

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Flagship Training Limited**

10 July 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 and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

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

## Overall judgement

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Flagship Training Limited

### Contents

#### Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the inspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	2
Key findings	2
What learners like about Flagship Training Limited	7
What learners think Flagship Training Limited could improve	7
Key challenges for Flagship Training Limited	8

#### Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	11
Quality assurance	12
Engineering, technology & manufacturing	14

## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Flagship Training Limited (Flagship) was formed from a consortium of high technology companies related to the defence industry in 1996. In that year, it entered into a 15-year partnership agreement with the Ministry of Defence and the Naval Recruiting and Training Agency (NRTA). The agreement provided Flagship with sole access to the training resources of the Royal Navy and gave the company the mandate to make use of this national training asset through commercial exploitation of the Royal Navy's spare training capacity. Flagship effectively became the commercial training arm of the Royal Navy. Flagship operates alongside the NRTA in 11 of the Royal Navy's shore-based training centres and schools providing a wide range of training, technical and support services. Under the partnership arrangements, Flagship markets spare capacity and invests in new facilities. In September 2002, BAE SYSTEMS and VT Group became joint owners of Flagship.

2. The only part of Flagship's wide portfolio of activities that was inspected was their three-year advanced modern apprenticeship training programme for electrical and electronics technicians, which is a civilian alternative to the Royal Navy's artificer modern apprenticeship training programme.

3. Flagship's advanced modern apprenticeship training programme is funded by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The first two years of the training programme are carried out at one of the Royal Navy's shore-based training centres in Hampshire and the final year is completed in the learners' workplace.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

4. There are 30 learners studying for the advanced modern apprenticeship in electric, electronic and telecommunications engineering. Learners spend the first two years of their training programme in full-time attendance at one of the Royal Navy's shore-based training centres. During this time, learners work towards a higher national diploma in electronics engineering, a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2 in performing engineering operations and five key skills units at level 3. All learners are employed and attend their employer's premises part-time for on-the-job training during holiday periods. Learners are based at their employer's premises full time during the third year of the training programme. During the final year, learners work towards achieving an NVQ at level 3 in technical services. There are currently four local high technology engineering employers using the modern apprenticeship training programme provided by Flagship. Workplace assessment and internal verification are carried out by a subcontracted training organisation and by work-based assessors.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learner interviews	26
Number of staff interviews	10
Number of employer interviews	3
Number of subcontractor interviews	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	2

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the training in engineering is satisfactory. Flagship's leadership and management are satisfactory, as is its approach to equality of opportunity and quality assurance.

## GRADES

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak*

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	3

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Work-based learning for young people	3

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

6. **Learners make good progress on to more advanced qualifications.** These qualifications exceed the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework. Of the 49 learners recruited between 1997 and 2000, 80 per cent have achieved a higher national diploma at the end of their second year on the training programme. A significant number of learners are supported by their employer to complete a degree in engineering.

7. **Learners produce a good range of technically complex work** during their time at the naval training centres. Learners' project work demonstrates that they have good

technical skills. Learners' good understanding of engineering principles and applications is also apparent. Project work is often linked to workplace activities.

8. Achievement rates have been poor, but are now improving. The achievement rate for learners starting between 1997 and 1999 is 9 per cent. Nine learners who started the training programme in this period are still in learning, beyond their planned completion date, and continue to receive support to complete the framework.

9. There has been a significant improvement in learners' achievement of the key skills units, when historically this has been poor. Of those learners who started the training programme in 1999-2000, 45 per cent have achieved the key skills units. Flagship has developed and introduced a number of initiatives to improve the achievement of key skills. Key skills training now forms an integral part of the vocational training programme and learners can use evidence produced during classroom and practical training sessions for the key skills qualification. Where key skills are not integral to the vocational training programme, Flagship has used alternative training methods. For example, an outdoor leadership and management programme which learners attend is now used to support key skills evidence collection.

### Quality of education and training

10. **There is an effective induction programme.** Learners receive a two-week introduction to engineering before starting the main training programme. A series of mathematics lessons are provided at this time and are proving effective in preparing the learners for the higher national diploma course. During the induction programme, health and safety training is provided and the requirements of the NVQ are explained in depth. Flagship's complaints and grievance procedures are also explained by the teaching staff. Learners' recollection of the subjects covered during the induction is good. Before starting full-time training at the training centre, learners complete a three-week induction period with their employer. This effectively reinforces to the learners that they are employed and represent their respective companies during their training period.

