

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP Channings Wood

28 October 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

Her Majesty's Prison Channings Wood, near Newton Abbott in Devon, is a category C training prison for adult men. The prison, opened in 1974, has certified normal accommodation for 594 and an operational capacity of 627. There are currently 613 prisoners. There are six living units, including a therapeutic community for dealing with drug addiction, and a separate enclosed unit for vulnerable prisoners. The education provision is contracted to a college of further education. There is a partnership arrangement between the college and a university for the provision of higher education courses. Other arrangements with the university include teaching placements at the prison. There is an accredited information, advice and guidance centre within the prison as part of the education department provision. A range of education courses is provided including information and communications technology, social and life skills, key skills, business studies, access courses, work preparation, literacy and mathematics. There are some nationally recognised qualifications offered in painting and decorating and industrial cleaning but no national vocational qualifications (NVQs). There are production workshops providing employment in wood milling, laundry, wood assembly, and tailoring, but no formal training is provided in these areas. Additional employment is available with the prison radio and magazine, and through work in the gardens, physical education department, kitchens, stores and works department, and as domestic cleaners. Only construction, information and communications technology and foundation areas of learning were inspected.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, construction training and foundation programmes are good, and training in information and communications technology is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory and equality of opportunity and quality assurance are also satisfactory.

KEY STRENGTHS

- effective working relationships with external agencies
- effective innovative provision of training and learner support
- good work to promote continuous improvement
- high retention and achievement rates on construction and foundation training programmes
- good recording of learners' progress

KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficient range of education and training programmes
- no structured sharing of good practice
- weak initial assessment process

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- improved central monitoring of learners' achievements and experience
- better flow of information to education and training staff from initial assessment

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of four inspectors spent a total of 17 days at Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Channings Wood in Denbury, Newton Abbot, in October 2002. They visited production workshops, the library, training workshops and the education department, and interviewed 53 learners. Inspectors also carried out 37 interviews with teaching staff, managers and other prison staff. They examined a wide range of documents, including learners' personal files, portfolios of evidence, records of meetings, policies, course management files and correspondence. Twenty-five learning sessions were observed. Inspectors also studied the self-assessment report and development plan, produced in May 2002.

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. HMP Channings Wood, near Newton Abbot in Devon, is a category C training prison for adult men. The prison, which opened in 1974, has certified normal accommodation for 594 and an operational capacity of 615. There are currently 613 prisoners. There are six living units including a therapeutic community for dealing with drug addiction, and a separate enclosed unit for vulnerable prisoners. Approximately 8 per cent of prisoners are serving life sentences, approximately 75 per cent are serving sentences of between two and 10 years, and approximately 5 per cent are serving less than 12 months. There are no unconvicted or unsentenced prisoners. Approximately 5 per cent of prisoners are from minority ethnic groups.

3. The prison contracts with a college of further education for the education provision. The education department is contracted to provide 14,059 hours of education over a 52-week period. This is supplemented by 3,000 hours of work-placement time by students on a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) course from a university on a no-cost basis. The provision includes teaching staff for the industrial cleaning course.

4. The prison's head of inmate activities (HIA) is responsible for education, training and work activities. The education department has a full-time education manager and approximately 15 teaching and training staff. The education department provides training in industrial cleaning, and education in mathematics, adult basic education, basic skills, key skills, information and communications technology (ICT), business studies, social and life skills, and art and craft. No formal vocational training or qualifications are provided in connection with the kitchens, farms and gardens, laundry, physical education (PE), or the production workshops. The industries manager is responsible for the painting and decorating training workshop and associated staff.

Education and training in prison

5. Most training is good. Learners produce good written and practical work. For example, learners produce particularly good practical work in the painting and decorating provision. Health and safety practice is satisfactory in the training workshops, although some of the areas for theory training are inadequate. Learners are able to develop good practical, social and personal skills in many learning programmes. Basic skills training is not integrated effectively with some training programmes and there is insufficient use of evidence for the achievement of basic or key skills. Vulnerable prisoners work in the woodmill and laundry, while other prisoners work in the tailoring and wood assembly workshops. This work is not formally accredited against any nationally recognised award.

