

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP The Verne

03 February 2003



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 The Verne is an adult category C training prison for men. It is situated on the Isle of Portland, near Weymouth in Dorset. The prison has a certified normal accommodation capacity of 552 and an operational capacity of 587. Currently there are 582 prisoners, of whom five are category D status. All prisoners are sentenced and come to HMP The Verne from another prison. HMP The Verne has a tradition of having many foreign national prisoners. Currently there are approximately 50 per cent foreign nationals from 38 countries, with the highest proportion being from the West Indies. There are 50 life sentence prisoners. Nearly half of the 155 prisoners who attend classes in the education department are enrolled onto literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages courses. There is a variety of other subjects offered. Some prisoners are taking teacher training qualifications and three are working independently on Open University courses. Education staff also visit the industrial workshops and the gymnasium to teach basic and key skills and to give language support. Vocational qualifications are offered in the kitchens, gymnasium and in the four construction workshops. The construction qualifications are in painting and decorating, brickwork, builders' operations and electrical work. There are four production workshops offering carpentry, cargo netting and assembly work. In addition, the prisoners work in the garden, on the wings and as orderlies.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The construction, hospitality and sports and foundation programmes are all satisfactory. The leadership and management and the quality assurance of education and training at HMP The Verne are unsatisfactory, but equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

KEY STRENGTHS

- good standard of practical work in construction
- frequent and effective vocational assessment in the kitchens and the gymnasium
- good achievement rates for basic skills and English for speakers of other languages qualifications
- accurate identification of development needs
- positive environment conducive to learning

KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficient priority given to education and training in strategic planning
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- insufficient incentives to encourage participation in construction vocational training
- poor classrooms facilities for gymnasium and catering courses
- insufficient provision for learners with language or learning needs

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of six inspectors spent a total of 23 days at HMP The Verne (The Verne) in February 2003. They worked with a team of inspectors from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons. They visited the education and physical education (PE) departments, vocational and industry workshops, kitchens and other prison work areas. Inspectors interviewed 76 prisoners and 52 of the prison's and subcontractors' staff. The 15 learning sessions varied in grades from very good to poor. A wide range of documents was examined including subcontracts, self-assessment reports, assessment records, verification reports, records of meetings and learners' individual learning plans and their portfolios of work.

2. The Verne completed two self-assessment reports and a development plan for the inspection in February 2003. The full prison self-assessment report contains sections about leadership and management, construction, the PE department, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), basic skills in education, basic skills in the gymnasium, language support in the workshops, key skills in the workshops, business administration and management (Firm Start), information and communication technology (ICT), the catering department, inmate pre-release courses, and horticulture. The development plan for 2003-04 uses the seven key questions of the 'Common Inspection Framework' to relate strengths and weaknesses to the themes of the prison's education and development strategy. In addition, the head of resettlement and regimes and the governor prepared a further self-assessment report for leadership and management and allocated grades to the sections of the compiled prison report.

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

3. The Verne is a category C training prison situated on the Isle of Portland. It is seven miles from Weymouth and accessed across a narrow peninsula of land known as Chesil Bank. The original buildings date from 1873 when they were built as a citadel overlooking Portland Harbour. It was taken over as a prison in 1949 using the citadel defences for dormitory accommodation and workshops. It has English heritage preservation requirements. The six purpose-built houseblocks were constructed in the early 1970s. There are now mainly single-occupancy rooms plus 72 dormitory spaces in seven wings. All prisoners have keys to their cells, glass windows and no bars at the windows. While there is no in-cell sanitation, prisoners have 24-hour access to toilet facilities. The Verne accepts prisoners who are suitable for its open regime, especially those serving longer sentences. In the prison, prisoners are not escorted within or between buildings. The Verne holds over 300 foreign nationals from 38 countries. Currently, approximately 50 per cent of the prisoner population are non-white. The Verne will not accept prisoners who are unwilling to participate in sex-offender treatment programmes, although it does not offer these programmes. There are approximately 60 lifers, although over the past year this has varied between 50 and 90. The Verne operates a totally integrated regime. Prisoners in the voluntary drugs testing unit participate in activities with all other prisoners.

