

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP Maghaberry

13 May 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 Maghaberry is a high-security prison located near Lisburn, County Antrim in Northern Ireland. The capacity of the prison is 718 prisoners. At the time of inspection there were 578 prisoners and 1,008 staff.

There is an extensive education programme available to all prisoners. All needs from basic education programmes through to Open University are catered for. Social and leisure activities are also included. There are extensive vocational training opportunities including bricklaying, painting and decorating, catering, joinery, knitting and sewing, computers, Braille, and wheelchair refurbishment. Prisoners are allocated to vocational training and all other work locations from the labour allocation board. Prisoners are encouraged to gain qualifications in sport and recreation and selected prisoners are allowed to engage in outdoor pursuits.

Overall judgement

The quality of education and training courses in the prison range from good to satisfactory. Leadership and management have made many recent improvements to facilitate the good training courses. However, there is still much to be done to provide adequate provision for all of the prisoners.

Horticulture training is satisfactory and offers a realistic working environment although specialist resources are insufficient. Construction trades have good standards of teaching and offer effective additional support for learners. Engineering and manufacturing are good with well-maintained practical resources and a high standard of training. Hospitality, sport and recreation are good and offer excellent training and work opportunities. Foundation education is satisfactory and offers a wide range of courses, although the learners spend insufficient time on education. Leadership and management have helped to create a more positive learning culture through actions which have improved the environment. There is a lack of emphasis on quality assuring the education and training processes and poor co-ordination of activities leads to inefficient use of resources. The time available for education and training during the day is too short and many prisoners are unable to attend courses.

KEY STRENGTHS

- highly effective support for learners
- good links between education and training departments
- effective management action
- thorough staff appraisal and development

KEY WEAKNESSES

- some poor resources
- too much disruption to the start of teaching and learning
- insufficient time allocation for training and education
- limited opportunities for remand and women prisoners
- insufficient co-ordination of quality assurance

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more realistic target-setting

THE INSPECTION

1. Six ALL inspectors spent a total of 24 days inspecting HMP Maghaberry in May 2002. The inspection was carried out in conjunction with and at the same time as a team of inspectors from Her Majesty's chief inspector of Prisons Inspectorate who were inspecting the prison. Interviews were carried out with 54 learners and 38 staff, 20 sentence/learning plans were examined, 22 portfolios or items of learners, work were examined and 15 teaching/training sessions were observed. Other documents relating to education and training were also examined, such as external verifier reports, minutes of meetings and learners' progress files.
2. The prison staff were not aware of the ALL inspection until close to the inspection date, therefore they had not prepared a self-assessment report. They did, however, produce a list of strengths and weaknesses on the first morning of the inspection, which proved to be an accurate reflection of their provision.

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

3. HMP Maghaberry was originally two prisons for men and women. The women's prison, now called Mourne House, opened in 1986 when Armagh prison closed. Maghaberry men's prison opened in 1987 and the two prisons were amalgamated in 1988. The men's section is made up of four accommodation units with 108 cells and two new recently built blocks, of 96 cell capacity. Mourne House has a capacity of 59 cells spread over four wings.

4. The function of HMP Maghaberry is to hold all prisoners sent by the courts, securely and humanely. As the committal prison in Northern Ireland, HMP Maghaberry carries out more functions than any other single penal establishment in the United Kingdom. It holds men and women and young offenders who are remanded in custody, committed for trial or sentenced to terms of imprisonment. It holds all prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment and it also holds fine defaulters, civil prisoners and immigration detainees. In addition, it has a psychiatric unit holding prisoners suffering from mental illness.

5. Since the closure of HMP Maze in July 2000 and the release of all paramilitary prisoners, HMP Maghaberry, as the main prison in the province, now holds paramilitary prisoners belonging to dissident republican and loyalist groups. These are held in integrated conditions.

6. The training workshops have 104 learners participating in training courses. Approximately 250 learners attend education courses either within the education department or in their accommodation blocks. There are 19 workshop, kitchen and gym staff offering training, and six full-time education staff. The education department also uses part-time staff and 20 are available for various specialist courses. In addition, the education and training areas have two administration staff and two managers.

7. There is an extensive education programme within the establishment which is available to all prisoners. All needs from adult basic education programmes through to Open University are catered for. Social and leisure activities are available including crafts, cookery and art. There are extensive vocational training opportunities including bricklaying, painting and decorating, catering, joinery, knitting and sewing, computers, Braille, and wheelchair refurbishment. Prisoners are allocated to vocational training and all other work locations from the labour allocation board. Physical education plays an important role in the life of the prison. The gymnasium and recently refurbished fitness suite are always well attended. Prisoners are encouraged to gain qualifications in sport and recreation and selected prisoners are allowed to engage in outdoor pursuits.