6. While NVQs were previously available in the PE section, they are no longer available to learners. However, PE staff provide national sports and sports leaders awards. Attendance is generally good and waiting lists are short. There are insufficient education classes for learners in the therapeutic community, and no information technology (IT) facilities in the unit. These learners have to wait at least 10 months into their sentence to become eligible to attend education classes in the main education centre. There is no practical workshop training for these learners. There are no evening education classes. The library resources are available to those attending the main education centre and are offered to other units at least once each week. There are appropriate textbooks available to learners on the painting and decorating course.

7. Provision is good for pre-release programmes through the information, advice and guidance (IAG) centre, which is managed by the education department. External agencies, such as Jobcentre Plus and local authority departments, work together effectively to provide learners with accurate information about further training courses and employment options. Access to education classes for learners with mobility difficulties in the main education centre is adequate.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

8. Leadership and management of education and training are satisfactory. The HIA manages education and training at HMP Channings Wood. The HIA is also responsible for managing the contract for education, which is held by a further education college, and for library services provided by the local county council. Basic education is offered by the education department, which comprises a core programme of mathematics, English language, IT, and social and life skills. The department also manages an accredited IAG centre. There is a writer in residence, funded through the writers in prison network. A painting and decorating course is managed by the industries manager and industrial cleaning is managed by the education department, both of which can lead to nationally recognised qualifications. The prison service operates employment workshops, although training is not formally accredited in these workshops. Some prisoners are also employed in other areas of the prison such as the laundry, kitchen, and farms and gardens. No vocational qualifications are offered in these areas. The prisoner wage structure is such that those attending education and training are not disadvantaged compared with those working in workshops or other areas of the prison. The prison has an equal opportunities policy. The further education college has a policy which applies to the education department in the prison. The HIA is responsible for equal opportunities in the prison. The prison does not have a formal quality assurance policy or processes to cover all training activities. It relies mainly on the quality assurance systems used by the college, which provides most of the education and training within the prison. These systems are used by the HIA and the established quality improvement group to monitor the quality of the provision. Self assessment was carried out using the 'Common Inspection Framework' and covered all education and training activities and other key areas within the prison such as PE. The self-assessment report was produced in May 2002.

STRENGTHS

- effective working relationships with external agencies
- effective innovative provision of training and learner support
- good performance against key targets
- good work to promote continuous improvement
- effective quality assurance standards established for the IAG centre

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient range of education and training programmes
- inadequate access to some training programmes for some learners
- no structured sharing of good practice
- lack of consistency in use of documentation

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better central monitoring of learners' achievements and experience

9. The HIA works well with the education manager to form effective working relationships with external agencies. For example, there is an effective partnership with a university through which learners and prison officers are studying for a certificate in education. Learners working towards this qualification also provide support to other learners on the same training programme. Prison officers have a good understanding of the educational provision and have good working relationships with learners. Students at the university use HMP Channings Wood as a work placement for their own education certificate. This provides approximately 3,000 free teaching hours for the prison. These students are used very effectively as classroom assistants. Some learners near the end of their course take full responsibility for lessons. There is good group and individual learner support in basic education. Some students, who are working in the therapeutic community and vulnerable prisoners unit, have attended specific prison college courses. There are effective partnerships with external funding and support agencies through the IAG centre to provide pre-release support. The HIA has helped develop the writers in residence scheme to include a prison radio station. A local broadcaster comes into the prison and helps learners develop broadcasting techniques. Although this work is not accredited, there are plans to introduce unit accreditation for a relevant award. Some prisoners get good work experience with the community volunteers association.

10. There is effective provision of training and learner support. Although the initial assessment process does not routinely provide teaching staff with details of individual learner's needs, the education manager ensures that each learner is able to discuss relevant needs with staff and negotiate an individual learning plan. There is effective learner support in the education classes in the main training centre. Staff also visit the production workshops and training workshops to work with learners. Individual and group support is provided. Learner support is also provided to learners on the wings. Much of this developmental work has been facilitated by the extra teaching provided by the PGCE students. Some learners are required to attend offending behaviour courses at the same time as attending education and work. The prison management of sentence planning is not sufficiently effective to ensure all prison and learners' needs are met fully.