4. The governor started at The Verne in March 1999. The head of resettlement and regimes had been at The Verne for four months at the time of inspection. Before this his post had been unfilled since December 2001. The education manager has been at The Verne since September 2001. The education department work is subcontracted to a further education college, which has nine prison contracts. The education department has a full-time manager, a deputy manager and an administrator. There are two team leaders for ESOL and numeracy and 30 part-time teachers. The education department is open for nine day-time sessions a week, which constitutes full-time attendance for learners. There are three daytime ESOL classes which operate in the prison workshops, with 10 learners in total. In addition, 15 learners attend ESOL classes in the education department. Education staff visit the workshops and the gymnasium to give additional support to 16 learners for key skills. They do not visit the segregation unit where there are five short-term prisoners. The library provision is subcontracted to the county library services. The library opens for over 30 hours a week, including every weekday afternoon and evening, four weekday mornings and for two hours on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Currently there are 560 activity places available to the 582 prisoners. There are 36 prisoners who are 'non-effective labour', one unemployed, 26 on the induction programme and 15 on treatment programmes. There are 76 learners attending full-time education classes and 74 on part-time courses. There are 143 prisoners working in the four production workshops, some of whom are receiving basic skills, key skills or language support from education department staff. Twelve learners are working towards a national vocational qualification (NVQ) in the gymnasium and 11 prisoners who work in

the kitchens are taking qualifications. There are 30 prisoners on construction courses and 12 on an electrical vocational training course. Other prisoners are employed in the prison where qualifications are not available, such as grounds maintenance, wings and as orderlies.

Education and training in prison

5. The standard of learners' work is good in all areas of education, vocational training and training for work. The practical construction skills are particularly good in the painting and decorating area. The prison's key performance targets for literacy and numeracy have been met or exceeded, before the April 2003 deadline. Many ESOL learners have gained English language qualifications. This is significant since many will be deported after their release and foreign nationals' achievements do not contribute towards the prison's key performance targets.

6. Teaching and training standards are varied. This is especially so in the education department where inspection observation grades ranged from very good to poor. The learning environment in the education department is good. There are two new initiatives in the education department in conjunction with local external institutions. The teacher training certificate course which started in January 2003 includes prisoners and staff. In addition, the department is providing teaching practice for a year for the postgraduate certificate in education students, to contribute towards their prison teaching module. The construction training is not promoted, especially in the winter months. In addition, there are inadequate arrangements for adverse weather conditions, for the learners to carry out practical and/or knowledge work and to protect the construction materials. The range of construction programmes has diminished in recent years, with specialist trainers not being replaced when they retire. The training provision has closed for carpentry and joinery, plastering and plumbing. In addition, NVQs are not offered in the large carpentry assembly production workshops. The motor vehicle training is currently not operating due to staff illness. There is a small vocational training workshop for 12 prisoners. They take three electrical awards consisting of NVQ levels 1 and 2 in performing engineering operations and an electronics wiring skills award. The course usually takes between eight and 12 months to complete. In the kitchen and gymnasium areas learners use poor classroom facilities, but there is effective and frequent vocational practical assessment. The key skills portfolios produced by the catering learners have improved significantly since the pilot inspection in December 2001. They include good use of work-based evidence for key skills. However, in the kitchen and gymnasium areas the external verifiers from the awarding bodies have not visited the prison for an excessively long time. In the PE department, some learners have been waiting for their certificates since May 2002. The external verifier's first visit to the kitchens was in May 1998, the second and last visit was in October 2000. The November 2002 visit was postponed and has not yet taken place. The internal verification processes are incomplete and prison staff are unaware of the code of practice or the guidelines for internal verifiers. Assessors are given insufficient support, guidance and monitoring. Throughout the provision, assessors work independently and implement individual systems which are irregular, unmanaged and unmonitored by senior managers. Quality assurance arrangements for education and training are inadequate.