Education and training in prison

8. Achievements in education and training have risen considerably in the past two years. Prisoners are now more willing to undertake education and training in the prison since the Good Friday agreement was signed in Northern Ireland. For example, two years ago there were only four certificates awarded in the education department. Over the past year, 362 individual qualifications have been awarded. Achievement is slow due to the limited time given to education and training.

9. Education and training is well taught by enthusiastic teachers and trainers, and learners are well motivated. The practical resources are generally good and well maintained. Vocational training workshops offer realistic working conditions and the qualifications are mainly those which will help learners to find work in similar industries. Unsentenced prisoners and immigration detainees do not have the same level of education as the sentenced prisoners and they cannot attend any of the vocational training courses. Women prisoners also are limited in vocational training options and their education department does not offer as broad a range of courses.

10. There are library facilities in the men's and women's education departments. The men's facility is well stocked, although it does not contain many books suitable for those with a low reading ability. Men have good access to the library and can order books if required. The library in the women's unit is not as good and access can be limited.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

11. The quality of education and training courses in the prison ranges from good to satisfactory. However, there is still much to be done by the managers of training to offer adequate provision for all prisoners. The overall responsibility for managing HMP Maghaberry's education and training departments currently lies with the prison's deputy governor. The post of head of inmate activities would normally have this responsibility but, due to internal promotion, the position is vacant and another senior manager is overseeing the role. The day-to-day management of training is the responsibility of the workshop manager, and the senior education officer has responsibility for education. The vocational training and work areas that are the responsibility of the workshop manager are horticulture, construction trades, engineering, textiles, computer studies and laundry services. The education department has a wide range of programmes ranging from basic education in numeracy and literacy to advanced study courses and practical skills courses. The staff who offer workshop and education courses are civilian and prison officers. The staff in both departments are suitably trained and qualified to carry out their job roles. There is no nominated quality assurance manager. HMP Maghaberry has written policies and procedures for one section of the training activities. The catering section has a national quality assurance standard. An equal opportunities policy is operated throughout the prison and procedures are in place for protecting prisoners against bullying and to assure fair treatment. HMP Maghaberry was not aware of the self-assessment process and therefore did not prepare a self-assessment report for the education and training areas. They did, however, produce a list of strengths and weaknesses.

STRENGTHS

- effective management action
- good links between education and training departments
- thorough staff appraisal and development

WEAKNESSES

- poor co-ordination between activities
- insufficient time allocation for training and education
- insufficient sharing of initial assessment results
- insufficient accreditation of work skills in some areas
- inadequate preparation for progression
- limited opportunities for remand and women prisoners
- withdrawal of learners from recreational education
- insufficient co-ordination of quality assurance

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more realistic target-setting

12. Senior managers at HMP Maghaberry have implemented many new policies and procedures which are effective in improving the overall structure and culture for staff and prisoners. This has been carried out despite much suspicion and opposition, and in difficult and complex political and religious circumstances, which are unique to Northern Ireland prisons. The actions have improved the learning culture and have empowered staff to work with prisoners to break down deep-seated barriers to learning. This has been achieved through a series of new policies, including a system which rewards good behaviour and discourages bullying and harassment. The system is known as the progressive regime and earned privileges scheme and has three levels of privileges. These are basic, standard and enhanced and prisoner's attitude, behaviour, work performance and co-operation determine their level on the scheme. The refurbishment of training and education facilities have added to the improvements.

13. The education tutors work with the skills training instructors to make good use of practical training opportunities. This allows basic numeracy and literacy lessons to be given in a practical environment.

14. Staff within the prison have annual appraisals with managers. Actions and development are reviewed every three months and amendments are agreed and recorded, together with the progress to date. The prison was accredited with the Investor in People standard in April 2001 and was successfully re-assessed in April 2002. This is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. The thorough staff appraisal process is part of the commitment to investing in people in the organisation.

15. The learners' time is poorly co-ordinated. Learners are often on other activities when tutors and trainers are expecting them to turn up for their training sessions. Training workshops and classrooms are often underused and resources are not being used efficiently and effectively.

16. The time available for learners to attend training or education each day is inadequate. Learners are often late arriving and when they are on time, the usable working day is too short. This is due to reasons such as security, meals times of staff and learners, and a general lack of urgency in moving learners to the areas they work in.

17. All prisoners have their basic numeracy and literacy skills assessed by the education department soon after they arrive at the prison. However, the results are not routinely shared with the skills training instructors. Most of the information is kept away from the workshops and individual files are not shared with workshop instructors. This often results in training instructors having to reassess the learners. Instructors are not trained in basic skills assessment and rely on their own judgement in referring students for additional support. Workshop instructors are not made aware of any medication their learners are taking.