11. The management of education and training is satisfactory and there is good performance against key targets such as learner progression on to higher education courses and the achievement of additional qualifications. Between April and September 2002, 220 learners achieved key work skills against a target of 90, 103 learners achieved literacy and numeracy at entry level compared with a target of 20, and 77 learners achieved literacy and numeracy at level 1 against a target of 40. In the same period, 70 learners achieved literacy and numeracy at level 2, against a target of 92. It is expected that this target will be achieved by the end of 2003. There is effective use of management information to plan education and training. There is good communication between the HIA and the education manager. Management information has been used effectively to implement training programmes in music technology and broadcasting.

12. There is an insufficient range of education and training programmes. The main focus is on basic education, social and life skills and key skills. There is no accreditation of key skills from work carried out by learners in the production workshops, farms and gardens, and the writers in residence work. There are insufficient education and training programmes for prisoners serving life sentences. There are some courses available in art and craft which have recently been introduced. Where there is good provision for access to higher education courses and good progression onto higher education, there are no courses in subjects such as history, geography and the sciences. The training provision comprises mainly painting and decorating and industrial cleaning. There is no practical skills training available to learners in the therapeutic community or the vulnerable prisoners' unit.

Equality of opportunity

13. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The prison has an equal opportunities policy and race equality policy. This is overseen by the race relations group, which meets quarterly. The detail of the policy covers the provision of education and training and includes regular updating and training for staff in equality and diversity issues. Prison staff and the education subcontractor work effectively to provide equal opportunities training for staff. Training includes diversity issues, drug awareness, personality disorders, and bullying. Staff also attend prison training colleges for courses on working with vulnerable prisoners and the therapeutic community. The further education contract holder also has an equal opportunities policy and related procedures. These apply to learners and staff and include issues relating to legislation on gender, race and disability. The procedures detail the approach to dealing with racial and sexual harassment and complaints. Learners receive information on equality of opportunity and complaints and appeals procedures during induction. However, the detail of information varies, depending on the particular course they have enrolled on. Some learners are able to recall clearly the arrangements for making complaints and their rights and responsibilities, while other learners' recall is unclear. Data relating to minority ethnic prisoners and those with a disability are collected by the prison and monitored on a monthly basis. Access to education classes for learners with mobility difficulties is adequate.

14. There is inadequate access to some training programmes for some learners. A computer-based driving licence qualification is available only to learners at the main education centre on access to higher education courses. Those learners on the vulnerable prisoners' unit have poor access to other courses other than some life skills courses, ICT, and courses in numeracy and literacy. Learners in the therapeutic community are only able to access basic education numeracy and literacy courses and some preparation for work activity at the end of the period in the unit. They have no access to IT provision in the unit. A new building is about to be constructed to improve the space available for educational activities in the therapeutic community and vulnerable prisoners' unit.

Quality assurance

15. The quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. There is good work in the education and training wing of the prison to promote continuous improvement. A quality improvement group was established to work on the prison's self-assessment report. This group is chaired by the HIA. The group prepared the self-assessment report. The provision managed by the further education college has effective systems for ensuring quality of education and training. The HIA has regular meetings with the education manager to discuss performance and areas of development. Lesson observations are carried out, findings are recorded and feedback is given to the teachers. This information contributes to teachers' annual appraisal. Staff development needs are identified and met where appropriate. All courses and programmes are reviewed annually. There is an annual survey of learner feedback about the quality of education and training. This includes changes made as a result of learner input. A new post has been created by the further education college to take the lead on quality issues in education and training provided by the college. The post involves the co-ordination of internal verification of key skills and overseeing the implementation of the quality assurance arrangements, including involvement in the quality improvement group. The course management files in the education department have been established to enable consistency in the evidence provided to support self-assessment.

16. The IAG centre has been accredited with the Guidance Accreditation Board. As part of the accreditation, the centre established comprehensive and reassuring quality assurance standards, which include procedures for staff support and supervision, as well as confidentiality and learner involvement. These systems ensure consistency. An analysis of learners enrolling on education and training programmes is currently being established. However, there is insufficient information available on prisoners who are not accessing the provision. The role of the IAG centre is now included in the prisoners' induction after their initial reception into prison.

