

INSPECTION REPORT

DMT Business Services Ltd Reinspection

03 April 2003



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based 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
- learning and job preparation programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

SUMMARY

The provider

DMT Business Services Ltd is a privately owned company based in several centres throughout Cornwall. It provides work-based and Jobcentre Plus programmes for young people and adults in land-based, construction, business administration, management and professional, information and communications technology, retailing, customer service and transportation, health, social care and public services and foundation. During the first ALI inspection in June 2001 there were 168 learners and this has now increased by 59 per cent to 285. There are 169 learners funded through Jobcentre Plus and 116 through the local Learning and Skills Council. Forty eight of the learners are employed, 34 of the 48 employed learners are women, 37 learners have additional learning and social needs and 53 have basic skills needs.

DMT Business Services Ltd has 65 staff including five directors. Most of the training and assessment is carried out by the providers' staff. In addition, there are three subcontractors offering assessment and training for learners in various areas of learning as and when the need arises.

At the original inspection, information and communications technology was inspected as part of business administration, management and professional. All training funded by Jobcentre Plus was inspected under the heading 'New Deal'. Retailing is a new area of learning, but it was not inspected as there were too few learners. Land-based provision also had too few learners and was not reinspected.

Overall judgement

The ALI inspection in June 2001 found that the provision was good in land-based provision and satisfactory in construction and health, social care and public services. However, learning in business administration, management and professional and foundation was unsatisfactory. Leadership and management of the organisation were unsatisfactory along with the quality assurance, but equality of opportunity was satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

Grades awarded

	Original	Reinspection
Leadership and management	4	2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity	3	1
Quality assurance	4	3

DMT BUSINESS SERVICES LTD REINSPECTION

	Original	Reinspection
Construction	3	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people		3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults		2

	Original	Reinspection
Business administration, management & professional	4	2
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	4	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults		2

	Original	Reinspection
Information & communications technology		1
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people		1
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults		1

	Original	Reinspection
Health, social care & public services	3	3
Contributory grades:		
Work-based learning for young people	3	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults		None

	Original	Reinspection
Foundation programmes	4	3
Contributory grades:		
Life Skills		3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults		2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following key strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

KEY STRENGTHS

- good achievement rates in most areas of learning
- good training
- good resources including work placements
- good assessment in most areas of learning
- effective partnerships to refer, support and develop learners
- very good support for learners including transport for rural communities
- clear strategic planning
- effective staff development and appraisal
- good use of data
- good basic skills support for learners
- good use of feedback from all involved in quality improvement

KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficient monitoring of subcontracted provision
- weak observation of teaching and learning

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more employer involvement in training in business administration

THE REINSPECTION

1. The reinspection was carried out in three stages. Five inspectors spent a total of 16 days reinspecting DMT Business Services Ltd (DMT) between November 2002 and April 2003. The first visit was on 26 and 27 November 2002. The other visits were on 16 and 17 January and 1-3 April 2003. Inspectors observed and graded 29 learning sessions. They interviewed 45 learners, visited 16 employer sites and carried out interviews with 15 of them. Forty-five interviews took place with the providers' staff. Inspectors examined 42 portfolios of evidence and 53 individual learning plans. They visited two subcontractors. Inspectors examined the revised self-assessment report which was produced in August 2002 and an update at the last inspection visit. Inspectors also analysed data and looked at a range of company policies and manuals, subcontractor reviews, lesson plans, observations and staff records.

Grades awarded to learning sessions at the original inspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Land-based provision	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Construction	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	5
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3
Foundation programmes	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Total	0	3	5	4	0	1	0	13

Grades awarded to learning sessions at reinspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Construction	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	2	3	1	0	0	6
Information & communications technology	1	1	4	2	0	0	0	8
Health, social care & public services	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	7
Foundation programmes	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	4
Total	1	2	12	13	1	0	0	29

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- clear strategic planning
- effective staff development and appraisal
- good use of data
- good communications
- good support including transport for learners from rural communities
- effective partnerships to refer, support and develop learners
- good basic skills support for learners in most areas of learning
- good use of feedback from all involved in quality improvement