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18. There are some areas of the prison where prisoners work and gain useful skills which could be useful in helping them find work when released. Areas that do not accredit the skills gained are the laundry, furniture production workshop and industrial cleaning. In addition to this, the textiles workshop only offers a limited range of national vocational qualifications (NVQs), whereas a manufacturing or production qualification is more attractive to potential employers and more achievable for the learners.

19. There is little help for those who are released to progress into further work or training in their local community. An excellent facility called the working out unit exists in Belfast and is operated by the prison to integrate prisoners back into the community. However, this is only available for a select few and the facility is underused.

Equality of opportunity

20. Other than the anti-bullying strategy, which includes good promotional posters and other publicity, there is little promotion of equal opportunities across education and training. However, there is an underlying culture of equality and fair treatment. A survey of prisoners indicates that education and training are acknowledged as being the safest and most secure environments within the prison.

21. The current structure does not allow equal access to education and training. Remand prisoners cannot use the training facilities despite the average length of stay being approximately six months. Very limited training opportunities are available to women, and none are available for detainees. Education is given to remand prisoners, although it is less extensive than for sentenced men. Individual tuition and support is offered to prisoners in healthcare and to vulnerable prisoners.

22. The use of the library varies greatly from wing to wing as it depends on the availability and willingness of officers to escort the men. Women prisoners can only use the library for one day a week and staffing shortages prevent this on some occasions. The provision for women is inadequate.

23. Evening classes in the education centre are only available to enhanced prisoners. Should a prisoner have their status changed as a result of disciplinary action, they are withdrawn from evening classes regardless of how close they are to formal accreditation.

Quality assurance

24. There is a lack of co-ordination of quality assurance. There is no allocation of responsibility for the management of quality assurance or an approved quality assurance statement on display in the workshops. There is a good relationship between instructors and quality assurance is discussed informally. Procedures to cover training, assessment and internal verification are weak. There are few work instructions or guidance notes included in the quality assurance system. Most documents are not clearly identified for reference. Staff use different systems for training, assessment and other key areas of delivery.

25. There is no systematic evaluation of feedback from learners' questionnaires. Feedback on a recent survey identified that 36 per cent were unhappy with the choice of training programme. These data have not been evaluated and communicated to the programme manager. There is no analysis of the outcomes of the survey and no action plan produced to lead to improvements. The format of the questionnaires does not invite clear responses and identify areas for improvement.

26. There has been slow progress in the implementation of a strategy to share good practice. Some instructors meet each month to discuss NVQ improvements, but others do not meet formally to share ideas and discuss possible improvements. Some auditing of training activities has been carried out by an external organisation and strengths and weaknesses have been identified. There is, however, no established plan to develop a self-assessment system. Prisons in Northern Ireland have not yet been encouraged to develop self-assessment and are not familiar with the requirements of the 'Common Inspection Framework'. There is little formal evaluation of learning in the prison's occupational sections. The quality assurance arrangements do not adequately monitor the standard of practical training. Internal and external verification are used to identify areas for action or make appropriate improvements. The monitoring arrangements for observations of training and quality assuring the training are currently under development, but are not yet implemented.

Good Practice

One learner gained skills in wheelchair repairs while at HMP Maghaberry. He was selected as being suitable for the working out unit in Belfast where he was placed with an employer repairing wheelchairs. The employer has been so pleased with his ability that he was sent on a course in England to gain a qualification enabling him to adapt motor cars for use by people with disabilities. The qualification is only held by a small number of people in Northern Ireland and the employer is keen to employ the learner when his full release is authorised.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Land-based provision

27. Training in horticulture is satisfactory. There are horticulture units in the men's and women's units. The women's unit has seven learners, four of whom are working towards nationally recognised horticultural skills tests. The men's unit has eight learners, all of whom are working towards nationally recognised horticultural skills tests certificates. All learners undertake an initial assessment of their basic skills when they arrive at the prison. The course is expected to last for one year, although the actual time taken by learners varies depending on ability and on the time spent on the unit each week. One female learner has also gained evidence towards her Duke of Edinburgh's bronze award. Each unit has a full-time supervisor/instructor. Prisoners are invited to apply for appropriate activities, and then approved by the work allocation board within the prison. Some attend mornings and afternoons for five days a week. Others attend education classes for one or more half days each week. Three female learners also attend a craft and hobbies workshop for part of the week. Verification of the award is carried out by the workshop manager. The men's horticulture unit consists of four polytunnels, a glasshouse, raised borders, tool store, common room and office. The women's unit has one polytunnel, a glasshouse, with two more glasshouses under construction, a hard landscape area, sheds for tool storage, and an office. Learners have also recently constructed a small poultry house in the craft workshop to keep chickens.

