

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HMP & YOI Forest Bank**

**17 June 2002**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- 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.

## Overall judgement

In those cases 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.

## **SUMMARY**

### **The provider**

HMP & YOI Forest Bank is a local prison for young offenders and adult men, situated in Salford. It has an operational capacity of 1,040, and at the time of inspection approximately 25 per cent of the inmates were young offenders. The prison's Pendlebury Technology Centre is approved to offer a range of qualifications. Courses are offered in adult basic education, key skills, information technology, personal and social skills, food hygiene, art, mathematics, English, industrial cleaning, catering, physical education and motor mechanics. Several new courses are to be introduced from Sept 2002, including national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in physical education, manufacturing and construction engineering.

### **Overall judgement**

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the management of education and training is satisfactory, equality of opportunity is good and quality assurance is satisfactory. The quality of education and training in engineering and manufacturing is satisfactory. In catering and industrial cleaning, sport and physical education, and literacy and numeracy, the quality of education and training is good.

### **KEY STRENGTHS**

- well-managed education, training and employment
- effective equal opportunities strategy
- good achievement rate on accredited courses
- effective support for learners
- good library facilities

### **KEY WEAKNESSES**

- too few teaching staff and instructors
- poor use of individual learning plans
- insufficient teacher training for instructors
- insufficient externally accredited qualifications available

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better recording of learners' progress
- more effective collection and use of data for quality assurance purposes
- more effective course reviews

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of seven inspectors spent a total of 27 days at HMP & YOI Forest Bank (Forest Bank) in June 2002. They visited the training workshops, production units and education department. They observed learning sessions, reviews and assessments, and interviewed 45 learners. Inspectors also interviewed instructors, teachers, managers and other staff. A wide range of paperwork was reviewed including learners' personal files, portfolios of evidence, records of meetings, policies, procedures and correspondence. Forest Bank's first self-assessment report, against the criteria in the 'Common Inspection Framework', was completed shortly before the inspection. Because of the small number of learners involved, the scope of this inspection did not include working parties in the prison gardens, art education, or informal classes in religious studies.

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

2. Forest Bank is a local prison for young offenders and adult men, situated in Salford on the site previously occupied by Agecroft power station. It is a private prison operated by UK Detention Services (UKDS), who also designed and built it. The prison has been open for two and a half years, and UKDS have a 25-year contract to run it. As a local prison, Forest Bank accepts 18-20 year old offenders from all the Manchester courts, and adults from selected courts. It has an operational capacity of 1,040, and at the time of inspection approximately 25 per cent of the inmates were young offenders. The length of stay for prisoners varies widely, and during the past year, the prison has received 3,000 new prisoners and recorded nearly 25,000 movements in or out of the prison.

3. The prison has its own training centre, the Pendlebury Technology Centre, which is approved to offer a range of qualifications. Certificates issued to learners by awarding bodies carry the name of the centre, rather than the prison. This ensures that when former prisoners or young offenders seek work, they are not stigmatised by presenting certificates bearing the name of a prison. There are courses leading to accredited qualifications in adult basic education, key skills, information technology (IT), personal and social skills, food hygiene, industrial cleaning and catering. Art, mathematics and English are taught to general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) level. A course in motor mechanics is offered, but this does not lead to a recognised qualification. Several new courses are to be introduced from Sept 2002, including NVQs in physical education, manufacturing and construction engineering.

## Education and training in prison

4. Senior managers see the availability of good-quality education, training and employment as a high priority. These areas are well managed and co-ordinated, with good internal communications. All education and training is run by UKDS full-time employees. No subcontractors are involved. In some areas, staff shortages have limited the range of available courses, and affected the quality of education and training. The prison's equal opportunities strategy is particularly successful. There is effective monitoring of bullying and harassment, a thorough response to race relations issues, and good promotion of cultural diversity. However, induction and other procedures are underdeveloped for learners for whom English is not their first language. There is good use of feedback from learners and staff, but quality assurance has only recently been introduced for training courses, and it has not yet led to any measurable improvements. The collection and use of data for quality assurance purposes needs further development, and some courses do not have a formal course review.