11. **There is good off-the-job training.** Training programmes are well planned and learners have easy access to good resources. The training programme is modular. The strategic learning aims of the training programme are linked to defined learning outcomes in each module. Each learning session also has clearly identified objectives, related to the objectives of the training module. Each module builds on work covered in earlier modules.

12. **The naval training centres used for the off-the-job training are well equipped with an excellent range of workshop and classroom facilities.** The practical workshop training resources are of a very good technical standard and are furnished with high specification equipment and systems. The workshops provide learners with excellent opportunities to work on a range of modern equipment currently in use in the Royal Navy and in industry. Workshop resources are well maintained, spacious and contain a good selection of training aids. There are good resources for computing and computer-aided design in well-equipped classrooms.

13. **The training programmes are flexible.** Changes are routinely made to the sequence or length of modules dependent on learners' needs. There is a good ratio of tutors to learners. Commonly there is one tutor to every eight learners, allowing tutors to provide good contact and support. Classroom teaching is satisfactory. Tutors are experienced in their field and most have engineering degrees and certificates in education. Tutors often extend their working day, if learners request additional learning support.

14. The training programmes satisfactorily meet learners' aspirations for their career development. Most employers consider the higher national diploma to be the most important and useful qualification to be completed as part of the framework. Employers consider this qualification to be very valuable in preparing learners for their future role and extremely relevant to their business needs.

15. Progress reviews carried out during the off-the-job training phase are satisfactory. There are frequent and detailed progress reviews during the first two years of the training programme. Teaching staff at the Royal Navy's training centre carry out progress reviews every month. General statements made during the progress review about attainment and attitude are recorded. Progress reviews carried out in the workplace are less frequent and contain insufficient detail. Flagship's staff have not visited some learners sufficiently in the workplace. Employers are not routinely involved in the progress review. Targets set during progress reviews are not challenging and are not monitored.

16. **The support given to learners is very effective and is appreciated by learners.** Pastoral problems are dealt with sensitively and compassionately. The services of the Royal Navy's chaplains and other professional counselling facilities located at the Royal Navy's training centre are accessible to all of Flagship's learners.

17. Learners are able to use a well-equipped training centre at the Royal Navy's premises. There is a wide range of facilities which are available to both Flagship's civilian learners as well as the Royal Navy's own personnel. The training centre provides computers, internet access and a library with an extensive range of reference material in a variety of formats. The centre is also an accredited **learnirect** training centre.

18. **A wide range of additional activities are available to learners.** All learners receive mandatory physical fitness training as part of the training programme. Flagship's learners have full access to an outstanding and extensive range of sports and recreational facilities at the Royal Navy's training centre. Their membership of the recreational centre and use of the facilities are paid for by Flagship.

### Leadership and management

19. **The partnership arrangements between Flagship and the NRTA are good and work well to benefit learners.** NRTA effectively co-operates with Flagship on all aspects of the modern apprenticeship training programme. Learners benefit fully from the unique resources available at the Royal Navy's training centre. The partnership between Flagship and NRTA has brought together a team of staff with expertise in training,



systems design and operating and servicing modern electronic equipment. The team has developed a training programme that meets the needs of the learners and their employers while also being conducted in the orderly and structured environment of the Royal Navy's training centre.

20. **Everyday operational control of the training programme is good.** The training programme is clearly structured and learners receive good guidance to support them. The training programme is modular which provides the flexibility to schedule parts of it to meet the specific needs of individual learners. Learners can repeat modules if necessary by transferring to other classes. They can even join a Royal Navy course if necessary. The training programme is well planned and well managed with a good balance between engineering background knowledge learning sessions and practical workshop activities.

21. **Communications between Flagship and the Royal Navy are good.** Flagship's staff meet regularly with the Royal Navy's training personnel formally at feedback and course review meetings, for which minutes are produced and actions allocated. Staff also meet informally everyday. The partnership agreement between Flagship and NRTA encourages open and effective communications between both organisations. Flagship also has good communications with employers. Flagship has provided training workshops for employers on topics such as modern apprenticeship frameworks and health and safety requirements. Employers value the good links they have with Flagship and the speedy and effective response they get to any queries or problems.