STRENGTHS

- effective support for learners
- realistic work environment

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient specialist resources
- lack of co-ordination of learners' activities

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more opportunities for vocational accreditation
- better recording of induction

28. Learners benefit from a high level of personal and subject-related support from their supervisors. One instructor has recently received a national prison service award after nomination by prisoners and staff, for his knowledge and enthusiasm in engaging

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prisoners in outdoor, physical work. Work towards the horticultural skills tests started in October 2001. Two learners have finished the award, and others are making satisfactory progress towards achievement. Records of learners' progress are well designed, clear, and kept up to date. Reviews of progress are informal, but learners have a good understanding of which units they have achieved. The women can work towards the Duke of Edinburgh's awards in addition to their main learning goals, and one learner has achieved a bronze award over a period of two years.

29. The work environment in male and female units is realistic. All grounds maintenance is carried out by the learners and their supervisor as part of their learning programme. Plants grown in the protected cropping areas are used across the site, in hanging baskets for display in other parts of the prison, as bedding plants, and a small quantity of salad crops are used for the prison kitchens. Learners have also carried out good hard landscaping work including the creation of a pond and waterfall area for the women's unit. Learners use a range of hand and powered tools and equipment, and learn how to use and maintain them safely. Induction into their safe use is effective, and learners have a satisfactory understanding of safety. However, it relies heavily on verbal confirmation of understanding and lacks detailed written checks.

30. There is a lack of some horticultural equipment. The qualification includes tests for acidity of a growing medium, but no suitable test kit is available. Although very few pesticides are used, the activity in the women's unit does not have an appropriate storage facility, which does not demonstrate good industry practice. The supervisors use some of their own materials and equipment to supplement the resources available for learners.

31. There is a lack of co-ordination of the learners' activities. Timetables for education, horticulture, craft activities and the gym are all prepared independently, resulting in more than one activity being planned for some learners at the same time. Some workshops are poorly attended. One horticultural workshop in the women's unit had only one learner attending and three further learners who were part of the horticultural group were attending a craft workshop which was held on the same day. The single learner present in the horticultural session also attended cookery classes, and part way through the session was asked to join another learner in cookery to enable an assessment to be carried out. This left the horticulture workshop without learners. The supervisor from the men's unit carries out most of the assessments for the qualification. This means that when he is assessing in the women's unit, the activity on the men's unit is unavailable. Some learners attend basic skills classes within the education department, but the results of the initial assessment are not given to the horticultural supervisors. There is no classroom to develop basic or key skills as part of the horticultural sessions.

32. Some of the learning activities are not accredited, and opportunities are not taken to provide training and accreditation in skills which are useful for potential employment. Hard landscape work is carried out on both units, but this work is not accredited. A small amount of pesticide application work is carried out, but learners are not given the opportunity to prepare for industry recognised tests of competence in their safe handling

and use. Some prisoners state the therapeutic benefits of working in horticulture, and the plan for the horticultural units state these benefits as one of the justifications for their development. Some learners have achieved significant levels of attainment before starting their sentence, and would welcome the opportunity to study towards a further qualification to develop their knowledge and skills. While research is being carried out into further qualifications, nothing is currently available to learners.

Construction

33. Construction training is good. HMP Maghaberry offers training programmes in brickwork, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating and furniture manufacture. Each section has 10 learners, with those in brickwork, carpentry and joinery, painting and decorating working towards a nationally recognised skills certificate or the intermediate craft award. Learners in furniture manufacturing do not work towards a recognised qualification. Prisoners apply for a position in the construction workshops and are assessed by the allocation board, in conjunction with security clearance. Each learner starts on a three-week probationary period, has an induction into their respective trades, and is given tools and personal protective equipment. The induction includes the signing of a contract stating the codes of conduct. Most training and assessment takes place in the workshops. Some learners in painting and decorating and brickwork carry out relevant maintenance and landscaping work around the prison. Several are given additional support for basic skills. The workshops are open five days a week for around four hours a day. Staff in the workshops are experienced in their occupations and all hold appropriate assessor qualifications. The workshop manager is a qualified internal verifier and is also experienced in construction. Over the past year, 18 nationally recognised skills test certificates have been awarded, along with five intermediate craft qualifications.