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient monitoring of subcontracted provision
- weak observation of teaching and learning

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more evaluative self-assessment report

2. The strategic planning is clear and is used to improve the learners' experience. In the original inspection report this was identified as a weakness and the provider has worked hard to turn it into a strength. As well as gaining contracts and increasing the number of learners by 59 per cent, the provider has focused its attention on the learners' experience. Strengths and opportunities have been identified and the provider has worked in partnership with many other agencies to ensure that learners have a positive learning experience with DMT. Targets for retention and achievements are being set and met. In many cases benchmarks have been set by the provider, for example for retention and achievement. Some of the targets are very challenging and appropriate steps have been taken to meet them. One of the targets is to increase the number of employer responses. The provider has learned from good practice in the organisation and has created positions for heads of curriculum and area of learning groups who discuss learners' progress and problems in their area of learning, regardless of funding. Appropriate action is taken to enhance the learners' experience. For example, in business administration, the achievement rates were poor across the whole provision during the second visit. The provider was able to improve the assessments and offer training in the workplace to ensure that the learners achieve. To meet the assessment needs of learners in the workplace, DMT trained 42 work-based assessors and they are now able to assess achievements in all care establishments. Similar plans are in place for

other areas of learning.

3. The staff development and appraisal process is effective. DMT is proud of recruiting 70 per cent of its workers from its learners. The provider identifies talent, nurtures it through generous staff development and monitors performance through regular formal and informal mechanisms. Most of the training takes place in-house. Some staff attend business-related training at a place and time convenient to them and DMT pays their fees and releases them from duty. Many staff have gained assessor and teacher qualifications which directly benefits learners. In addition, the provider also sponsors staff to undertake learning for personal development and vocational expertise. Appraisal is regular and good. Appropriate records are kept and action points are followed up promptly. Many of the staff have progressed in the company. This strength was identified at the original inspection and the provider has continued to develop it further.

4. There are good internal and external communications which contribute towards the learners' experience. This was a weakness at the original inspection, but is now a strength. Staff have a good understanding of the company objectives and share the vision of the managers. Staff members work well in teams with regular area of learning team meetings. Learners' problems and progress are discussed by staff from across the service. Administration staff are also part of the groups and they understand the roles and responsibilities of all staff. The staff have mobile telephone numbers of the managers and feel free to contact them outside office hours. E-mails and faxes are used extensively. Problems related to placements and transport are communicated and are resolved quickly. Recording of actions is also good.

5. DMT uses data to identify the stage of learning and development for each of its learners. The provider has purchased a data system and all relevant staff have been trained in the storage and retrieval of data. Many staff are able to access the data to identify the exact stage of the learners' progress. For example, staff are able to find out when reviews are due or whether individual learning plans are completed. They are able to identify the anticipated achievement date and work to ensure that the learners complete on the specified date. Figures on ethnicity, gender, disability and health related issues are collated and analysed. Learners who need additional support are also identified to ensure that they get help. Achievement and retention rates are collected and internal benchmarks have been established so that the provision can be improved. For example, learner surveys identified that they were not happy with the induction and appropriate action was taken. At the next survey, the figures on dissatisfaction went down substantially.

6. There is good basic skills support for learners in most areas of learning. Many of the learners have poor levels of basic skills when they start. Some of them have spent their lifetime on manual work and have not had the need to develop literacy and numeracy skills. Their needs are sensitively identified and carefully dealt with. Tutors in the construction area, for example, have qualifications in literacy and numeracy and are able to clearly demonstrate the need for basic maths and English. They liaise closely with the basic skills tutor to prepare work in context, such as working out the dimensions of a

room and the amount of paint required. Learners are well motivated and are able to use their training effectively. Resources for basic skills are satisfactory, but there is insufficient time for staff to develop vocationally relevant materials.