5. Not all learners have individual learning plans. When individual learning plans are completed, they are not sufficiently detailed or specific to the needs of the individual, and they are not linked to sentence planning. Support for learners is, however, effective. In general, this is due to the enthusiasm and hard work of staff. The mentoring system is much appreciated by learners. The formal recording of learners' progress is inadequate. In some areas, where vocational qualifications are being introduced in preference to recreational and occupational activities, staff do not have appropriate teaching and assessor qualifications. There is insufficient planning and evaluation of staff training, and the annual staff appraisal system is not fully implemented. Where externally accredited qualifications are on offer, achievement rates are good, but there are too few qualifications available. The prison library is spacious, well stocked and centrally located. It is particularly well resourced for learners on adult basic skills courses.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

6. The leadership and management of education, training and employment at Forest Bank are satisfactory. Equality of opportunity is good, and quality assurance is satisfactory.

7. Education, training, employment and library services at Forest Bank are all managed by the learning skills and employment manager. She reports to the head of resettlement, who in turn reports to the prison director. There are four co-ordinators, responsible for NVQs, physical education, education and industries. At the time of inspection, 73 per cent of the prison population and 64 per cent of the young offenders were in education, training, industries or prison induction. Over 40 staff are involved in providing education and training. These include physical education instructors, prison custody officers, instructors, teachers and learning mentors. All staff involved in training, education and industries are employed directly by the prison on full-time permanent contracts. No subcontractors are involved. Staff produced a basic skills development plan in September 2001, which was expanded and updated following self-assessment in spring 2002. A quality assurance handbook for the academic year 2001-02 was also produced in spring 2002. This includes an equal opportunities policy for education and training, a strategic plan and targets, and the organisational structure and staffing responsibilities. It also lays down terms of reference and targets for the new quality improvement group, the self-assessment template, and guidance on course administration, including an induction checklist, individual learning plans and internal verification paperwork. The first self-assessment report, drawn up against the 'Common Inspection Framework', was produced shortly before the inspection. Prisoners are paid to take part in education and training. Rates of pay are higher than for employment, but as education and training are part time, total weekly earnings are generally lower. Many prisoners choose to combine education and training with recreational physical education.

### STRENGTHS

- well-managed education, training and employment
- effective equal opportunities strategy
- good use of feedback from learners and staff
- realistic achievement targets that are understood and agreed by staff

### WEAKNESSES

- too few teaching staff and instructors
- poor use of individual learning plans
- insufficient externally accredited qualifications
- inadequate induction for learners who speak English as an additional language
- insufficient control and management of paperwork



## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- fuller implementation of annual staff appraisal
- more effective collection and use of data for quality assurance purposes
- more effective quality assurance of courses

8. The learning skills and employment manager has overall responsibility for education, vocational training and employment at Forest Bank. The provision is well managed and co-ordinated. The organisational structure is clear, and internal communications work well. As identified in the self-assessment report, there is a strong team spirit among the staff and they are well informed and supported by their managers.

9. Accommodation is clean, tidy and well maintained. The classrooms in the education unit are big enough for the size of group, and there is ample furniture and equipment. There is a well-stocked library in the centre of the classroom block, with easy access from all classrooms. A number of spacious workshops are available for employment and vocational training. The workshops used for welding and furniture making are well equipped, but there are no resources for practical work on motor vehicles, and storage facilities in the production workshops are inadequate. These issues are currently being dealt with by the prison.

10. There are clear procedures for staff appointments and appraisal. Staff are appointed in line with the UKDS policies and procedures, with the full involvement of the learning skills and employment manager. As identified in the self-assessment report, induction for new staff is very effective, and is followed up by progress reviews after three and six months. Teaching and training staff are observed in their classrooms. A great deal of staff development has taken place. However, there has been no formal needs analysis and many staff have not yet undergone an annual staff appraisal. The planning and evaluation of staff training is underdeveloped.

11. Informal staff meetings are held daily. They are used to disseminate information, and staff are encouraged to participate. Issues requiring more attention are discussed at a monthly meeting of education and training staff, which has a formal agenda and is minuted. There are also monthly meetings for the whole prison staff. Staff have easy access to their manager, and regular contact with senior managers and the director.