7. The prison education and training development plan for 2003-04 accurately identified the development needs. However, before this, insufficient priority was given to education and training. Strategic focus is on meeting performance and financial targets. Previous

action plans have not been adequately dealt with and progress has been slow. Vocational training development is ineffective, with insufficient training and qualification opportunities for prisoners and not enough use of resources. The prison does not have effective strategies for dealing with its ever-changing population of foreign nationals, whose needs vary depending on their country of origin, culture and life experiences. However, the prison does have a positive environment which is conducive to learning, an open and safe regime and cordial relationships in a population of 38 different nationalities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

8. The leadership and management of education and training at the prison are unsatisfactory. The head of resettlement and regimes is responsible for managing the activities of the education department, specialist treatment programmes, chaplaincy, drugs, resettlement activities, kitchens and the gymnasium. Prior to his arrival in October 2002, the post had been unfilled for approximately a year. The industrial manager is responsible for employment in the production workshops and for vocational training. The head of estates is responsible for the grounds and estate, although was on sick leave at the time of inspection. All post-holders are managed directly by the governor. Education is subcontracted to a college of further education. The prison library is subcontracted to the county library services.

STRENGTHS

- accurate identification of development needs
- positive environment conducive to learning

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient priority given to education and training
- insufficient use of data systems for management decisions
- insufficient strategies for dealing with the changing prison population
- inadequate arrangements for quality assurance

9. In recent months, a group of managers has carried out a review and self-assessment of activities in the prison. The group was led by the head of resettlement of regimes and included the head of education, the industrial manager and the NVQ co-ordinator. From this process, cross-prison themes have accurately identified the development needs for activities. The subsequent development plan for 2003-04 has clear targets and deadlines and includes the introduction of qualifications in many of the prison's employment areas. The draft business plan for 2003-04 includes education and training. A new learning centre, which has 10 computers, is being developed in the education department.

10. The prison has given insufficient priority to education and vocational training activities. They have not been included in the business plan for the prison. There has been a significant decline in qualifications offered to prisoners over recent years. Training workshops have closed as staff have left and training is no longer offered in plumbing, plastering, welding, carpentry and joinery, electrical installation and motor mechanics. In the summer of 2002, the education department stopped offering evening classes and it does not offer weekend classes.

11. More than 60 per cent of prisoners are not involved in education and training activities which lead to accreditation. For example 143 prisoners are employed in four production workshops, the two largest being carpentry industries workshops. Prisoners have their pay reduced if they are late, absent or do not fully engage in their work. Workshop supervisors discuss these problems with prisoners individually. The motivation of prisoners is increased by the use of nominal weekly bonuses. While the experience gained from up to 53 machine and assembly operations is recorded in detail, prisoners do not gain a formal qualification. The skills they develop relate to the NVQ in furniture production woodmachining at level 2 or construction-related NVQs at level 2 in woodmachining. These skills, particularly those linked to computer numerical controlled machines are in high demand in industry. All prisoners have a thorough induction which includes health and safety instruction. However, there is no diagnosis of individual prisoner's mechanical reasoning, spatial awareness and graphical and operational skills before starting work. Smoking is allowed in the workshops, which would be unacceptable in industry. The two smaller workshops make cargo nets and assemble hospitality packs. In addition, other prisoners work in the prison grounds, on the wings or as orderlies and there are no qualifications relating to their work.

12. The strategic focus for education and vocational training has been on meeting performance and financial targets. The prison has a range of information and data systems, but they are not used to inform managers' decisions. The systems do not correlate and are not systematically cross-referenced to provide a holistic picture across the prison. The labour allocations system only records one prisoner activity, which is misleading. Seventy-four prisoners attend between one and four education classes a week, and there are unfilled vocational training and employment places. Training places are also unfilled when prisoners attend the gymnasium and exercise sessions. However, non-active prisoner numbers are low, with one prisoner unemployed, 26 on induction, 15 on treatment programmes and 35 who are non-effective labour.

Equality of opportunity

13. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory throughout the prison and is the responsibility of the deputy governor. Co-ordination across the prison is by the head of residence. There is an equal opportunities policy, a disability policy, a comprehensive anti-bullying strategy and procedures, and a complaints procedure. These policies and procedures are explained to prisoners during the induction programme. Copies are displayed in communal prison areas. The prison's race relations management committee is the principal forum for discussing equal opportunities. It meets every other month and includes prisoner representatives. Minutes are widely circulated. Recently an equal opportunities and disability committee has been formed. The subcontracting college has its own policies and procedures which focus on the rights and responsibilities of learners and staff in the education department. Data from the systematic collection of information on prisoner ethnicity are routinely analysed to show the proportions of prisoners engaged in education, work and training. This highlights disproportionate areas.