7. DMT does not monitor the performance of its subcontractors well and this affects 11 per cent of the learners. For example, one of the subcontractors has not carried out reviews and completed assessment documents. The achievement and retention rates are recorded, but targets are not recorded. No judgements are made on the subcontractors' performance. Some of the reasons for poor achievement rates are not dealt with satisfactorily. Actions are identified, but are not recorded. Some of the actions do not have a deadline and there are no responsibilities attached to the actions. The reviews are carried out annually and this is insufficient. Some of the junior members of staff are supposed to monitor that the actions take place, but they have not been able to enforce action. Observation of teaching and learning is not one of the requirements. The provider relies on the quality assurance of the subcontractor.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 1

8. DMT has a good equal opportunities policy which is regularly reviewed and amended to reflect changes. It is displayed and promoted effectively to the learners and employers through an ongoing induction and information packs. After the original inspection, an equal opportunities focus group was set up to promote equality of opportunity effectively. It draws its membership from across the provider and deals with items effectively. For example, positive images of people in non-traditional roles and some provocative posters have been displayed in all DMT centres to make learners and staff think about the problems in a non-confrontational way. Induction is carried out at various stages of the training programme by the staff, and equality of opportunity is reinforced. Learners and staff discuss discrimination very sensitively to raise awareness and develop strategies to protect themselves. Learners are well protected from discrimination and are asked regularly if they have any experience of discrimination. Equal opportunities is monitored during the progress reviews and through the employer focus groups. Documents have been simplified and appropriate learning resources have been secured to raise awareness. A section in the library at one of the centres is devoted to equal opportunities resources. The methods to engage employers have been discussed and acted upon. For example, the employers have been sent booklets to promote the benefits of employing staff over the age of 50. The provider has a database of 6,000 employers which is regularly updated. In addition, the provider has worked with specific sector employers to increase the number of older staff.

9. Through very good partnerships with a broad range of partners, DMT is able to identify support in the locality. Through its work with local schools, DMT has effectively recruited a significant number of disaffected learners into vocational training. Effective liaison has helped the provider to secure additional funds for resources such as protective clothing and grooming items to enable learners to attend interviews well prepared. DMT offers a broad range of learning programmes in conjunction with partners. It has productive relationships with a range of voluntary sector agencies and learners are referred as required. In partnership with the local Jobcentre Plus office, DMT has promoted retailing and health service training to older learners and a high proportion of learners have been successful in securing a job. The problems which affect the locality are long-term unemployment, rural exclusion and isolation, offenders, people with disabilities and health problems and basic skills. Unemployment in the area is very low and the proportion of minority ethnic groups in the area is also very low. DMT's staff are very aware of the needs of such groups. This has been developed through comprehensive training in equality of opportunity. The awareness of gender and race issues is good and staff use language very sensitively. A learner who has had an illness for 10 years has been found a work placement in the local council to develop his long-term leisure interest into a potential job as an archivist.

10. There is excellent support for learners, which extends to study as well as pastoral care. For example, learners are offered study support to meet their work, social and family commitments. Staff take training to the learners and provide laptop computers to enable them to complete their assignments. Learners choose the topics of interest to them and are motivated. Resources are good in all centres and there is good wheelchair

access. Learners' progress is regularly reviewed and prompt action is taken to remedy problems. Some of the Life Skills learners have been taken by staff to see a variety of career and training opportunities. Learners have access to staff at many levels and they are not afraid to call the managers if they are not satisfied. Alternative courses and programmes are offered to learners if they do not succeed. For example, one learner will be taking a large goods vehicle test for the third time, but DMT only gets paid for one course. There is good basic skills support for learners on vocational courses.

Computerised resources are used for learners who are not confident in reading and writing. Learners' basic skills are further developed through work placements such as running a snack bar. Both genders are actively encouraged to consider non-traditional training programmes. Data are collected each year on ethnicity, gender and disability in each area of learning. Numbers of learners starting, leaving and achieving are also monitored closely. Significant underachievement is discussed by a number of staff and action is taken. Reasons for under-representation are analysed and explanations are sought. For example, the provider realised that the number of referrals for women onto training programmes was poor because they were referred to part-time jobs. The number of people with a disability and those with health problems is very high at 40 per cent. Early leavers are sensitively monitored and alternative programmes are proposed.