22. **There is good staff appraisal and training.** Flagship has a comprehensive employee performance scheme which aims to clarify and emphasise staff responsibilities, set individual performance objectives, review past performance, and assess and agree individual training and development needs. Appraisals take place regularly. Staff training needs are also identified during appraisals to support improvements to the training programme, as well as to ensure individual development for the staff. Staff are encouraged and supported to take courses in subjects such as health and safety and to obtain additional qualifications such as a degree in engineering. Flagship imposes no limitations on staff training and development particularly if it will help them to support the learners.

23. **There is poor management of staff resources.** There are insufficient administrative staff for the number of learners on Flagship's training programmes. Two additional support posts have been established but are still vacant. Staff have been recruited to these posts but are still to start their employment with the company. The scheme manager does not have a deputy or any full-time administrative support. As the only member of staff who deals directly with learners' general administrative queries, there is a risk to learners' experience of the training programme if the scheme manager is absent. There is no cover for his absence and there is no-one else who has sufficient knowledge of the training programme to deal with routine work or learners' problems.

24. The company's strategic objectives do not give the management of the training programme a clear direction. Although the everyday operational management is good there is no clear business strategy or long-term targets. There has been no long-term

## FLAGSHIP TRAINING LIMITED

planning for the management of the training programme to meet employers' changing recruitment targets and priorities, the needs of learners, or to prepare for an anticipated extension to the modern apprenticeship programme.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Strengths**

- good partnership arrangements
- good operational control of the training programme
- good internal and external communications
- good staff appraisal and training

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor management of staff resources
- no strategic planning for the advanced modern apprenticeship training programme
- insufficient involvement of stakeholders in the self-assessment process
- inadequate promotion of equality of opportunity

### **Engineering, technology & manufacturing**

#### **Strengths**

- good progression to and achievement of more advanced qualifications
- good off-the-job training
- excellent training resources
- very effective pastoral and learning support
- wide range of additional activities

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor completion of modern apprenticeship framework
- inadequately detailed progress reviews in the workplace
- insufficient analysis of data

### **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT FLAGSHIP TRAINING LIMITED:**

- the good sports and recreational facilities
- the extra teaching and tutorial support available outside of normal training hours
- the excellent teaching by knowledgeable instructors
- the opportunity to achieve a higher national diploma in two years
- working and studying closely with the Royal Navy's modern apprentices
- the good practical workshops
- the outdoor leadership course
- the good administration of the training programme with good timekeeping

### **WHAT LEARNERS THINK FLAGSHIP TRAINING LIMITED COULD IMPROVE:**

- the opportunity to train more closely with the Royal Navy's modern apprentices
- the order of the modules

## **KEY CHALLENGES FOR FLAGSHIP TRAINING LIMITED:**

- ensure that learners complete the modern apprenticeship framework in the agreed time
- improve progress reviews in the workplace
- manage staff resources better
- develop long-term strategies for the modern apprenticeship training programme
- increase stakeholder involvement in the self-assessment process
- reinforce the promotion of equality of opportunity

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### **Strengths**

- good partnership arrangements
- good operational control of the training programme
- good internal and external communications
- good staff appraisal and training

#### **Weaknesses**

- poor management of staff resources
- no strategic planning for the advanced modern apprenticeship training programme
- insufficient involvement of stakeholders in the self-assessment process
- inadequate promotion of equality of opportunity

25. The partnership arrangements between Flagship and the NRTA are good and work well to benefit the learners. NRTA effectively co-operates with Flagship on all aspects of the modern apprenticeship training programme. Learners benefit fully from the unique resources available at the Royal Navy's training centre. The partnership between NRTA and Flagship has allowed the formation of a team of staff with expertise in training, systems design, and the operation and servicing of modern electronic equipment. This team has developed a training programme that meets the needs of learners and their employers, while also being conducted in the orderly and structured environment of the Royal Navy's training centre. Flagship has also developed a very effective partnership with the department of electronic and computer engineering at a local university. This agreement benefits local engineering employers and builds on the existing higher national diploma teaching provision in the region by allowing access to the exceptional learning resources at the naval base. This agreement with the university will be further developed when Flagship starts to offer training for a foundation degree.

26. Everyday operational control of the training programme is good. This is the responsibility of the modern apprentices' scheme manager. The training programme is clearly structured and learners receive good guidance to support them. The training programme is modular which provides the scheme manager with the flexibility to schedule parts of it to meet the specific needs of individual learners. Learners can repeat modules if necessary by transferring to other classes. They can even join one of the Royal Navy's courses if necessary. Training is well planned and managed with a good balance between engineering background knowledge learning sessions and practical workshop activities. The scheme manager has a good awareness of learners' general concerns and takes effective and timely action to resolve their problems and respond to

## FLAGSHIP TRAINING LIMITED

their queries. Learners' attendance and punctuality are monitored closely, which learners and employers value. The scheme manager has created a comprehensive database about the learners which is a good resource for course administration.