STRENGTHS

- good standard of teaching
- effective additional support
- good portfolios of evidence
- good workshop resources
- good monitoring of individual progress

WEAKNESSES

- low occupancy of workshops
- lack of space for theory work and storage
- no qualification in the furniture workshop

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better sharing of good practice for staff
- increased opportunities for work in the prison

34. Teaching in craft areas is effective. Expectations are high and learners produce work

of a higher standard than those required for the qualification. Learners also carry out additional tasks to enhance their opportunities for employment on release. In the carpentry and joinery workshop, learners carry out roof-tiling work and some learners in painting and decorating and brickwork carry out work around the prison to develop their speed and techniques. The competence and attitude of staff is a considerable factor in the motivation and retention rates of learners.

35. Many learners are given additional support for literacy and numeracy, much of which is in the practical workshops to allow English and mathematics to be shown in a practical setting. On occasions, learners attend formal classes in the education department. Support is not limited to those who need to improve their skills for the qualification. Many learners who enter the prison with a low level of basic skills go on to achieve general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) or level 3 qualifications in English and mathematics alongside their craft qualification.

36. Workshop resources are good. Learners have a plentiful supply of bricks, timber and painting materials. Hand tools are kept in good condition and are regularly replaced. Learners take responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of equipment in the spacious workshop. One learner was servicing bench joinery machining equipment in the carpentry workshop under the supervision of the instructor, and good guidance and advice was given.

37. Monitoring of learners' progress is effective. Each completed task is recorded by the staff and the learner. Frequent reviews are carried out and the learner makes comments on their own progress. Records are also passed to the residential blocks so that other staff in the prison are kept up to date on individual progress. The value of this recording is demonstrated when learners who move to a neighbouring prison are able to take records of their achievements with them. Staff are very experienced and many have been working in the prison for several years, but relationships with other training centres which offer similar programmes have not been made.

38. Learners' portfolios of evidence are good. Staff have recently obtained a digital camera and many portfolios contain photographs of learners' work. Good cross-referencing is also carried out by the learners. Staff cross-reference jobs in the skills tests to the higher level craft award so that learners do not have to repeat work.

39. Workshops do not have adequate space for learners to carry out theory work. While the space for practical work is ample, there are only one or two small tables to use for written work. Learners in the painting and decorating workshop are easily distracted and often find it difficult to concentrate on written work. Storage space for materials is also limited in some workshops.

40. Some workshops are under-used. Despite the capacity to accommodate 10 learners, many have less than six in the workshop at any one time. On some occasions, staff wait in the workshops but no learners arrive. Some learners stay in the workshops for long periods of time after they have completed their tasks, and new learners are not

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able to start.

41. Learners in furniture manufacture do not work towards a recognised qualification. The tutor is occupationally competent, but is not qualified to assess NVQs in this occupation. HMP Maghaberry offers its own printed certificate which lists the competences the learners have carried out.

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

42. Engineering and manufacturing training are good. HMP Maghaberry offers training to NVQ at level 2 in basic engineering, textiles and garment production. Engineering programmes offer a range of skills in bench fitting, turning, milling, grinding and computer numeric control programming. Engineering tasks include project work which is of benefit to the prison. Additional project-based awards are achievable in mechanical engineering by renovating wheelchairs. The clothing training workshop accredits textiles and garment production programmes. Textiles training uses a range of skills in cutting, shaping, forming templates and patterns. Garment production specialises in the use of production machinery, including manual and electric looms and overlocking machinery and pressing and cutting processes. There are 24 learners attending training. There are no women on these training programmes. All sections except the wheelchair section can accommodate up to 10 learners at any one time. A maximum of four learners can work in the wheelchair repair workshop. Up to 34 learning places are available in total. One instructor is a qualified assessor and the remainder are working towards their qualification. Additional training in basic skills is often given in the workshops on an individual basis. All inmates carry out a basic skills initial assessment and general induction, where training opportunities are explained. A trade-specific induction and assessment is carried out during the first three weeks of training before acceptance onto the full training programme. Programmes are planned to take between 18 months and two years to complete. Accreditation is carried out for each unit achieved towards the full NVQ. Individual training records are kept on personal files in the respective departments. Progress reviews are carried out each month.

STRENGTHS

- routine monitoring of individual progress
- well-maintained practical resources
- high standard of practical training
- highly effective support for learners
- additional certificates awarded

WEAKNESSES

- limited access to NVQs
- insufficient assessors and internal verifiers

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better lighting and ventilation in manufacturing areas
- better resources for theory classes

43. There are regular formal progress reviews each week during practical learning. Emphasis is placed on the monitoring of the learners' progress and accurate recording. Progress reviews give learners the opportunity to have their opinions of the programme written on the review sheet. There is no overall method of recording progress in some workshops to enable management to monitor progress and programme effectiveness. Initial induction to training programmes includes three-week taster courses which enable learners to settle into their chosen programmes. Fewer learners are now leaving their training programmes early.