11. The provider has been very successful in attracting 126 learners from the rural parts of the county, through a transport service. DMT allows such learners to attend training at a place which is local to reduce social exclusion. DMT is currently working with other providers to offer a co-ordinated response to the transport needs of the learners across the region.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

12. The quality assurance systems and procedures cover most aspects of training and learning. They have been streamlined repeatedly to focus on meeting and improving the quality of the learners' experience. Staff are aware of the quality assurance systems and comply with the procedures. They are consulted comprehensively about their effectiveness and are involved in redesigning them. Staff are aware of how improvements in quality assurance will be measured.

13. There is good evaluation and use of feedback by learners, staff and employers. However, feedback from the partners and subcontractors is not as well established. The self-assessment process is an ongoing programme and is well established. However, in some cases it is not sufficiently evaluative and tends to give too much description and insufficient analysis. Questionnaires are given to learners at the start, during and at the end of learning and the results are analysed and acted upon. There is a suggestion card scheme which tells learners about their rights and how they can complain and seek help. Comprehensive data are produced every quarter, demonstrating that improvements are being implemented to increase satisfaction. The process of development planning is good and DMT is accurately defining the action points and has taken swift action to resolve matters. For example, inspectors identified that the curriculum leadership was weak in some areas. Effective action has been taken and staff roles have been revised to give them a better curriculum focus. This has resulted in a reduced, but focused workload for the staff. DMT follows up early leavers to identify their reasons for leaving and identifies support needs to encourage them to return to learning. The findings from this analysis are considered carefully by the managers. For example, DMT set up a discretionary fund to help adult learners get appropriate clothing for interviews. Jobcentre Plus now supports these learners through additional funding. In another example, DMT realised that the learners were leaving early and one of the main reasons was that they were on the wrong programme due to insufficient initial assessment. The provider has now negotiated a week-long initial assessment to ensure that all learners are assessed correctly.

14. Internal and external verification processes are thorough and all staff and learners understand the role of the assessors. Many more staff are being trained to carry out assessments. DMT has also trained 42 employers to become work-based assessors to ensure that there is sufficient assessment in the workplace. Employers are supportive and understand the process and their role in it. Learners' progress is being recorded but it is only identifying the current stage of the learners' achievement and does not record the progress and gains the learners have made in self-confidence and in reaching their personal achievements. Internal verification is now well organised and recorded and there is sufficient monitoring of the standards. However, there are infrequent meetings in care. These weaknesses have now been resolved. Some of the learners who are with the subcontractor do not understand the assessment procedures. There is insufficient monitoring of the subcontractors and some of the results of assessment have not been given to DMT's staff.

15. The process of observation of teaching is well established, but it is also weak. It

focuses on teaching and contract compliance and there are insufficient evaluative comments. There are insufficient records of what was covered and tutors do not sign the forms to confirm that they agree with the findings. The records of actions are kept separately. DMT is aware of the staff's needs and appropriate action is taken to book many staff onto teacher training courses.

Good Practice

DMT has trained 42 employers as assessors at their own expense to ensure that there is sufficient assessment available to the learners.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	12	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	45	2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good initial assessment of construction craft skills
- good off-the-job practical training
- very good support for learners
- wide range of effective projects on the environment task force option

WEAKNESSES

- poor retention and achievement rates
- inadequate short-term targets

16. The initial assessment for construction craft skills is good. It includes a basic skills test and identification of additional support needs. It is occupationally based and tests the learners' ability to produce a small piece of practical work. The quality of the assessed piece of work is used to determine the appropriate qualification and level for the learner. Similar tests have been developed for other areas of the construction trade. Learners then attend an initial training programme to develop their skills at using hand and power tools. This allows further assessment of the learners' capability. This strength was identified at the original inspection and is being maintained.