27. Communications between Flagship and the Royal Navy are good. Flagship's staff meet regularly with the Royal Navy's training personnel, formally at feedback and course review meetings, for which minutes are produced and actions allocated. Staff also meet informally every day. These frequent meetings contribute to the continuous improvement of the training programme. The partnership agreement between Flagship and NRTA encourages open and effective communications between both organisations. There are also good communications with employers. Flagship meets with employers every six weeks. The local LSC's contracts manager is also invited to attend these meetings. Flagship has provided training workshops for employers on topics such as modern apprenticeship frameworks and health and safety requirements. Employers value the good links they have with Flagship and the speedy and effective response they get to any queries or problems.

28. There is good staff appraisal and training. Flagship has a comprehensive employee performance scheme which aims to clarify and emphasise staff responsibilities, set individual performance objectives, review past performance, and assess and agree individual training and development needs. Appraisals take place regularly. Staff training needs are identified during appraisals to support improvements to the training programme, as well as to ensure individual development for staff. Staff are encouraged and supported to take courses in subjects such as health and safety and to obtain additional qualifications such as a degree in engineering. Flagship imposes no limitations on staff training and development particularly if it will help them to support the learners. The scheme manager has recognised the need for additional staff training in diversity and equality of opportunity.

29. There is poor management of staff resources. There are insufficient administrative staff for the number of learners on Flagship's training programme. The scheme manager, who took up the post in April 2002, is the only Flagship member of staff with direct responsibility for the modern apprenticeship training programme. Two additional support posts have been established but are still vacant. Staff have been recruited to these posts but are still to start their employment with the company. The scheme manager does not have a deputy or any full-time administrative support. As the scheme manager is the only member of staff who deals directly with learners' general administrative queries, there is a risk to learners' experience of the training programme if he is absent. There is no cover for his absence and there is no-one else who has sufficient knowledge of the training programme to deal with routine work or learners' problems.

30. Flagship's management agree a business strategy with the company's shareholders. A business plan is produced in line with the agreed business strategy and is used to set targets and objectives for individual staff members. However, the plan does not fully extend to the modern apprenticeship training programme. The strategic objectives do not give the training programme a clear direction. Although the everyday operational

management is good, there is no clear strategy or long-term targets. There has been no long-term planning for the management of the programme to meet employers' changing recruitment targets or priorities, learners' needs, or to prepare the company for an anticipated extension of the modern apprenticeship training programme with other defence agencies. Key business targets and objectives are not communicated to all staff. Targets for learners' retention, achievement and progression rates have been specified in the most recent development plan which was revised in April 2003 but it is too early to judge the effect of actions which have been introduced recently.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

31. Flagship has a satisfactory written equal opportunities policy. The policy includes references to all relevant current legislation and clearly expresses the company's commitment to combating discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, or disability. The policy is contained in the company's policies' folder as well as its handbooks for employers and learners. Flagship's equal opportunities statements are not displayed in classrooms or on notice boards. Learners are also bound by the policies and procedures of the Royal Navy which apply to Royal Navy and civilian personnel at the training centre. The Royal Navy's equal opportunities policy is put into effect by an equal opportunities action plan which identifies specific responsibilities and targets. The Royal Navy has a pamphlet about how to combat harassment and bullying and this is displayed prominently. The leaflet contains details of a confidential support line which Flagship's learners can telephone. Flagship's equal opportunities policy is explained to learners during induction and they are also given guidance on the procedure for making complaints about bullying or harassment.

32. Staff managing the modern apprenticeship programme have not received equal opportunities training. Progress review documents require staff to check that learners have not been subjected to bullying or harassment. Learners also have to sign a statement to confirm they understand the equal opportunities policy. As part of a management project, learners write an essay about management techniques, which includes a section about equality of opportunity. Other than this, there is no further promotion of the topic. Flagship's limited range of printed recruitment material does not contain positive imagery to promote diversity.