12. Forest Bank has insufficient teaching staff and instructors. This was identified in the self-assessment report. The prison has met its contractual requirements for the number of education and training hours it provides. However, difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff in some areas has made it difficult to introduce additional vocational qualifications. In some areas, such as industrial cleaning, there is too much reliance on one member of staff, with no effective contingency arrangements for her absence.

13. Some learners on physical education or training programmes do not have individual

learning plans. For those that do, the plans are not individualised sufficiently, and targets are not sufficiently detailed. Learning plans are not linked with sentence plans.

14. Although courses and training programmes are delivered in 10 areas of learning, the range of externally accredited vocational qualifications is narrow. In some areas, such as engineering and manufacturing, there are no externally accredited qualifications available. The range of courses is sufficient to meet the needs of most learners, but those completing GCSE courses are unable to progress to higher levels. The choice of activities to supplement learners' education programmes is limited. Adult prisoners participating in education in the afternoon have the option of using the sports hall in the mornings, but many stay in their cells.

## Equality of opportunity

15. The promotion of equality of opportunity at Forest Bank is good. Equality of opportunity for learners is managed by the learning skills and employment manager and the race relations team. Staff are clear about their responsibility to deal promptly and effectively with bullying, harassment and prejudice. There is good access to the training facilities for learners with restricted mobility.

16. The prison has a clear statement of equal opportunities for learners, which is explained to learners during their induction. Learners are given a summary of the equal opportunities statement, which clearly outlines their rights and responsibilities. The statement is clearly displayed in education areas. The prison effectively monitors and promotes good practice in equal opportunities and race relations. However, there is no overall equality and diversity policy. The equal opportunities statement does not refer to current legislation. For example, there is no reference to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

17. There is a clear and appropriate race relations policy, which is effectively monitored by the race relations management team. They meet every two months to review practice and procedures. The meetings are recorded in detail, and practice is amended where necessary. Information relating to the race relations policy is clearly displayed in all areas of the prison. Learners are aware of the procedures, and the importance given to them by the prison management. The prison does not have an equality and diversity policy for staff, although there is a clear statement of purpose and a strong ethos in practice. There is also no specific policy for the disclosure of poor staff practice in the protection of vulnerable adults.

18. Complaints are dealt with effectively. The 'Rough Guide to Forest Bank', which is distributed to all learners during induction, includes a section on making a complaint. There are locked boxes on all residential wings where prisoners can leave complaints. Managers analyse the complaints, which mainly relate to the outcomes of adjudication. Analysis shows that there are relatively few complaints from minority ethnic groups, and this is currently being reviewed by staff.

19. The education department analyses data collated from a range of sources. The department regularly collects the views of learners through surveys and discussion, and uses such information to amend courses or provision. For example, the induction programme was originally five days long. This was reduced to three days, and combined with two days of taster sessions, following learners' comments.

20. Staff provide very good support for individual learners through the learning mentor programme, offending behaviour programmes and the chaplaincy. The chaplain offers counselling, and provides support for learners experiencing bereavement. Good arrangements are in place for religious observance. There are two visits every week from the local imam, and a weekly visit from a Hindu priest. A Buddhist priest leads meditation once a week and a local rabbi visits as required. Religious events are well publicised and well attended. For example, a Friday prayer group for Muslims is well attended and

appreciated by learners. Halal food is one of four dietary choices, and it is prepared by Muslim learners.

21. The issue of sexual orientation is openly discussed, and there is accessible literature on the subject available in the library. Cultural diversity is promoted well through displays and regular references in schemes of work. For example, in personal and social education, students research healthy eating and review foods from other countries.

22. Induction arrangements are unsatisfactory for learners whose first language is not English. When they arrive at the prison, these learners are not identified, and prison documents are given to them in English and not in their own language. Once they are referred to the education department, copies of the 'Rough Guide to Forest Bank' are available to them in French, Spanish, Urdu, Bengali, Hindi and Chinese. Other documents are also available in these languages, and there is an interpreter. The department provides appropriate courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) once they have been identified. However, referral to the education department is sometimes too slow.