17. Practical training in construction is good with good resources. Learners carry out their tasks diligently with little supervision. Trainers are available to demonstrate and help and only intervene when necessary. Each day the tutors explain the programme for the day and ensure that everyone understands what they will be doing. The praise and encouragement given by the tutor motivates learners. Learners work well together and often provide mutual help and support. There is an information pack for learners which includes pages of questions. When completed, the question papers are placed in the learners' portfolios. Tutors are appropriately experienced and qualified. Assessment and verification arrangements are satisfactory. Internal verifiers meet regularly and

formal meetings are used to identify good practice and share best practice.

18. New Deal clients attend a wide range of projects which benefit their local community. Projects have included the conversion of an office building and old garages into a new training centre for DMT. The projects require the clients to use an extensive range of construction skills. Other projects include the conversion of industrial buildings, repair and renovation of shops and redecoration of schools. Many letters have been received from the owners of buildings expressing their pleasure at the quality of the work and the professional attitude of the clients. DMT provides transport to take clients to and from the projects. Clients work under the firm but supportive direction of a project supervisor. Several supervisors were previously New Deal clients themselves and can understand the clients' perspective. A number of project supervisors are training to become assessors. Tutors frequently visit the projects to offer additional support and help clients to identify evidence and assessment opportunities for their qualifications. Clients also benefit by developing their self-confidence, team-working and leadership skills. There is good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training for those in work-based learning.

19. Learners are supported by enthusiastic staff. Several cases of additional support are well over that normally expected. Examples include driving lessons for one learner who finds travelling from remote parts of Cornwall difficult, and arranging a special locksmith residential course for one New Deal client. All learners benefit from the pastoral care given by their tutors and business liaison officers who carry out progress reviews every month. Learners speak highly of the friendly and helpful attitudes displayed by staff.

20. At the original inspection, progress review practices were weak. New practices and documents have been introduced and the tutors are now included in the review process. A two-tier system of progress review is in place with one focusing on the progress in training and the other concentrating on pastoral care and additional support requirements. Learners can have their names entered onto a wall chart which displays their progress unit by unit for national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes, or task by task for other programmes. This information is also contained in the learners' portfolio or log book. Most learners are aware of the length of time they will spend in training and the overall targets they have to achieve. Long-term target-setting is satisfactory but the short-term target-setting remains weak. Some short-term targets in the reviews are insufficiently specific and in some cases no remedial action is identified to deal with missed targets.

21. In June 2001, the achievement rates for clients on the environment task force option of New Deal were poor. Clients passed a number of skills tests but there was insufficient time for them to achieve a certificate from the awarding body. Over the previous two years, over 90 per cent of clients have left the option without achieving the targets on their individual learning plans. During that time, only 41 of the 210 clients who started training have gained employment. In an effort to improve this, DMT has introduced basic skills tests as a qualification target for clients. Over the past three years, more than 70 per cent of learners left the NVQ training programmes without

achieving the targets on their individual learning plans. Results from 2001-02 show that the number of learners leaving without a job or achieving their targets have reduced considerably. For foundation and advanced modern apprentices, there are indications that there are 100 per cent retention rates, but to date there have been no achievements. For youth NVQ programmes, 20 per cent of learners left with no qualification and did not achieve targets on their individual learning plans. Twenty per cent achieved an NVQ at level 1 and 66 per cent are still in learning. It is too early to measure the achievement rates for this programme. However, learners are staying on programmes longer.

22. Three other improvement needs were identified in the original inspection report and they have been dealt with satisfactorily. There are now strong links between on- and off-the-job training. Workshops are tidy, and there is satisfactory space for private study by the learners.

Business administration, management & professional**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	11	2
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	10	2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- well-planned training to meet individual needs
- good support for learners
- good achievement rates
- good assessment practice

WEAKNESSES

- no employer involvement in the apprenticeship programme

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more proactive completion of NVQ monitoring sheets by learners

23. Good improvements have been made to the training provided to modern apprentices. More training is now carried out by DMT's staff in the workplace. For example, laptops are taken to the workplace to carry out information technology (IT) training. Short courses have been organised on subjects such as telephone techniques, body language and communication styles and these are taught during half-day sessions when a need has been identified. There is still no regular day release as most employers are not willing to allow learners the time to attend.