33. During the full-time training in the Royal Navy's training centre, Flagship's learners receive the same training as the Royal Navy's learners. Many learning sessions contain learners from Flagship and the Royal Navy. Flagship's learners are also bound by the Royal Navy's equal opportunities policy during this time. Flagship monitors employers' equal opportunities policies during learners' training in the workplace. There is superficial reinforcement of equal opportunities topics during learners' progress reviews in the workplace.

34. Equal opportunities data are collected but are not routinely analysed beyond that necessary for contract compliance. There are no statistics identifying the proportion of male or female learners or those learners from minority ethnic groups. The management information system can however produce such statistics and the scheme manager does

know all the learners well.

35. Currently, of the 27 learners currently in learning, four are women. Three of these are attending the training centre. This is a larger proportion of female learners than usual. In the past, women have been under-represented in the engineering sector. Statistics from 2000-01 about the school-leaving population in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight show that 1.5 per cent of school leavers are from minority ethnic communities. There are currently no learners from minority ethnic communities on Flagship's training programmes. However, the proportion of learners who have attended previously and the proportion of applicants for the training programmes from the minority ethnic communities is commensurate with their representation in the local population. Satisfactory additional support has been provided for learners with dyslexia.

36. Teaching accommodation at the Royal Navy's training centre is on two floors. There is a lift in the building which allows satisfactory access for wheelchair users and people with restricted mobility. All work placements visited had suitable access for wheelchair users.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 3**

37. The quality assurance arrangements for the advanced modern apprenticeship programme are satisfactory. Flagship operates a quality management system, which meets with the requirements of ISO 9001, an international quality assurance standard. The company also holds the Investors in People award, which is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

38. The advanced modern apprenticeships offered by Flagship are part of an income generation scheme using spare capacity in the Royal Navy's training centre. All training courses are subjected to the Royal Navy's comprehensive quality assurance procedures. The Royal Navy's clearly defined quality assurance procedures have been developed over a number of years. They include the validation of examination papers, the moderation of examination results, observation of lessons and detailed analysis of results to identify and rectify potential problems in course design or delivery. Learners complete a feedback questionnaire after each module and take part in a course review discussion every six months throughout the two-year course. Flagship is notified of any course changes resulting from these measures. In addition, Flagship has its own feedback questionnaires for its learners to complete at the end of the course and a post-course questionnaire for their employers. The completed questionnaires are collated and immediate problems which are within Flagship's control are dealt with satisfactorily. However, there is no use of these data to identify overall trends or as a basis for management decisions. Quality assurance of the higher national diploma is satisfactory and is carried out by a local university, which is the awarding body for the qualification.

39. Internal verification practices are satisfactory. Flagship uses a different awarding body to the Royal Navy for the NVOs at levels 2 and 3. Flagship currently uses the Royal Navy's training centre for its own administration purposes and to licence assessors and internal verifiers. The company plans to open its own centre later this year. A local firm



of consultants has been engaged to internally verify NVQs and key skills. Currently, the company has no formal contract with the consultants but plans to have one by September 2003.

40. External verification visits from the awarding body for the NVQs take place every six months, with a reapproval visit every two years. Concerns raised through external verification are satisfactorily resolved before the next visit.

41. There is insufficient involvement of stakeholders in the self-assessment process. Self-assessment reports are produced every year. Two members of Flagship's staff produced the latest report in June 2003. No-one else was involved in the production of this report. All weaknesses identified in the report form part of the associated development plan for 2003-04. Some improvements are already in place. For example, a firm of consultants has been engaged to carry out internal verification in response to an identified weakness regarding training and assessment in the workplace. Inspectors confirmed some of the key strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report but identified more.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Work-based learning for young people	30	3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good progression to and achievement of more advanced qualifications
- good off-the-job training
- excellent training resources
- very effective pastoral and learning support
- wide range of additional activities

#### Weaknesses

- poor completion of modern apprenticeship framework
- inadequately detailed progress reviews in the workplace
- insufficient analysis of data

#### Achievement and standards

42. There is good progression on to more advanced qualifications. These qualifications exceed the requirements of the modern apprenticeship framework. Of the 49 learners recruited between 1997 and 2000, 80 per cent have achieved a higher national diploma. Learners progress from national certificate to a national diploma. Learners are well supported by their employers and a significant number of them are additionally supported by their employers to complete an engineering degree. Learners value these learning opportunities and the support given to them. The training programme has received recognition from a professional institution for incorporated engineers. On the successful completion of all parts of the modern apprenticeship framework, learners are eligible for associate membership of that professional body.