14. There is a positive environment throughout the prison which is conducive to learning. The Verne has an open and safe regime and cordial relationships in a population of approximately 38 different nationalities. Relationships between prisoners and staff are good. Prison staff have regular training in diversity which covers a broad range of prison issues, such as institutional racism, homophobia and religious discrimination. However, there is little focus on areas which are specific to learners and learning.

15. The prison makes good use of the many languages spoken by prisoners. Prisoners who are bilingual often act as interpreters to help new arrivals who speak little English. Prisoners and staff have translated education department leaflets into the three most commonly used languages in the prison. In addition, information about prison employment opportunities is also available in a wide range of foreign languages. There is a good range of foreign language newspapers in the community lounge, as well as over 250 foreign language videos. The library has a good stock of books in many languages. The prison has an annual international day which focuses positively on the multi national background of the prisoners. In addition, some prisoners organise carefully planned evenings to celebrate their national culture. Prisoners can access the education building by a ramp into one of the classrooms.

16. There are insufficient strategies for dealing with the changing prison population. The staff deal with each situation as it arises, but this results in delays in the timely implementation of strategies. There is no trend analysis in order to anticipate new groups. Foreign nationals' needs include language support, religion, culture and diet. In addition, with so many foreign national prisoners the cost of international telephone calls is vitally important on limited prisoner wages. It is understood that there are prison proposals nationally to provide cheaper calls for foreign nationals to maintain contact with their families. A further management issue is that the qualification achievements by the foreign nationals do not contribute to the prison's key performance targets.

Quality assurance

17. Quality assurance of education and training is unsatisfactory. There is no strategic or business planning framework to use as a basis for developments. Self-assessment is not systematically used as a continuous improvement process. Previous action plans have not been adequately dealt with and progress has been slow. There is no quality assurance framework for vocational training to ensure that all aspects of the training provision are managed well, monitored effectively and have critical processes completed. There are no written procedures or service specifications to help staff with processes and procedures. External contracts for education and library provision are not effectively monitored or reviewed.

18. The quality assurance and co-ordination of qualifications is poor. There are no regular assessor meetings and internal verification is not effectively monitored by managers. External verifier activity is not managed and no-one has visited to quality assure the hospitality and sports awards for up to two years. Vocational training staff act independently and implement individual systems which are irregular, unmanaged and unmonitored by senior managers. There are some development plans for widening vocational training opportunities for prisoners, but they have yet to be implemented. The development of vocational courses is ineffective and there are insufficient training opportunities for prisoners. Some obvious good practice in the education department is not shared with the vocational training staff.

Good Practice

An innovative computerised information project has been developed by a prisoner in the education department. This started after the identification by the education manager of the need to inform prisoners about the range of education, training, employment and personal support at The Verne. An A4 information booklet and compact disc are available, which include clear text and useful diagrams. There are plans to install this information on computers in the new learning centre and to translate it into other relevant languages.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

19. The construction training is satisfactory. There are 10 learners on the intermediate certificate in brickwork, 10 on the foundation certificate in construction operations, and 10 on the intermediate certificate in decorating occupations. These qualifications can be achieved in prison as they require learners to develop and achieve competences to industry standards, but do not need the skills to be accredited in the workplace. Learners can also achieve a range of accredited practical skills tests. Each construction area has one trainer who is qualified technically and occupationally in their specialist field. All have the necessary assessor qualifications. Two trainers are working towards teaching qualifications and one is a qualified teacher. If an instructor is absent through illness or for any other reason, learners' attendance on the course is stopped. Two workshops have a mezzanine area overlooking their practical work areas. In the trowel trades shop this area is used as the trainers' office and interview room and in painting and decorating it is used as an additional skills training area. There is a large open-air construction project area opposite the workshops. Learners agree to work towards a full qualification in a year. New learners can join throughout the year, when a place becomes available. Occasionally, potential learners must join a waiting list for their preferred course.