17. There is no systematic arrangement for the sharing of good practice between the prison's training and education activities. For example, there is good practice in the use of open learning material to support ICT learners in one section of the prison. However, ICT tutors in another part of the prison do not know about this practice. Although there is innovative teaching in some lessons, other teachers are unable to meet the diverse needs of learners. There is no assessment of key skills during non-accredited learning. Key skills assessors in other parts of the prison do not know that learners' competences are not being assessed. There are no formal meetings arranged or publications produced, for staff to become aware of good practices. As part of the college's policies and procedures, a range of relevant documents has been developed, but is not used by all teachers. Some teachers have written their own systems and records. These are not standardised between different locations or areas of learning or in other prison training activity. There is a duplication of intention in policies and procedures relating to different providers of services within the prison. Individual learner files, which are held centrally, are not monitored sufficiently for achievements, qualifications and experience.

Good Practice

Good practice in promoting equal opportunities was demonstrated through the celebration of black history month. This included a display of literature by black writers, and related posters as a prominent feature in the library.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

18. HMP Channings Wood offers good training in painting and decorating. There are currently 13 learners working towards a nationally recognised qualification in painting and decorating. The training programme is managed by the industries manager. All learners complete an initial basic skills assessment on entry to the establishment and, following application, are selected for one of the courses by the labour board. There is a short waiting list of nine learners. The qualification generally takes 16 weeks to achieve and includes core and optional units. Additional practical experience is provided in conjunction with the works department, where learners are given supervised painting and decorating tasks within the prison grounds. There is one qualified trainer who is also a qualified assessor. Internal verification is provided by a qualified internal verifier from the tailoring workshop. Learners attend for five days each week. Learners are given basic skills support for one half day each week by peripatetic staff from the education department.

STRENGTHS

- high retention and achievement rates
- high standards of practical skills achieved by learners
- good practical training resources
- well-qualified and experienced staff
- particularly good portfolios of evidence

WEAKNESSES

- poor accommodation for theory training
- some poor learning materials

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better flow of information to education and training staff from initial assessment

19. Achievement and retention rates are high. Of the 38 learners who started training in 2000-01, only two failed to achieve their qualification, one of whom was transferred out of the prison. Thirty-five learners successfully completed the full award and one learner achieved some units of the qualification. Current learners have achieved units but have not been on the programme long enough to achieve the full award. Learners are able to start the training programme at any time, according to spaces available on

the course. This process ensures that the waiting list for the course is small. Some information from initial basic skills assessment is not given to the trainer. The trainer carries out an additional basic skills assessment.

20. All learners achieve a high standard of practical skills. Learners quickly gain confidence and are able to demonstrate good workmanship early in the training programme. Learning sessions are planned well according to learners' individual needs. The trainer works well with individual learners and demonstrates good practice. There is good individual learner support for basic skills. This is provided in the practical training area by staff from the education department. Learners attend voluntarily and attendance is good. Some learning materials are not directly related to painting and decorating.

21. The practical training resources are good. Realistic practical projects are carried out in a realistic working environment. The workshop is spacious and well lit, with a good supply of materials and tools to carry out practical work. Each learner has their own work area for the duration of the course. Each work area is fitted with a good range of work tasks which reflect current commercial and industrial practice, including ceiling papering, curved walls, coving, and moulding work. Learners are also able to develop marbling techniques on fireplaces. Learners are well motivated and produce a high standard of work. Learners who are near the end of their course are able to work with tradesmen in the prison works department to further develop their skills. The trainer is experienced and well qualified and has a good working relationship with learners and with colleagues in the construction industry. He also updates his skills and knowledge at the college subcontracted to provide the education and training.

22. Learners' portfolios of evidence are well organised and presented. The monitoring of progress is effective. Each unit or task is well recorded and learners understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to reach their next target. Records include certificates of achievement and examples of theory assessments. Portfolios contain a good variety of photographic evidence. Several learners have gained jobs on release, as painters and decorators, as a result of the skills gained and the evidence produced.

23. Although the practical training areas are well equipped and provide good resources, the accommodation for theory training and basic skills support is poor. The area used for this purpose is above the practical area and is used for storage of materials and some signwriting practice. There is insufficient space to carry out training and ventilation and natural lighting is poor. It is also affected by noise and paint odours from the practical training area. The standard of furniture is poor and there is insufficient room for tutors to discuss basic skills development with individual learners.