23. All staff are trained in equal opportunities and race relations during their induction and this is reinforced through regular supervision sessions and daily practice. For example, staff read the guidelines and policies aloud to all new learners.

24. There is no formal psychological assessment of learners with behavioural disorders, and no clear policy or practice to differentiate between mental health problems and behavioural difficulties. Individual learning plans lack specific and detailed targets for learners' social development.

## Quality assurance

25. Quality assurance at Forest Bank is satisfactory. A mission statement sets the overall direction of the education and training in the prison. This guarantees all prisoners an educational assessment and interview, along with opportunities to gain qualifications. The policies and procedures used are those for the prison as a whole. There are few that relate specifically to education and training. The quality assurance handbook and the self-assessment process are both new. It is too soon to judge their effect. Managers have identified many of the weaknesses and strengths of their work. However, they have overrated the quality of the teaching and learning, and have given insufficient weight to some of the weaknesses.

26. The quality assurance system has many good features, but is very new. There is a strong commitment from the staff to improving the quality of education and training. The learning skills and employment manager has overall responsibility for the management of the system, which incorporates physical education and employment as well as education. A quality improvement group has been established, but so far it has met only to establish its terms of reference. The views of learners and staff are gathered both informally and formally, through questionnaires. There are many good examples of changes being made in response to the information gathered from learners and staff.

27. Following an initial interview with learners at their induction, general statements are recorded about the courses they will follow. These are somewhat vague and do not constitute good learning plans. When the learners attend their first classes, individual learning plans are written, setting short- and long-term targets for that subject. In many cases these are poor, often repeating the same statements for each learner in the group. Reviews for individual learners are completed more thoroughly and are useful in monitoring progress. Many learners' files are not maintained thoroughly enough. There is insufficient management and control of documents. The quality assurance of courses is not systematic enough.

28. Clear targets have been set, and they are understood by staff. Learners' achievements last year exceeded the targets set by the prison service. Data are gathered about the numbers of prisoners on training or employment duties, and their retention and achievement. However, much is recorded manually, and it is in a format that makes it difficult to use when measuring improvements. Two internal verifiers moderate the assessed work. This is effective, and the internal verifiers' reports are good. The external verifier's report seen by inspectors was positive.

## **AREAS OF LEARNING**

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

29. Engineering and manufacturing training at Forest Bank is satisfactory. Forest Bank is currently seeking approval to train learners for level 2 NVQs in performing manufacturing operations, performing engineering operations and welding. There are work programmes designed to equip learners with the skills needed by local employers. The prison makes a range of products for local employers. The industrial complex is capable of providing training and employment for 300 learners. At the time of inspection, there were 30 learners training in welding, 10 on motor vehicle programmes and 20 in the furniture section. Additional work programmes are, or have been, available in the manufacture of electric lighting units, the renovation of air conditioning equipment, and in various packing operations. All training is given by prison staff. Learners are recruited onto work programmes following initial assessment by the education department. All learners complete a basic skills test, initial assessment and general induction, followed by a brief industrial induction at which work programmes are explained. Learners' previous experience is taken into consideration when selecting a programme. Individual learning plans are produced for all learners. There has been no training in basic skills and key skills since September 2001. A qualified teacher has recently been recruited to remedy this. Learners complete and sign a statement of understanding of health and safety requirements. They can join work programmes at any time of the year. Three members of staff are qualified NVQ assessors, and the remainder are taking these qualifications. Learners are invited to meet potential employers when opportunities arise. Recent innovative projects include partnerships with employers to prepare learners for work in the community.

### **STRENGTHS**

- good resources for welding and furniture making
- high standard of practical work
- effective support for learners
- good links with employers

### **WEAKNESSES**

- no courses leading to qualifications
- no professional staff development for instructors
- no initial assessment for vocational training

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better resources for off-the-job training
- better storage facilities in production workshops
- better recording of learners' progress
- more structured training to support workshop activities
- more effective sharing of good practice
- more imaginative teaching methods

30. In welding and furniture production, the training areas are spacious. The machinery and equipment is well laid out and of industrial standards. Training includes processing customers' orders, cutting material, preparation of components, final assembly and dispatch. Health and safety requirements are carefully observed, and new fume extraction equipment has been installed. However, the areas currently used to train learners in background knowledge are small, and situated in the workshops. During some sessions, noisy production work is being carried out close by, and music is being played on the public address system. There is a well-stocked library for learners, but there are few reference materials for welding, general engineering and manufacturing processes. There are, however, some specialist resources in the workshops including text books, videotapes and computers.