24. The recording and monitoring of training are now thorough. There are individual monitoring sheets in the front of all NVQ portfolios showing progress. Long-term targets are set on the individual learning plans and they are reviewed during the monthly or bi-monthly progress checks. Individual training logs are kept in the portfolios to record the off-the-job training. Some of the training, such as health and safety and first aid training, is provided by the employer.

25. Good changes have been made to the assessment practice. All assessment is now well planned and recorded on a progress sheet which is given to the learner. The assessor keeps a copy and a copy is put in the central file. The employer is not given a copy. Learners are encouraged to ask for assessment when they feel they are ready and a variety of methods is now used. Observations are carried out which capture a great deal of evidence. Clear objectives are set for learners to achieve before the next assessor visit. Key skills are an integral part of all portfolios and good progress is being made.

26. The modern apprentices' progress is better than during the original inspection, but some are still making less than satisfactory progress as they are not carrying out the work they have been set between sessions. Some of the employers are not involved in the training and do not encourage the learners to achieve their targets or identify opportunities for collecting evidence. Progress is limited as some learners are not confident in completing their progress sheets and wait for the assessor to help them do this.

27. Achievement rates are now satisfactory to good, and improving. Achievement rates for advanced modern apprentices have increased from 25 per cent in 1999-2000 to 67 per cent in 2001-02. Achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices have increased from 20 per cent to 50 per cent over the same period. NVQ achievement has increased from zero at the original inspection to 67 per cent. Jobcentre Plus programmes have maintained their good achievement rates. Of the 53 learners who started, 77 per cent reached the end of their planned learning and 64 per cent completed all aspects of their programme.

28. Internal verification is now very good. There is a clear monitoring and planning system in place. Feedback from the internal verifier is constructive and can be found in all portfolios. All learners are aware of the internal verification system and have met the internal verifier during verification.

Information & communications technology**Grade 1**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	15	1
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	37	1

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good level of achievement
- good teaching of computing and key skills
- good support for learners and employers
- good assessment and verification practices
- good learning opportunities
- good work placements which increase employment prospects
- good resources to support learning
- strong management of the area of learning

WEAKNESSES

- no significant weaknesses identified

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more systematic observation and evaluation of teaching and learning

29. Retention and achievement rates are excellent for NVQ learners at 82 per cent and for foundation and advanced modern apprentices at 100 per cent for both. Retention rates and completion of targets on individual learning plans for Jobcentre Plus programmes are good. Learners also achieve their personal objectives. They are re-engaged into learning and use information and communications technology (ICT) to the benefit of the community groups they are involved with. Learners are very aware of their progress, which is recorded on paper and electronically.

30. Teaching is also good or better. Lessons are well planned and all learners are effectively engaged. They are given good feedback which encourages and motivates them. Resources including hardware and software, and workshops including technical

support, are also excellent. Tutors are well qualified and experienced. Some of them have been modern apprentices themselves and plan and teach lessons from the learners' point of view. Learners who leave programmes early are given good support and guidance and reasons for leaving are sensitively explored by DMT's staff. Those who leave do so for reasons that are personal and are not a reflection of their dissatisfaction with the provision.

31. There is excellent pastoral and study support for the learners. This area of learning is characterised by a clear focus on learner needs and involvement in learning. Learners and employers value systematic and individual support given by DMT's staff. Involvement of learners in the requisitioning of learning materials and equipment is an example of good practice which is reinforced by an effective feedback system. Basic skills needs are quickly identified and support is given by ICT trainers and specialist staff who work well together. DMT offers highly focused training to meet the business needs of the employers. There is good co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training. Learners attend good training which is organised by their employers. Learners and their supervisors identify opportunities for assessment and evidence gathering.

32. The assessment and verification processes are thorough. This helps learners to progress quickly and provides many challenging opportunities and tasks, which learners accomplish within a timescale. The employers, learners and staff are all involved in negotiating and setting challenging tasks. The activities and assessment periods are agreed with all parties and are well recorded. E-NVQ is used well to review the learners' evidence and allows the learners to see the most recent comments from the assessors. Learners use e-NVQ with great confidence and they are supported well by their tutors. All assessment and reviews are well recorded. New information is added to the reviews and learners are encouraged to reflect on the current range of activities and progress made. The planning and target-setting for the next review is excellent where learners and the staff agree the next set of realistic, but challenging tasks and learning. Key skills are also discussed and arrangements are made to carry out assessments alongside the main qualification.