43. Achievement rates have been poor, but are now improving. Achievement of the technical services NVQ at level 3 is slow. The achievement rate for learners starting between 1997 and 1999 is 9 per cent. Nine learners who started the training programme in this period are still in learning, beyond their planned completion date, and continue to receive support to complete the framework. Many learners leave the training programme after achieving the higher national diploma at the end of the off-the-job training period. Many employers and learners view the achievement of the higher national diploma as the principal outcome of the training programme. There is also insufficient assessment planning by work-based assessors. For some learners, the range

of engineering activities experienced in the workplace is limited and prevents learners from gaining the required range of evidence to achieve the level 3 NVQ in technical services. Flagship's analysis of the data about learners who leave their training programme without achieving all the targets on their individual learning plan has identified that 64 per cent of these learners have either progressed to university or have stated that the level 3 NVQ in technical services is no longer relevant to their career aspirations as they have already achieved a more advanced qualification.

44. There has been a significant improvement in learners' achievement of the key skills units, when historically this has been poor. Of those learners who started the training programme in 1999-2000, 45 per cent have achieved the key skills units. Flagship has developed and introduced a number of initiatives to improve the achievement of key skills. Key skills training now forms an integral part of the vocational training programme and learners can use evidence produced during classroom and practical training sessions for the key skills qualification. Where key skills are not integral to the vocational training programme, Flagship has used alternative training methods. For example, learners attend an outdoor leadership and management programme which is now used to support key skills evidence collection.

45. Learners produce a good range of technically complex work during their time at the Royal Navy's training centre. Learners' completed project work is clear evidence that they have attained good technical skills. Learners' good understanding of engineering principles and applications is also apparent. Project work is often linked to workplace activities.

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

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced modern apprenticeships (AMA)	2001-02		2000-01		1999-2000		1998-99		1997-98							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Number of starts	18		8		14		15		14						
Retained*	0		0		9		8		8							
Successfully completed	0		0		1		2		1							
Still in learning	13		8		5		3		1							

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

### Quality of education and training

46. The recruitment strategy is satisfactory. Learners are recruited on to training programmes through a number of different routes, either directly by employers or Flagship or by referral from career agencies. The Royal Navy's training centre has allocated Flagship two annual start dates for their learners. Flagship is also able to fill

## FLAGSHIP TRAINING LIMITED

vacant places on many of the Royal Navy's own training courses. Flagship uses a variety of written tests and interviews in the selection and recruitment process. These include literacy, numeracy and mechanical appreciation testing. The results of these tests are communicated to potential employers for reference during the final interview stages.

47. There is an effective induction programme. Learners receive a two-week introduction to engineering before starting the main training programme. A series of mathematics lessons are provided at this time and are proving effective in preparing the learners for the higher national diploma course. During the induction programme, health and safety training is provided and the requirements of the NVQ are explained in depth. Flagship's complaints and grievance procedures are also explained by the teaching staff. Learners' recollection of the subjects and material taught during this time is good. Before starting full-time training at the training centre, learners complete a three-week induction period with their employer. This effectively reinforces to the learners that they are employed and represent their respective company during their training period. The allocation of a workplace mentor is completed at this time and helps the learners and their employers to maintain contact during the first two years of the training programme. Learners often attend their employer's premises during the holidays. This also provides learners with good reinforcement of them being employed and allows them to witness the practical application of the background knowledge training.

48. There is good off-the-job training. Training programmes are well planned and learners have easy access to good resources. The training programme is modular. Strategic learning aims of the training programme are linked to defined learning outcomes in each module. Each learning session also has clearly identified objectives, related to the objectives of the training modules. Each module builds on work covered in earlier modules. For example, basic engineering principles lead to general repair techniques, which lead to specific electronic assemblies and fault finding. This then leads to individual applications such as the operation of gyroscopic, sonar and other navigational aids. There is a comprehensive and wide range of teaching materials. These include detailed descriptions of the delivery methods for individual learning sessions as well as the testing and assessment criteria. Learners are kept well informed of the learning plans and of any changes made to their training programmes.

49. The Royal Navy's training centre used for off-the-job training is well equipped with an excellent range of workshop and classroom facilities. The practical workshop training resources are of a very good technical standard and are furnished with high specification equipment and systems. They provide learners with excellent opportunities to work on a range of modern equipment currently in use in the Royal Navy and in industry. Workshop resources are well maintained, spacious and contain a good selection of training aids. There are good resources for computing and computer-aided design in well-equipped classrooms.