44. There is good practical training and a range of well-maintained resources. Training usually takes place on an individual basis and gives learners a good introduction into the basic skills of engineering and manufacturing processes. Learners value the individual attention and are encouraged to develop a wide range of skills.

45. Support for learners is highly effective. Instructors give individual help and any areas of concern are dealt with quickly. Learners are given specific work responsibilities during their training programme, and confidence and morale have improved through working in a realistic environment. There is an excellent team spirit among learners. Learners who are near the end of their sentence are able to take up work placement opportunities with local employers. One learner who was difficult to motivate is now working in industry in wheelchair renovation through this initiative. Work activity is regularly monitored during visits from prison officers.

46. New initiatives which have been supported by management include entries from the manufacturing sections to fashion competitions in the design of clothing for prison and external use. Engineers have submitted a converted wheelchair as an entry to another competition. Students have achieved several additional external prison awards, some of which are linked to cash incentives. There is a wide range of previous experience among learners. On achievement of the initial qualifications, opportunities are not always available to progress to a higher level. However, many gain additional skills and qualifications in other departments to meet their individual aims. Learners who have identified additional support needs attend courses to improve their confidence and motivation and work towards qualifications in numeracy and literacy.

47. There are insufficient qualified assessors and internal verifiers. One member of staff carries out all the internal verification, with some support from external verifiers. Plans have been agreed to improve the ratio of qualified assessors and internal verifiers, but the training has not started as yet.

48. The work areas are spacious and well equipped with appropriate tools. The engineering area has computer numeric control programming facilities. In textiles and garment production, the training areas are spacious and machinery and equipment are well laid out and designed to meet industry standards. Health and safety requirements are closely observed. There is, however, a lack of natural light and the area relies solely on fluorescent lighting. A notable exception to the good workshop resources is the lack of a suitable area for providing background knowledge to support the practical learning. The area currently used is small and is situated in a noisy area of the workshops where production work is being carried out.

49. Training sessions are well carried out, and good interaction with learners is demonstrated. Questions are encouraged and dealt with effectively. In some sections, progress is monitored and assignments and progress charts are displayed on noticeboards. Other sections have not adopted similar good practice. Learners indicate that the experience they gain during training programmes is significant as many have little experience of a working environment.

50. The instructor in engineering has been in post for 12 months. In the previous 12 months no training took place and the section was closed. The last recorded NVQ achievement was in 2000. Few students are directed towards full NVQ programmes and there are currently two engineering students registered and none on manufacturing programmes. New systems are now being prepared to meet the requirements of the performing engineering operations NVQ, but they are not in place as yet. Emphasis is now placed on NVQ unit accreditation and certification of additional skills. Many students have no previous experience in an industrial environment and no qualifications of any kind. The two instructors for textiles have over 20 years' experience in training. In textiles, two students achieved a level 2 NVQ in 1999 to 2000. Key skills training is carried out by the education department. Learners are given adequate time to settle into the training environment. Learning difficulties are taken into account when establishing workloads in the early stages of training.

51. There is irregular attendance on all training programmes. Priority is often given to other prison activities such as the gymnasium and offending behaviour programmes. Continuity of training for groups of students is seldom possible.

52. Many learners achieve a high level of skills. Practical exercises and work produced for customers is of a high standard. Engineering work demonstrates particularly good skills in planning and the manufacturing of the finished product. Instructors are experienced in their respective areas and offer the training programmes with enthusiasm.

Good Practice

The engineering department received a request from a missionary in Brazil, who was working with a young girl with a severe disability. A suitable wheelchair could not be found for her locally. The instructor and students at the prison decided to adapt an existing chair to meet her requirements. The work was carried out using photographic evidence of her condition and scaled estimates of sizes required. The chair was successfully completed and is now in practical use, giving the young person a better quality of life. Personal 'thank-you' letters to the prison staff and students confirmed the quality of work achieved.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

53. The hospitality and sport and recreation in the prison is good. HMP Maghaberry offers training leading to NVQs at levels 1 and 2 in food preparation and cooking, kitchen and larder at level 3, supervisory management at level 3 and kitchen portering at level 1. The gymnasium offers a level 1 NVQ in sport and recreation and some short courses leading to NVQs in weight training, football coaching and outdoor pursuits. There are two learners working towards level 1 and six working towards level 2 in food preparation and cooking with three learners working towards level 3 kitchen and larder. Prisoners in the kitchens are encouraged to work towards an NVQ once they have shown an interest in cooking. Prison orderlies are also encouraged to work towards NVQs and to become NVQ assessors. The physical education department advertises the sport and recreation NVQ to all prisoners and takes on four learners at a time. All prisoners are given an introduction to the gym at the start of their sentence and are trained in use of the gymnasium equipment before use. There are currently no learners working towards the sport and recreation NVQ, although there are four prisoners waiting to start a new course. Staff in both areas are occupationally competent and experienced. Training is carried out in the workplace on an individual basis. In the kitchen, there are six assessors and one internal verifier with three staff working towards the assessors' qualification. The gym has four qualified assessors and an internal verifier. Assessment and verification is carried out in the gym and the kitchen. Assessors in the kitchen meet each month to share good practice and to look at the progress of all learners.