31. There is insufficient space in the workshop area to store materials. Boxes of materials supplied by customers are often stacked in areas where training and production takes place, presenting a potential health and safety hazard. There is no practical work for learners taking motor vehicle training programmes. Training sometimes lacks imagination and variety. In some workshops, there is a learner to instructor ratio of 25:1. However, good team-working by staff and a responsible approach by learners have enabled the workshops to continue effective production, and meet departmental targets.

32. Practical exercises and work produced for customers are of a high standard. Some learners are responsible for checking the quality of their own work. Welding work demonstrates particularly good skills in the planning and manufacture of the finished product. Instructors are experienced in their specialist areas, and manage training programmes enthusiastically. Two learners recently achieved awards in national practical skills competitions. These successes are publicised in display cabinets to encourage other learners. There is a friendly atmosphere in all workshops, and good interaction between instructor and learners. Learners are encouraged to ask questions and these are dealt with individually. There are opportunities for learners to work on their own initiative. Some are given responsible roles such as assisting new starters during busy periods. Learners are also encouraged to work in teams to meet production targets. Learners take customer deadlines seriously. The furniture department renovates prison furniture including gymnasium equipment. There are few opportunities for staff to visit other prisons. They are not able to learn from the experience of other departments

where NVQs have been introduced successfully.

33. Pastoral support for individual learners is highly effective. Learners appreciate the support given by instructors, and any problems are dealt with quickly. Learners are given specific work responsibilities during their training programme, and these improve their confidence and morale. There is an excellent team spirit among learners, and team-working is encouraged. Training is mainly given on a one-to-one basis. It provides learners with a good introduction to the basic skills of welding and manufacturing. Many young learners have no previous experience in an industrial environment, and no qualifications of any kind. They are given time to settle into the training environment. Learning difficulties are taken into account when establishing workloads and the appropriate level of training.

34. Forest Bank has established effective links with employers. This was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Partnerships with local companies have enabled some learners to gain employment on their release.

35. There are too few externally accredited qualifications available to learners. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report. Training programmes have concentrated on the development of low-level practical skills, and the prison is not approved to offer NVQs in engineering or manufacturing. Additional short courses in health and safety and related areas are not readily available. Although, some learners have completed training in portable appliance testing, but learners are not formally trained in health and safety. Staff recognise that learners need training in manual handling of materials, but these needs have not been met. Training in basic skills and key skills stopped in September 2001. An assessor/verifier with a basic skills qualification has recently been recruited to remedy this. However, instructors are committed to the introduction of NVQs, and external verifiers are to visit Forest Bank in July 2002 to offer advice on appropriate courses. Feedback from surveys suggests that learners serving medium to long sentences would welcome this initiative. There are no formal reviews of progress made during practical sessions, and recording of achievement is in the early stages of development. In some sections, progress sheets are being introduced, but there are no charts displayed in workshops to record achievement and increase motivation.

36. There is no professional development for instructors. Some instructors were formerly prison officers, others come directly from industry. All have suitable industrial experience, but few have teaching or training experience or qualifications. On all training programmes, there are insufficient qualified assessors. Two members of staff are qualified to complete internal verification. Plans are in place to increase the number of qualified assessors.

37. Learners' basic skills are assessed by the education department before they are allocated to training workshops. All learners are given a formal interview and informed of the outcome of their assessment. However, the results of basic skills tests are not used effectively to direct learners onto appropriate training programmes. Information



about individual learners and their initial assessments is not passed to instructors. Instructors have to request specific information or conduct further assessment interviews themselves. The instructors are not trained in basic skills assessment, and rely on their own judgement in referring learners for additional support. Induction to work programmes is brief and support materials are not promoted for learners to refer to during training.