50. The training programmes are flexible. Changes are routinely made to the sequence or length of modules dependent on learners' needs. There is a good ratio of tutors to learners. Typically, there is one tutor to every eight learners, allowing them to provide good contact and support. Teaching is satisfactory. Tutors are experienced in their field

and most have engineering degrees and certificates in education. Tutors often extend their working day, if learners request additional learning. This opportunity for individual tuition is much appreciated by the learners. There is continuous assessment and testing during the modular training programme. Assessment in the workplace is not as frequent or as thorough. Workplace assessors, nominated by the employers, carry out most of the assessment during the third year of the training programme. Subcontracted internal verifiers are now responsible for all verification in the workplace.

51. The training programmes satisfactorily meet learners' aspirations for their career development. Most employers consider the higher national diploma to be the most important and useful qualification to be completed as part of the framework. Employers consider this qualification to be very valuable in preparing learners for their future role in the high technology industry and extremely relevant to their business needs. Employers are involved in selecting the optional units of the NVQ. Adjustments to the learners' training programme are made with the agreement of the learner, the employer and Flagship.

52. Progress reviews carried out during the off-the-job training phase are satisfactory. During this period, they are frequent and detailed. Flagship's staff review learners' progress every month during the off-the-job training phase at the Royal Navy's training centre. General statements from the progress reviews about attainment and attitude are recorded. Progress reviews carried out in the workplace are less frequent and contain insufficient detail. Flagship's staff have not visited some learners sufficiently in the workplace. Employers are not routinely involved in the progress review. Targets set during progress reviews are not challenging and are not monitored.

53. The support given to learners is very effective and is appreciated by learners. Pastoral problems are dealt with sensitively and compassionately. The services of the Royal Navy's chaplains and other professional counselling facilities located at the Royal Navy's training centre are accessible to all of Flagship's learners. Often, training programmes are adjusted to allow this support to be provided. Frequently, learners are supported with individual additional learning sessions, as difficulties or poor performance are identified. The initial assessment enables prompt identification of learners with additional learning support needs. Particular attention is given to learners' literacy and numeracy needs because of the demands of the main learning programme. The initial support for mathematics is effective in enabling learners to deal successfully with the requirements of the higher national diploma. Literacy needs are also given a high priority. Flagship's staff are aware of, and make use of, the different teaching techniques available to help learners. Learning support resources are available to learners with dyslexia. Learners are referred to external support agencies where appropriate.

54. Learners are able to use a well-equipped training centre in the Royal Navy's premises. There is a wide range of facilities which are available to both Flagship's learners and the Royal Navy's learners. The training centre provides computers, internet access and a library with an extensive range of reference material in a variety of formats. The centre is also an accredited learndirect training centre.

## FLAGSHIP TRAINING LIMITED

55. A wide range of additional activities are available to learners. All learners receive mandatory physical fitness training as part of the training programme. Flagship's learners have full access to an outstanding and extensive range of sport and recreational facilities at the Royal Navy's training centre. Their membership of the recreational centre and use of the facilities are paid for by Flagship. Flagship's learners can be selected to play for Royal Navy's teams and can take part in the Royal Navy's events. Each group of learners attends an outdoor leadership course at the Royal Navy's training centre in the Brecon Beacons in Wales. Learners take part in leadership and personal development tasks. Learners speak highly of these activities and comment how challenging and fulfilling they are. Learners also complete a three-day project management course. This gives learners the skills and knowledge needed for them to successfully plan and complete the project-based exercises which form part of the higher national diploma programme. Learners are also offered residential accommodation at the training centre. One of Flagship's learners is making use of this option.

### **Leadership and management**

56. The arrangements for the leadership and management of the engineering advanced modern apprenticeship training programme are satisfactory. One manager currently controls all aspects of the training programme. Senior management do not sufficiently support this post. Learners have great respect for the instructors and management of Flagship. There has been considerable review of operating practices and procedures by the programme manager which has led to the introduction of a number of improvement initiatives. There have been improvements to the management information system and the quality assurance feedback arrangements, and changes have been made to the key skills programme. Subcontracted assessors and internal verifiers are now used and this is showing good results. There is, however, insufficient analysis of the data collected. Strategic improvements, resulting from a detailed trends analysis, are not being considered. There are good relationships between the Royal Navy's teaching staff and Flagship's managers.