STRENGTHS

- good standards of practical work
- good work in learners' portfolios
- significant progress by some learners

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate arrangements for adverse weather conditions
- insufficient information for trainers about learners' additional support needs
- insufficient incentives to encourage participation on construction courses

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better access to information technology (IT) resources
- better acknowledgement of key skills gained
- more formalised progress reviews

20. Learners produce work to industry standards, particularly in painting and

decorating. Trainers use accredited practical tests to assess the initial practical skills of learners and to test their development. Most learners take pride in their work. In all areas some learners make significant progress. A high proportion of learners are foreign nationals who have no practical skills when they start. Most of the learners are unaware of the key skills they develop, and opportunities to gather evidence for key skills are not taken. Learners who complete the construction programmes, leave prison with good employment skills. In painting and decorating, learners gain enough skills to set up their own business. Many keep in touch with their prison trainers and send photographs of their work. They also write complimentary comments about the training they received in prison.

21. Learners' portfolios are good, are well kept and are valued by learners. There are clear schemes of work and detailed records of occupational units achieved by learners. Some trainers use a digital camera to record the standard of work achieved by learners on projects, and provide evidence for their portfolios. Taking photographs is normal practice at The Verne and each learner receives three copies of the photographs, one for their portfolio, one for the trainer's records, and one for the learner to send home to their family to celebrate their achievements. Learners take pride in their achievements and value this support.

22. A substantial number of practical trowel trade skills are developed on the open-air project site. However, the arrangements for learners to cope with adverse weather are inadequate. The trowel trades workshops are too small to accommodate two groups of learners when the weather prevents use of the project site. There is also insufficient covered space to store bricks and blocks. In addition, there is insufficient access to IT facilities to give alternative activities during adverse weather conditions.

23. There are insufficient incentives to encourage participation in the construction programmes. Construction learners have the lowest rate of pay among all prisoners and face some of the most difficult working conditions. Learners have low morale, and consider their training to be less important than prisoners working in production areas. This makes it difficult to motivate learners. The participation rate of learners in the trowel trades programmes tends to be seasonal. Learners working in the project area find it pleasant in the summer but often harsh and uncomfortable in the winter. There is a waiting list for learners to join these programmes in the summer but poor attendance is a problem in the winter. The self-assessment report identifies that learners on these programmes have recruitment and retention problems due to literacy and numeracy difficulties. However, inspectors identified that these problems were more likely to be caused by the poor conditions experienced by learners. The range of construction programmes is narrow and has diminished in recent years, even though there is a high demand for these skills in industry.

24. The induction into the training programme and health and safety is well organised. The candidate agreement form is used to record the learners' previous experience in construction. However, individual learning plans do not record these skills, nor do they identify an appropriate plan of learning. Trainers do not set challenging targets against

agreed timescales. Attendance monitoring is thorough. Learners' programmes are disrupted by the requirement to participate in other activities associated with their rehabilitation programme. Trainers are not given sufficient information on individual learners' involvement in these activities. Progress reviews are useful, but informal. Internal verification is adequate.

25. The self-assessment report identifies that all learners have an initial assessment and diagnosis of their literacy and numeracy support needs. However, it does not state how many learners have additional needs or whether the support given is effective. The construction trainers are only given details of the times when learners must attend specific support sessions or when education staff will visit the workshops. It is not effectively linked to, or integrated with, the development of job knowledge. Many learners on construction programmes are foreign nationals and some state that they had little command of the English language when starting their programme. They praised the support received from specialist teachers and the additional support given by trainers in developing their language skills. Teaching materials are only available in English. One Spanish learner arranged for relatives to purchase a technical book in his own language to overcome this problem.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

26. The hospitality and sport training is satisfactory. There are 12 learners who are working towards sport and recreation qualifications, 10 of whom are working towards level 1 and two are working towards level 2 in operational services. There are 10 learners who are working towards hospitality qualifications in kitchen portering and one who is working towards a level 2 in food preparation and cooking. Learners work in the prison kitchen or the gymnasium and they are all employed. Before joining the hospitality programme learners must obtain an entry level 1 and successfully complete a month's work trial. To join a sports programme the learners must complete a week's taster session to establish their suitability for the programme. All training, assessment and internal verification take place in the workplace by kitchen or gymnasium staff. Hospitality training takes place on the job except for health and hygiene qualifications. Sport and leisure learners at level 1 attend off-the-job training on five days a week. Four catering and four sport and recreation staff have assessor qualifications. An additional three members of the kitchen staff are working towards the assessor qualification. There is one qualified internal verifier in each area. The learners studying for the sport and leisure NVQs have three reviews during their 12-week programme. Learners are able to gain additional qualifications such as the level 1 in coaching football or food hygiene awards. Key skills training and assessment is taught in both occupational areas.