#### **Good Practice**

*One instructor in the workshops encourages attention to health and safety by asking learners to forfeit a chocolate bar for any infringement of health and safety rules. At the end of the week, a quiz is held and the winner receives all the chocolate bars accumulated during the week.*

## **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

38. Sport and physical education provision at Forest Bank is good. The physical education department plays a key function in the prison, both recreationally and educationally. All prisoners are entitled to at least two recreational physical education (PE) sessions each week, although many receive more. The amount of time given to educational PE has increased over the past 12 months. At the time of inspection, 28 learners were taking a football academy course, nine were on a fitness instructors' course, and 18 were taking the physical education taster course. These numbers vary from week to week depending on the courses offered. The facilities include a four-court sports hall, a weight training room, an all-weather five-a-side area, and use of two classrooms in the education department. There are currently six physical education officers, including one senior officer, with one new officer due to start in the near future. These staff provide both recreational and educational activities. Educational courses are short and part time, ranging from 10 to 180 hours, over 12 weeks. Class sizes are from two to 20. Taster courses in physical education take place over 10 hours in one week. The football academy runs for 50 hours over five weeks. One-week certificated courses are also offered. External courses offered are a weightlifting leaders' award, football association (FA) referee, basic first aid and fitness instructor certificate. Courses are planned to rotate through the year.

### **STRENGTHS**

- good achievement rate on accredited courses
- good teaching
- strong commitment to introducing vocational training
- effective leadership

### **WEAKNESSES**

- insufficient teacher training for instructors
- insufficient externally accredited qualifications available

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better recording of learners' progress
- further development of course quality assurance

39. There are good levels of achievement by those learners who complete their fitness instructors' certificate and the FA referees course. These qualifications improve the learners' chances of gaining employment on their release. Learners' portfolios on the

instructors' course are completed well, and show work of an appropriate standard. Learners following internally accredited courses have the opportunity to progress to other courses if appropriate, when they are available.

40. Teaching of physical education and sport at Forest Bank is good. There are schemes of work and lesson plans for all courses, and they are consistently adhered to by instructors. There is a good balance of background knowledge sessions and practical work. The vocational fitness instructor course is run by one qualified trainer, who teaches and assesses the whole course. It is fully supported by appropriate learning materials. Learners' targets and ongoing assessments are recorded. There is clear evidence of internal verification. This qualification offers learners good opportunities for future employment. Learners are carefully selected for suitability. Those due for early release can make best use of the qualification. Literacy and numeracy are effectively promoted in internally accredited courses. Key skills are taught as part of background knowledge sessions.

41. There is effective leadership in sport and PE. There have been recent changes in the staffing and structure of the physical education department, and a significant improvement in the amount of time allocated to training. Most in-house courses effectively incorporate theoretical and practical elements. For example, the football academy course enables learners to gain a recognised refereeing qualification. This is currently taught by staff from the FA. Learning takes place in a safe environment, with health and safety regulations fully adhered to and integrated with the courses. Quality assurance procedures in physical education and sport are not well developed, and do not reflect the good practice in the education centre. There is no formal review or collection of learners' views at the end of the course. Learners' achievement is recorded in the physical education department, but is not consistently linked to individual learners' training plans.

42. Staff have a clear commitment to introducing more educational courses in physical education. However, none of the staff has a teaching qualification. One has the NVQ assessors' award and is taking the internal verifiers' award. Several staff have limited classroom teaching skills. Instructors are qualified as physical education officers, but most lack the professional qualifications necessary to offer externally accredited courses. The inconsistency of teaching on some courses, caused by the shift patterns of PE staff, restricts opportunities for learning.

43. Inspectors agreed with the self-assessment report which identified the limited range of externally accredited courses as a weakness. Plans are in place to offer NVQs at level 1 and 2 in sport and recreation. Learners speak positively about their learning. There is a positive working relationship between trainers and learners, which enhances learning.