24. Learning sessions are planned well and meet the needs of the learners. However, the standard of some handouts and written material is poor. Some of the material is difficult to read due to poor reproduction and often does not follow a particular housestyle. Some learning materials are not sufficiently relevant to the training.

Good Practice

The trainer makes good use of work within the prison to supplement the training and meet the standards for the optional modules. For example, learners practise rust treatments on metal goal posts and rugby posts.

Information & communications technology

25. Training in ICT is satisfactory. There are 133 learners of whom 75 are full time and 58 are part time. There are currently two members of qualified teaching staff who provide ICT training, one full time and one part time. Most learners also take other subjects within their educational programme. They attend ICT training in the education centre, which has a suite of computers to accommodate 14 learners. Twenty-four learners attend ICT training within the vulnerable prisoners' unit. Education is organised to ensure that 20 per cent of the education programme includes ICT training. Learners on part-time education programmes attend one ICT lesson each week. Full-time learners attend two ICT lessons each week. Before starting a course, learners are interviewed by the education manager. At this meeting, a basic skills assessment is carried out. Learning in ICT is accredited at levels 1 and 2 by the awarding body. Accreditation in key skills is provided at level 2. Between 2001 and 2002, there were 92 accreditations at level 1, and 23 at level 2.

STRENGTHS

- good learner support
- good recording of learner progress
- well-qualified and experienced staff

WEAKNESSES

- weak initial assessment
- inadequate individual learning plans
- poor progression for some learners

26. There is good learner support provided by tutors, learners acting as peer partners, and trainee PGCE teachers. A good number of support staff are available during training sessions. Tutors provide regular individual coaching. Peer partners are employed as orderlies in the education department and have progressed through ICT courses. They work well with learners who are starting qualifications in ICT. Learners from other courses are able to use the facilities on a drop-in basis and are able to access additional learning resources. For example, two learners who are teaching themselves computer programming, have daily access to the ICT facilities. There are insufficient ICT books in the library. However, the two learners who are learning computer programming have gained specialist software language books through the library's county searches. Trainee teachers provide additional group theory teaching sessions for key skills external tests.

27. There is good recording of learners' achievements. Learners maintain weekly records of their work activity and have a clear knowledge of their current progress.

Tutors update achievement records and keep detailed records of ongoing work activities of learners. There is no recording of achievements of groups of learners to analyse trends. Due to recent staff changes, data were not available to make judgements about achievement trends.

28. Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced. Many staff have higher level teaching qualifications. Staff continually update their knowledge and experience and work towards additional qualifications in their subject areas. Teaching staff have very good working relationships with learners. Staff fully understand the broad range of issues that affect learners. For example, tutors agree timetables so that learners can attend offending behaviour courses. Staff deal effectively with learners' individual support needs. Staff ensure that rooms are good and that additional resources, such as a wide range of relevant CDs, are available.

29. Initial assessment is weak. There is insufficient recording of learners' prior achievements. Insufficient use is made of prison records when learners start their education programmes. Results of basic skills assessments are not routinely given to ICT tutors. Some records of learners' previous achievements are incomplete or are missing. There is an inconsistent approach to initial assessment. In some cases, initial assessment is carried out verbally and is not recorded. Some learners are placed on inappropriate education programmes and are moved at a later date to a more suitable programme level.

30. Individual learning plans are inadequate. Negotiated learning plans have been recently introduced, but these are not sufficiently detailed and, in some cases, have not been completed. Some plans show that learners will work first towards basic qualifications but do not identify a further main qualification aim. The plans do not clearly detail what a learner must do to complete the full course. They do not take account of initial assessment results and do not identify learners' preferred learning styles and additional support needs. Learners are not given copies of the plans. Lesson plans do not always take full account of individual learning styles. A few learners are not fully involved in some theory sessions. There is insufficient use of a range of effective teaching strategies during theory training. There are insufficient learning resources to help learners with specific learning needs, such as reading difficulties. Most learning materials are appropriate only for learners with good literacy skills.