33. DMT and the employers create excellent learning opportunities for learners and this enhances their job prospects. Nearly all of the learners are using their new skills from the classroom to help benefit their community. For example, some of the learners have built computers and also test and distribute them for the community groups. In some cases the learners have invented peripherals. Learners report having made good progress at DMT. The establishment of e-NVQs has motivated learners.

34. There are good work placements, ranging from local employers to national employers including a national earth station. The employers support their learners by making time for them to attend quality learning opportunities, such as tasks which help the companies to reduce wastage. In addition to the on-the-job-training, employers release their learners to attend additional off-the-job-training which is organised by DMT.

35. There are very good resources. The main centre for IT in Redruth is well equipped

with good hardware and software. The computer workshop and the technical support is excellent. Staff are very well qualified and experienced. Some have been modern apprentices themselves and are able to empathise with the learners.

36. The area of learning has strong leadership which supports the curriculum development, and support for the staff and learners. Over the reinspection period, considerable efforts have been made by DMT to resolve the weaknesses and make the improvements needed by restructuring the training and delegating responsibility for the curriculum and internal verification. This has been supported by a substantial relocation of IT installation and user support training to the Redruth centre. Inspectors identified substantial evidence of improvements in all areas. Clear policies and effective strategies are in place to support and sustain these improvements.

37. Teaching and learning are good, but they are not checked on a regular basis to ensure consistency.

Good Practice

An external visit to an earth station was observed which was carefully planned around the needs of learners. Prior agreement had been obtained to use modern apprentices as guides and presenters to enable the learners to see what employment and development opportunities were available in the organisation. Good opportunities were provided for questioning and learners were able to benefit from having a visit which dealt with their needs rather than being a promotional exercise. The visit was very carefully planned and managed.

Learners are actively involved in the requisitioning of equipment and resources, using a form which is discussed and agreed with trainers and managers. If the request is turned down learners are given feedback and it is recorded. This provides learners with ownership of a significant aspect of their training and exposes them to management and supervision at an early stage.

Health, social care & public services**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	21	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	7	None

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- well-planned individual training programmes
- effective support for learners
- good employer and assessor involvement in reviews

WEAKNESSES

- poor achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- continued development of flexible key skills teaching
- more standardisation of assessment practice

38. Training is well planned to meet the individual needs of learners. Learners attend a one-week taster in placement to help the learner and employer decide whether the placement and/or programme are appropriate. Induction includes an initial assessment to identify additional support needs. None of the current learners were identified as needing additional support at this stage, but a few were identified as needing extra help during their training. Their needs are being met appropriately and flexibly either in formal group sessions or on an individual basis. The business liaison officer, assessor and learner all contribute to the planning of training. Assessors help learners to link on- and off-the-job training to their jobs and the NVQs. Most of the training takes place in the workplace. When training is needed which cannot be met in the workplace, the business liaison officer makes alternative arrangements, such as for first aid and basic food hygiene. Resources and equipment for training are satisfactory.

39. The training team members communicate well with each other and give a good level of support to learners. Employers allow learners to spend time with their assessors

and to attend off-the-job training. Learners have direct access to their assessor as well as their business liaison officer, who maintains contact in between formal visits and makes additional visits if necessary.

40. The care team meets each month to review the progress of all learners. It identifies any problems with assessors or employers and agrees actions to resolve problems quickly and effectively. Business liaison officers carry out a monthly review of learners' progress in the workplace. Reviews are fully recorded and include achievement of NVQ units and key skills. Clear targets for progression are set with the agreement of the learner and the assessor, and responsibilities for action are identified. Reviews produce more detailed and focused plans when the business liaison officer has a care background. There is good involvement by assessors and employers in this process to ensure that learners are fully aware of decisions taken. This has improved since the original inspection.