STRENGTHS

- frequent and effective vocational assessment
- good use of work-based evidence for key skills

WEAKNESSES

- poor classroom facilities
- incomplete internal verification processes

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better NVQ documents

27. In sport and hospitality, learners have good workplaces which offer a realistic work environment. There is frequent and effective vocational assessment in the kitchen and the gymnasium. There are sufficient assessors to allow each one to have two or three learners. There are seven assessors based in the kitchen and four in the gymnasium. Portfolios are good in both areas. Learners have full ownership and take a pride in their work. There is a good rapport between staff and learners. Learners are encouraged to

finish their qualification even if they move to another area of work. In one case a learner is returning to the kitchen at weekends to complete the NVQ. Unit accreditation is also available for learners who move establishments or are released. There are insufficient opportunities to progress for some learners. On completion of the level 1 NVQ, few learners have the opportunity to progress to the level 2, even though learners are in jobs which cover all areas of the qualification. Assessors in the kitchen have recently revised their assessment methods and now carry out more observations. This has increased the rate in which learners are achieving their qualifications. It is also more appropriate for learners who do not speak English as their first language. There is no achievement data available for the kitchen or the gymnasium.

28. Learners are offered a range of learning opportunities including additional qualifications. Essential food handling training is available for all hospitality learners. The sport and recreation learners are offered national governing body awards, such as in a weightlifting leader award, first aid and the football coach award, as well as local prison awards. These local awards allow learners to develop their own understanding and performance in sports such as cricket and basketball. The off-job-training for sport and recreation covers a wide range of sports, background knowledge of fitness, and coaching. This training is above that required by the NVQ.

29. There is good use of work-based evidence for key skills and this encourages learners to finish the key skills while working towards the NVQ. Key skills are taught and assessed in the occupational area by a tutor from the education department. The tutor and assessors have worked together to arrange work tasks to fit key skills requirements. This has led to learners using coaching sessions to complete communications in the gymnasium and fridge temperature monitoring to complete application of number in the kitchen.

30. There are poor classroom facilities in both areas. Background knowledge and key skills sessions in the gymnasium are held in a store cupboard. There are nets and other equipment stored in the area and there are no desks. Key skills in the kitchen are taught in the staffroom where there are no tables, and there are interruptions as staff get equipment which is stored in the area. The areas are cramped with poor lighting, which is not conducive to learning.

31. The internal verification process is incomplete. Both internal verifiers verify portfolios, but do not support the continuous development of assessors. There is no sampling plan or systematic approach to the process. There are few observations of assessors' practice, and those that do take place are not formally recorded. The internal verifiers are not aware of the NVQ code of practice or of the guidelines for internal verifiers. The NVQ documents are not standard across the areas. The sport learners have reviews at six, nine and 12 weeks and then during each remaining month of the programme. Short-term targets are set at these meetings. There is no formal review mechanism in the kitchen area. There is little co-ordination of the administration of the qualifications or sharing of good practice. There has been no external verifier for hospitality since 10 October 2000. Learners who completed their sport and recreation

qualification in May 2002 have still not received their certificates. Many learners have now left The Verne.

Foundation programmes

32. Foundation provision is satisfactory. The work of the education department is subcontracted to a further education college. There are three full-time staff, comprising the education manager, his deputy manager and an administrator. There are team leaders for ESOL and literacy and numeracy. There are thirty part-time tutors. Full-time programmes are offered each weekday in the education department. There is additional support for key skills in workshops and in the gymnasium and there are currently 16 learners. There are part-time classes in ESOL in workshops for three half days a week and 10 learners currently attend. Classes in literacy, numeracy, key skills, business studies and IT, and art are available. There are 15 learners following an ESOL programme, of whom 13 are full-time. The learners working towards certificate of education qualifications are staff and prisoners. Three learners are working independently on Open University courses. There are 76 enrolments on full-time provision overall and 74 part time. Nearly half of enrolments are on literacy, numeracy or ESOL classes. Learners are given information on the education department and literacy and numeracy assessments during their induction. They then have individual interviews during induction with the education manager to discuss their education, training and employment needs. Some prisoners find a job in the prison before this interview.