31. There is poor progression for some learners. Some learners are unable to progress beyond key skills at level 2 in ICT. There are no courses available for learners with higher-level ICT skills, such as computer programming, or for advanced users of ICT. Learners studying in the vulnerable prisoners' unit receive ICT training within a suite of networked computers. They are able to progress to a computer-based driving licence qualification, made available through a simulated Internet environment with e-mail access within the network. This facility is not available within the main education centre. This qualification has recently become available for some learners studying on access to higher education courses within the education department. However, they cannot achieve the full range of units until sufficient resources are available. The

maximum time that a learner can attend ICT training is five and a half hours each week. Most learners wish to attend ICT training more frequently.

Foundation programmes

32. The foundation training provision is good. There are 68 full-time learners and 140 part-time learners. Approximately 34 per cent of the prisoners are on foundation programmes. Initial assessment normally takes place during the first induction week and involves an interview with the head of education and a member of the IAG team, and a basic skills assessment. Basic skills accounts for 42 per cent of the foundation programmes. Learners who speak English as an additional language receive additional individual support from PGCE students. The firm start programme provides a 14-week course of study during which learners develop a business plan as preparation for starting a new business. Work on this course also contributes to the completion of key skills modules in mathematics at level 2. Communication skills training is accredited by the relevant awarding body and also supports the achievement of key skills in communication at level 1. Training takes place in the main education centre, which comprises seven general teaching rooms, an IT suite, with another IT suite currently being equipped. There is no training kitchen and no specialist facilities for art in the main education centre. The library and the IAG centre are also based in the education centre. There is an education classroom based in the therapeutic community and a further education room, training kitchen and IT suite in the vulnerable prisoners' unit. Basic skills training is also provided as part of the vocational training course in painting and decorating. Two members of staff provide basic skills support on the wings. There are no evening classes.

STRENGTHS

- excellent achievement rates on many foundation programmes
- good teaching on most foundation programmes
- good learner support
- clear progression routes

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate use of individual learning plans
- inadequate facilities for life skills training programme

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better study furniture for learners

33. Achievement rates are high on many foundation programmes. The pass rate in 2001-02 for the firm start and communications skills courses is 100 per cent. Of those

learners who started a basic skills in literacy programme in 2002, 66 per cent successfully completed the level at which they were entered. The achievement rate for numeracy over the same period is 25 per cent. Of those learners starting a key skills communication programme in 2002, 65 per cent achieved all or part of the award. Retention rates are good on all training programmes, although attendance numbers vary, particularly in the afternoon classes. The firm start programme is very good and is supported effectively by materials and resources developed by staff within the education centre. Achievement for all learners on this programme is consistently high. Some of the achievements made by learners on the firm start programme are used to support the completion of other certificated courses.

34. There is good teaching on most foundation programmes. Lessons are planned well and cover a range of learning styles. Learners are involved well in most sessions and develop good personal and social skills. Learner progress is recorded clearly and monitored regularly by teaching staff. There is good individual learner support. This is provided by college staff and PGCE students. There are good working relationships between staff and learners.

35. There is good individual support for those learners with basic skills needs on the painting and decorating course. There is also good support for learners outside the formal basic skills programmes, provided on the wings by two tutors. This comprises literacy and numeracy skills support and help with tackling barriers to education. Foundation programmes take place on two living units as well as the main education centre. These learners, however, have insufficient access to the library and some training programmes, which are available to other learners.

36. There are clear progression routes for learners. Some learners are able to progress through the basic and key skills levels and take a teaching certificate or access courses to higher education. One learner, over a four-year period, successfully progressed from attending basic skills classes to nearing completion of the teaching certificate. In the last academic year, 12 learners moved onto degree courses on discharge from prison.

37. There is inadequate use of individual learning plans. There is poor use of initial assessment and prior learning to develop these plans. Most plans comprise only targets related to the achievement of modules within the training programmes learners are following. There is insufficient account taken of individual learning needs, preferred learning styles and short-term targets. There is insufficient involvement of learners in setting targets.

38. Although there is good training in the development of some personal and social skills, there are inadequate facilities for life skills training. For example, although there is a cookery room in the one of the units, most learners have no access to this facility. Some of the teaching rooms in the main block and in the two separate units are too small for the numbers of learners and support staff participating in the classes. In a few rooms, the desks are too small for adults to use effectively.

Good Practice

The development of the peer partners initiative has helped many learners to achieve a range of skills. In one training session, individual learner support was provided by a peer partner who had completed the programme the previous year.