STRENGTHS

- excellent support for learners
- good retention rates
- good training and work opportunities

WEAKNESSES

- some poor resources

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more support for the internal verifiers

54. Learners are given excellent support in the kitchen and the gym. Most assessors are responsible for only one learner and learners are encouraged and supported on a daily basis. There is no formal individual learning plan but, because of the close working

relationships between learners and assessors, learners are fully aware of their progress, and opportunities for assessment are maximised. In the kitchens, assessment is requested by the learner and most learners progress quickly. Learners work in the kitchens every day and are encouraged to work in all areas of the kitchen so that they become competent in all aspects of the NVQ. Learners on the sport and recreation NVQs have limited access to gymnasium facilities but they are still well supported by their assessors. There is a strong training culture with qualifications being offered to prisoners and staff. One prisoner in the kitchen has achieved NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 as well as the NVQ assessor award and has successfully assessed a member of the prison staff. Prison staff are very supportive and make their own reference materials available to learners if none is available. Portfolios contain good evidence which is relevant and current.

55. Retention rates are good for all qualifications. The physical education department offers only four places at any one time as there are only sufficient human resources available for this number of learners. All learners who started the sport and recreation NVQ achieved it. All learners in the kitchen have either achieved or are still working towards their NVQ and many have progressed to a higher level. Learners are also encouraged to work towards more than the minimum requirements of the NVQ.

56. Training is carried out by experienced and well-qualified staff on an individual basis. Qualifications reflect the work and facilities available to the learners. They are all nationally recognised and reflect the level and availability of work opportunities available to prisoners once released. All those who have achieved qualifications in the kitchen have gained a job in catering when they have been released.

57. There are some poor resources. The gym has good, modern equipment. The kitchen is operated as a commercial enterprise and prepares all the food for the prison inmates, although some of the equipment is old and limited. No additional or updated equipment has been purchased recently because there are plans for a new kitchen. Both are realistic working environments but other resources are limited. There are no designated training rooms in either area. The kitchen has converted a storeroom for use as a training room but it is small and has no natural light or ventilation. There are limited reference materials although staff make their own materials available to learners. Human resources can also be limited at times. Staff in the kitchen are primarily responsible for the production of food and when they are short-staffed this comes first. The gym is a very popular activity for prisoners and priority is given to continuous access for all prisoners. However, because of the high ratio of learners to assessors, the time available to learners is rarely compromised.

58. There is only one occupationally competent internal verifier in each area. The quality and integrity of NVQs is not in question but internal verifiers expressed the desire to have contact with other verifiers in their occupational area to increase their knowledge, to share good practice and to benefit from the experience of others.

Good Practice

One prisoner has achieved the NVQ assessors' qualification and has been assessing a member of the prison staff in the kitchen. This has resulted in an atmosphere of mutual respect, co-operation and promotion of the learning culture.

Foundation programmes

59. Overall, education provision at HMP Maghaberry is good. During induction, sentenced prisoners meet individually with a member of the education staff who explains the opportunities available and notes down any requests for learning. After initial assessment, prisoners identified as having a basic skill need are prioritised for education or are offered work-based tuition to support vocational training. Thirty per cent of classes offer numeracy or literacy training below level 2 and 15 per cent are first level information technology (IT). A further 15 subjects make up the remainder of the provision. The average number in basic skill classes is six. During the past year, 253 qualifications have been achieved in basic skills.

STRENGTHS

- very wide range of training
- strong focus on individual needs
- highly motivated learners
- very well-qualified and experienced staff
- significant improvements in achievement rates

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient resources for part-time staff
- inadequate resources in some areas
- too much disruption to the start of teaching and learning
- inadequate strategic support

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better structure for tutorial support

60. Most courses have appropriately recognised accreditation and there is a high rate of success. Achievements range from entry level literacy and numeracy certificates to Open University credits. There is a culture of achievement throughout the provision. There is structured assessment and accreditation in life skills and creative programmes such as cookery, first level hairdressing, languages, art and design, and music. In 1998, only one learner achieved external accreditation, but now virtually all those who attend education achieve at least one certificate.