41. Achievement rates for foundation modern apprentices remain poor. In the three years from 1999-2000 to 2001-02, achievement rates were 25 per cent, 29 per cent and 17 per cent respectively. Ten modern apprentices are still in learning from the final year but no evidence was available about distance travelled. Over the same three years, the retention rates have averaged 60 per cent with a high in 2000-01 of 71 per cent. No analysis of reasons for withdrawal was produced. Retention rates for advanced modern apprentices for the three years from 1999-2000 to 2001-02 have improved from 52 per cent to 65 per cent. Achievement rates are less consistent over the same three years, at 18 per cent, 67 per cent and 35 per cent respectively. Ten are still in learning from the last year but no evidence about distance travelled was available. Two learners are very close to completion.

42. The teaching of key skills starts at the beginning of the programme. Learners whose assessors are able to provide the training for all key skills in the workplace generally make good progress. Other learners attend additional off-the-job training to cover application of number and IT. These learners tend to make slower progress as they find it difficult to see the relevance of key skills to their care activities. Many of the learners delay completion of key skills until they have achieved the NVQ. DMT is working hard and experimenting with alternative and flexible means of delivering these components.

43. Internal verifiers support assessors in the workplace, but a meeting to ensure standardisation of assessment practice has not been held since May 2002. The external verifier noted this concern. Meetings are not always well attended. Much assessment practice is good, but evidence passed by some assessors in some units is insufficient. Assessment is fully recorded and learners are given verbal and written feedback. A satisfactory sampling system for internal verification has been introduced since the original inspection.

Foundation programmes**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Life Skills	41	3
New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults	53	2

During the reinspection process, the inspection team identified the following strengths, weaknesses and other improvements needed:

STRENGTHS

- good achievement of positive outcomes on Life Skills programmes
- effective Gateway to Work course
- good support for learners by responsive and supportive staff
- good attainment of literacy and numeracy skills

WEAKNESSES

- weak progress reviews
- insufficient work placements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better sharing of good practice between programmes
- clearer learning objectives in teaching and learning sessions

44. The achievement of positive learning outcomes is good for Life Skills learners. At the end of the reinspection period, the provider's rate of positive outcomes was very good at 62.7 per cent. This was achieved at a time of rising employment levels and some very hard to help learners. There are good links with Connexions. All the learners are now given a good and memorable induction which is carried out in several stages at intervals during the learners' stay. The achievement rates were unsatisfactory at the original inspection.

45. The Gateway to Work course is effective and this continues to be a strength. The courses are well designed and have a variety of activities. Time to reflect on behaviour and achievements is built into the programme. Learners are allocated a mentor and have help to design their own curriculum vitae. Several employers visit the centres to speak to the learners directly and participate in mock interviews. There is a range of

good technological and paper-based resources. Staff are well qualified and helpful to the learners. The retention rate is good at 85 per cent, and 54 per cent of these learners get a job. The practice of good course design, such as employer involvement, is not shared with other foundation programmes. General resources and furniture in one of the centres were poor, but have subsequently been improved.

46. There is good support for learners, including pastoral, personal and study support. Many learners get support with transport, including taxi fares to enable them to attend training at a local venue. Placements are carefully arranged to meet the learners' needs, but there is a narrow range of work placements. The learners are transported from their homes initially to show them the range of training options available to them. This develops the learners' self-confidence and self-esteem. The learners are offered counselling and assessment help, as and when required. This was identified in the original inspection and continues to be a strength.

47. Learners develop their numeracy and literacy skills. Many of the learners have had negative learning experiences and the staff offer good individual, small-group and whole-group help in developing basic skills. The learning is broken down into small sessions and learners are able to demonstrate their progress. Handouts are well prepared and relate to the world of work. This is a new strength.

48. The progress reviews are weak. They only focus on pastoral care and general progress, rather than on learning. They take place every four weeks, which is too long for some learners. Targets are general and short-term target-setting is ineffective. Teaching is satisfactory but does not focus on learning objectives. This was a weakness at the original inspection and it has not been resolved.