### **Good Practice**

*Learners who successfully complete their fitness instructor course are given work experience by assisting in the PE induction to the gym, which every new prisoner completes. One learner who has completed the fitness instructor course has been guaranteed a job interview and voluntary work placement on release, arranged through the instructor.*

## Health, social care & public services

44. Training in catering and industrial cleaning at Forest Bank is good. A total of 323 learners have achieved an industrial cleaning qualification since the start of the training programme 18 months ago. However, at the time of inspection, there were no learners taking the qualification. Approximately 12 per cent of the prison population is employed in industrial cleaning. Any learners wishing to become cleaners are interviewed by the instructor and if suitable, are employed. As soon as they start work, they are trained in basic cleaning and can gain a nationally recognised qualification. Any learners who wish to pursue cleaning as a career are encouraged to take the British Institute of Cleaning Science qualification (BICS) at levels 1, 2 and 3. The instructor is occupationally competent and is accredited to assess the BICS qualifications that are offered. A verifier from another local prison carries out internal verification. There is on- and off-the-job training. NVQs at level 1 and 2 in food preparation and cooking are offered to prisoners and staff employed in the kitchen. There are two learners currently taking level 1 and two taking level 2. Two staff are taking their assessor awards and another member of staff trains learners in background knowledge and food safety. Two members of the education department are accredited to internally verify the food preparation and cooking NVQs. Training for the food safety qualification is carried out in the education centre, and NVQ training takes place in the kitchen. Training in both hospitality and industrial cleaning is good.

### STRENGTHS

- well-managed training for industrial cleaning
- industrially relevant qualifications
- well-structured on-the-job training

### WEAKNESSES

- slow introduction of NVQs

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- wider use of formal assessment planning
- better quality teaching aids in cleaning
- more training staff for industrial cleaning

45. The instructor in the industrial cleaning department is responsible for all training in the cleaning department and for the overall cleanliness of the prison. All learners in the cleaning department must complete the BICS basic course, for which they receive a

certificate. Those who show an interest are encouraged to complete stages 1, 2 and 3 of the BICS qualifications. Learners taking more advanced qualifications have the opportunity to work in specialist areas such as carpet cleaning. The instructor has developed an effective training programme, which is easily understood by most learners. Those who find it difficult are given one-to-one tuition. All learners achieve the basic cleaning qualification. Learners appreciate the respect and support they are given by the instructor. However, as there is only one member of staff in the cleaning department, no training takes place if the instructor is absent. The fact that the standard of cleanliness remains high even when the instructor is away reflects the high standard of training and the enthusiasm of the learners. The industrial cleaning learners are given a copy of an informative and well laid out cleaning proficiency manual as a training aid. This, however, has been photocopied many times, and the quality of the copies is now poor with many of the pages difficult to read.

46. In both catering and industrial cleaning, learners work in a realistic work environment. Industry standard equipment is used in both departments. The qualifications offered in both occupational areas are nationally recognised and accredited. Essential food handling training and accreditation is provided for all catering learners. The parent company of UKDS is encouraging learners to work in these occupational areas, and offering employment to suitable candidates when they are released. There are skill shortages in these two areas, which improves employment opportunities for the learners.

47. In both areas, on-the-job training is well structured and relevant. In catering, training for all kitchen tasks is well documented, and learners must receive the relevant training and prove their competence before they attempt a task. In addition, all learners gain the food safety qualification before working with food. Learners are aware of the training and progression opportunities available.

48. The introduction of NVQs has been slow. Accreditation for hospitality NVQs was gained six months ago and three learners were registered immediately. One learner has been released since then, but the others have only made slow progress towards the qualification. Learners are not assessed regularly because there is insufficient time. The assessor has yet to gain the assessor award, and no one else is occupationally qualified to countersign the documents. The assessor is inexperienced, and is not receiving the necessary support from the education department to help him achieve the award. There is an internal verifier, but no verification has taken place. The infrastructure of the NVQ system is not yet in place. Learners do not have an individual learning plan, they have no target achievement dates and their progress is not reviewed. Evidence of learners' competence is gathered through observation, but is not recorded in sufficient detail. Assessment planning takes place informally and all learners know they are to be assessed. The need for a written assessment plan was identified in the self-assessment report. A generic plan has been developed, but as yet has not been implemented. NVQs are to be offered in industrial cleaning but this has also been delayed because there is no qualified assessor. There are more learners requesting training than there are

places available.

