Life Skills programme manager, a senior trainer/assessor and three trainer/assessors. In the workplace, learners receive regular visits from trainers and their progress is regularly reviewed. Learners with particular needs receive additional support from personal advisers employed by the careers service.

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

| Foundation Programmes   |                     |   |         |   |           |     |         |     |         |     |
|---|---------------------|---|---------|---|-----------|-----|---------|-----|---------|-----|
| Foundation Programmes   | 1997-98             |   | 1998-99 |   | 1999-2000 |     | 2000-01 |     | 2001-02 |     |
|   | No.                 | % | No.     | % | No.       | %   | No.     | %   | No.     | %   |
|   | Number that started |   |         |   |           | 126 |         | 151 |         | 120 |
| Still in training   |                     |   |         |   | 0         | 0   | 4       | 3   | 51      | 43  |
| Gained job with training/progressed to further training and/or planned learning completed |                     |   |         |   | 112       | 89  | 115     | 76  | 39      | 32  |
| Left without either   |                     |   |         |   | 14        | 11  | 32      | 21  | 30      | 25  |
| Gained job with training  |                     |   |         |   | 20        | 16  | 36      | 24  | 24      | 20  |
| Progressed to further training  |                     |   |         |   | 27        | 21  | 35      | 23  | 10      | 8   |
| Planned learning completed  |                     |   |         |   | 65        | 52  | 44      | 29  | 5       | 4   |

## STRENGTHS

- good collaboration with other agencies
- very effective use of work placements
- excellent preparation for employment
- secure learning environment
- effective individual learning plans

## WEAKNESSES

- insufficient critical feedback on learners' assessed work, daily journals and progress review comments

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more opportunities to gain key skills qualifications

43. PETA works in effective collaboration with other relevant agencies. In particular, there is successful joint working with the careers service. Careers service staff are actively involved in helping to select potential learners, in supporting them during their studies and in learners' progress review meetings. Other agencies give presentations on relevant health and social issues. Learners enjoy the presentations which these organisations give and clearly benefit from them.

44. Very good use is made of the work placements which learners undertake. Learners apply for, and are offered, a variety of work 'tasters' before taking up a work placement. Learners are then encouraged to apply for their own work placements. Work placements are tailored to suit individual interests, abilities and needs. Employers are aware of the aims of the Life Skills programme. Learners are closely supported and monitored during their work placement, with twice-daily telephone calls and visits from PETA's staff at least once a week. The self-assessment report mentions the difficulty of persuading local employers to offer placements, but PETA has taken effective steps to deal with this. These include using the work placements of other training providers, with their agreement, and exercising tougher discipline when learners fail to attend placements.

45. Learners are given an excellent preparation for employment. The building of learners' confidence and self-esteem is at the heart of the programme. An effective programme is used for raising self-esteem and self-awareness. The training includes measures to help learners gain employment. These include writing a curriculum vitae and filling in application forms. The learners interviewed by inspectors were sure that their training was of benefit to them. Rates of progression into employment increased from 16 per cent in 1999-2000, to 22 per cent in 2000-01. In addition, 22 per cent in 1999-2000 and 23 per cent in 2000-01 progressed to further training.

46. Learners are provided with a secure learning environment. Training starts with a clear and comprehensive induction programme, which was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. During induction there is thorough coverage of learners' rights and responsibilities. Clear rules of discipline are enforced. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with immediately. Discipline is fair and firm. The self-assessment report identified as a weakness poor timekeeping and attendance. PETA has now introduced the disciplinary systems mentioned in its action plan, which are effectively tackling this. There is, for example, a structured and fair approach to lateness, which is fully explained to learners.

47. Learners benefit from carefully compiled and effectively used individual learning plans. They are produced after a comprehensive initial assessment of learners' potential and reflect genuine individual starting points for each learner. Plans include learning targets which are challenging but achievable. The subsequent training is well planned to meet learners' individual needs. There are regular progress review meetings at which learners' plans can be changed if appropriate. Inspectors observed some very effective progress review meetings involving all the partners in learning.

48. Although assessments and progress reviews are well managed, the written feedback on learners' assessed work is not detailed enough and learners' comments on their progress review sheets are often missing. Some learners' daily journals are incomplete and this has not been commented on in writing by trainers. In some cases, there is little evidence of evaluation of workplace training.

49. PETA's thorough and realistic approach has been very successful in helping learners to achieve. Eighty-nine per cent of starters in 1999-2000, 76 per cent in 2000-01, and 32 per cent so far in 2001-02, have either gained a job, progressed to further training, and/or achieved the targets in their individual learning plans. PETA is committed to supporting learners to gain formal qualifications wherever possible. At the time of the inspection, it was planning to introduce key skills qualifications into the programme.

#### Good Practice

*Inspectors observed a meeting at which a learner's progress was discussed. It was attended by the learner and by representatives of PETA, the local careers service, and the local LSC. The meeting considered whether the time available to achieve the targets on the learner's individual learning plan was to be extended or not. This meeting illustrated a real concern for the learner's future and the fact that the responsibility for future learning rested with the learner. It was based on realistic targets for the learner which were agreed by all involved.*