61. There is a very broad curriculum. While the largest number of classes deal with

basic skill needs, GCSEs in English, mathematics and law are also studied. IT is available from first level up to an international qualification. Irish and Spanish are taught, as are extensive ranges of creative arts. Art and design, leather crafts, guitar, music technology and fly-tying classes were observed.

62. There is a strong emphasis on meeting individual needs. Learners work successfully on individually planned programmes and great effort is made to provide for those learners who do not wish, or are unable, to attend formal education. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively in the training workshops, on an individual basis, and English as a foreign language (EFL) is taught to the detainees on their wing. Individual support is also given to prisoners on healthcare and in the vulnerable prisoners' unit. Twelve prisoners are studying towards Open University qualifications and are given excellent individual tuition by education staff and good support with learning resources from library staff.

63. Learners are highly motivated towards their studies. In basic skill and creative art classes, learners regularly undertake considerable volumes of work in their cells between classes. GCSE and Open University learners spend much time in the main education centre and on their wings working independently towards qualifications. Learners speak highly of the enthusiastic support they receive from teaching staff.

64. Staff are particularly well qualified. All full-time staff have a degree and a teaching qualification as well as teaching basic skills and first level IT qualifications. Additionally, all full-time staff are qualified assessors. Part-time staff have appropriate specialist qualifications and most have a teaching qualification. Staff are generally very experienced in prison education and understand the specific needs of learners in a custodial environment.

65. The quality of teaching observed was satisfactory and in most cases good. Subject teachers prepare individual learning plans for learners in their classes which are formally reviewed on a regular basis. However, they are not drawn together formally to develop an overall education plan for each learner. There is no personal tutorial system operating.

66. Regulations passed down from the Northern Ireland Prison Service prohibit part time staff from teaching more than eight hours a week and for 38 weeks a year. Moreover, the pool of part-time staff has diminished in recent years. Consequently, learners are deprived of additional specialist teaching which would be beneficial. Part-time staff, who already teach for eight hours a week, cannot be used to cover for colleagues who are on holiday, sick or undertaking professional development. In most cases, these classes are cancelled with detrimental effects on the learners. Similarly, the staff cannot be employed throughout the summer period and this severely curtails all but basic skills education during July and August. The EFL teacher will not be available during this time. This situation is unacceptable.

67. Some staff and resource shortages have been overcome by the support of the

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Prison Arts Foundation (PAF). Two music classes and two fly-tying classes are financed by the foundation. The PAF also sponsor a writer in residence for a day a week. He works individually with learners who wish to improve reading and writing skills, generally meeting with them on the wings. Prisoners speak highly of this initiative.

68. While there are good resources for IT and basic skills within the education centres and for cookery in the women's unit, there are deficiencies in some other areas. Men are taught foundation hairdressing skills with no specialist equipment other than those the part-time tutor brings to the prison herself. There is a significant lack of general storage facilities for teaching resources. There are insufficient teaching rooms in the men's prison which has led to many classes being taught on the wings, without the benefit of the teaching and learning resources available in the education centre.

69. Frequently, men and women arrive at their classes late as prison staff escorts are distracted by other duties or staff shortages. Learners from the wings often arrive at different times, and very often late, therefore the start of teaching is regularly disrupted. Average attendance at observed classes was under 70 per cent. In some cases, prison officers were unable to escort learners to classes, even belatedly, and in two classes students were prevented from attending education as their enhanced status had been withdrawn.

70. The strategic management of education in prisons in Northern Ireland is currently under review. Previous centralised support for curriculum development, budget planning and staffing is now much diminished and it has not yet been replaced by a local structure. A staffing budget for April 2002-03 had not been received by May 2002. This situation is preventing managers from giving sufficient time and attention to quality improvement and learners from benefiting from new initiatives.

71. The department is actively involved with the European Prison Education Association. Staff regularly meet with prison education staff from Norway, Bulgaria and the Republic of Ireland. During the inspection week, two full-time staff were attending a conference in Norway. This has enabled curriculum and other developments from European partners to be introduced at HMP Maghaberry.

72. The library at the men's education centre is welcoming and contains an exceptional stock of over 900 recreational videos. Additionally, over 100 Open University study videos, catalogued against units of study, are available. However, there is inadequate help for readers developing literacy skills. The library in the women's prison is limited and although it is planned to open each week, it is often less frequent.

Good Practice

The education department is actively involved in the European Prison Education Association and the EEC Socrates programme. This has involved exchange visits as well as attending conferences. It has widened the team's horizons, challenged some of their thinking and given a focus for review against different models of prison education and management.