## **Foundation programmes**

49. Literacy and numeracy training at Forest Bank is good. Prison education is provided by UKDS employees. No subcontractors are involved. A full-time manager runs the education department, supported by 11 teachers. The student support services co-ordinator has two assessment and guidance officers. There is also a librarian and an administration assistant. Young offenders attend classes in the morning, and adults attend in the afternoon. At the time of inspection, there were 162 learners, of whom 83 were young offenders and 79 were adults. Certificated courses include literacy and numeracy, key skills in communication, application of number and IT, food hygiene, art and cookery. A two-day induction is carried out on arrival in the education department, followed by individual interviews with learners at the end of the week. Learners receive a copy of the learners' code, the equal opportunities statement and the mission statement. During their induction, learners are given further assessments and advised about suitable courses. Two learning mentors are available, by appointment, on two days each week. An external adviser employed by Jobcentre Plus provides advice and guidance on benefits, housing and employment. The centre achieved the basic skills quality mark in 2000.

### **STRENGTHS**

- effective support for learners
- good retention and achievement rates
- good library facilities

### **WEAKNESSES**

- limited choice of higher level courses
- insufficient resources in some areas

### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more integration of key skills within individual subject areas

50. Staff give good support to learners both in educational and personal matters. The student support services co-ordinator and team provide an effective mentoring service. They support those learners experiencing negative attitudes to learning, or experiencing difficulties with their programme of learning. Staff are sensitive, and rapidly deal with issues that may hinder learning, such as disruptive behaviour in classes. The mentoring service is available for two days a week. During induction, an external employment advice worker gives advice to individual learners. Learners can use a laptop computer to



access national job sites, and there are good contacts with local employers. Good internal staff communications deal rapidly with any problems that arise in the centre. Informal staff meetings are held every day, and they are very effective at airing and resolving issues as they arise. The atmosphere within the centre is relaxed and productive, and it facilitates learning. Learners are treated with respect, and the relationship between staff and learners is one of equals. There is effective use of peer tutors, who act as classroom assistants in basic skills groups. They provide valuable one-to-one support to other learners in mathematics and English. Assistants act as good role models to other learners by demonstrating the benefits of gaining qualifications and developing their skills.

51. Retention rates on courses between April 2001 to April 2002 were high at 90 per cent on young offender courses, and 91 per cent on adult courses. As a local prison, the centre experiences a high and rapid turnover of learners. Where learners are able to stay in education for longer periods of time, results are very good. These learners achieve several qualifications and there is good progression between different literacy and numeracy programmes. Achievements of key performance indicators far exceed the targets set by the prison. Between April 2001 to April 2002, the learners at the centre achieved 107 qualifications in communications at level 2, and 65 qualifications in numeracy at level 2, against targets of 15 in each. A further 35 qualifications have been achieved in IT, and two in GCSE mathematics.

52. The library facilities are good, and provide a broad range of literature and information for learners on literacy and numeracy programmes. Twenty per cent of books are aimed at those with lower literacy levels, and books are classified by an easily-understood colour code. Learners have access to computer equipment for their project work, and the library provides a relaxing and quiet working area.

53. There is a limited choice of courses and qualifications for learners starting with higher skill levels. IT courses are focused on those new to computers, with qualifications only available at lower levels. A key skills qualification is being developed at level 2 in information technology, but this is not yet available as a stand alone course. Learners can progress to GCSE in English, mathematics and art.

54. There are limited teaching and learning resources for basic skills. There are insufficient resources to allow learning through computer-based activities, CD-ROM and other practical methods. There is too much reliance on work sheets. Learners have separate IT sessions but these are not linked to basic skills lessons. There are insufficient teaching staff. Some classes are cancelled when staff are absent. There is a wide range of learning needs and some staff have difficulty providing an appropriate level of support.

### Good Practice

*A learner was unsure whether he would be able to return to his previous employment on release. Staff contacted the employer, who then confirmed in writing, his intention to re-employ the prisoner.*