STRENGTHS

- good achievement rates for basic skills and ESOL qualifications
- particularly well-motivated learners
- good learning environment in education department

WEAKNESSES

- poor target-setting for individual learners on courses
- insufficient support for learners with identified learning needs
- outdated computer resources

33. There are good achievement rates for literacy, numeracy and ESOL qualifications. The success rate for those on ESOL qualifications over the past year is over 90 per cent and over 80 per cent for literacy and numeracy. All learners are encouraged to gain accreditation for their learning. Success is celebrated by a prominent display of examination results in classrooms and on noticeboards in the department. All accreditation is part of the national qualification framework. Schemes of work and lesson plans are systematically cross-referenced to the appropriate national curricula. Key performance targets which are set by the prison service for literacy and numeracy, have either been met or exceeded before their April 2003 target. Many ESOL learners

have succeeded in gaining English language qualifications that command high respect internationally. This is significant since many will be deported following release. The retention rate is good, at an average of 70 per cent for 2002-03. Business studies had a 100 per cent retention rate in 2001-02.

34. Learners are particularly well motivated. They speak with pride of the good progress they have made. Most attend classes regularly and with enthusiasm. They are able to give clear examples of what they have learned, and how this benefits them in their day-to-day lives in the prison. They are positive about the impact this will have on their prospects when they are released. Learners in business studies are enthusiastic about the usefulness of the 'Firm Start' short course and its effectiveness in preparing them for self-employment on release. A useful link has been made with representatives from a trust who meet learners to look at their portfolios and make arrangements to support them after release. A helpful link has also been established with a trust in Jamaica, a country to which many learners will be returning. A well-planned financial capability course has also recently started. This is effective in helping learners gain more confidence to deal with personal budgeting.

35. The education department is a good learning environment. The accommodation is well maintained and classrooms are light, airy and spacious. All are well equipped with good furniture, large whiteboards and many have modern audio and video cassette recorders. There is ample storage space for resources in all the classrooms. A recent innovation is the provision of an interview room in some classrooms, which provides an appropriate setting for confidential interviews between staff and learners. Displays on noticeboards are attractive and reflect the activities of the classes. For example, in the room used by ESOL learners there are lists of irregular verbs and commonly used phrases which learners can refer to. Books and other paper-based resources are mainly up to date. There is an extensive range of bilingual dictionaries which learners can refer to.

36. Target-setting for individual learners is poor. Targets are routinely set for learners at induction and are revised at progress reviews. However, they have insufficient detail. Targets are not broken down into specific elements for learners to work towards. Learners and teachers cannot measure whether a target has been achieved. Timescales for achieving targets are vague. ESOL learners and their teachers meet regularly to review progress, but this does not happen systematically in all literacy and numeracy groups. There is inconsistent use of individual learning plans and in the recording of achievements in literacy and numeracy provision, with some unsatisfactory practice. Poor target-setting was identified as a weakness in the department's self-assessment report.

37. There is insufficient support for learners who have additional needs. The education department has identified significant numbers of learners who need additional support with language or literacy. Over 100 prisoners do not speak English as their first language, but only 15 are currently attending ESOL classes. The education department has set up part-time classes in the workshops, but currently only 10 learners attend.

Much of the content planned for these classes is not sufficiently linked to the demands of the workplace. The department has successfully obtained funding for a 'pathfinder' project to pilot new approaches for patois speakers to respond to their individual needs, but this has yet to start. Some initial work has been carried out to identify basic skills needs of learners who are in employment in workshops or taking training in the gymnasium. The department has established key skills support to help learners in these areas. However, only very small numbers of learners receive this support at present. Arrangements to identify and cater for the needs of prisoners who have dyslexia are inadequate. Initial assessment at induction does not include screening for dyslexia, and there is no formal provision to support these learners. There have been recent reductions in the range of the education provision. Evening classes ceased in the summer of 2002.

38. Computer resources are poor and outdated. Computers are often unreliable, and many do not have the technical specifications to run up-to-date software. Much of the software is outdated. There is no access to computers in rooms where literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes are held. Learner access to computers for independent learning in the education department is inadequate.