

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP Frankland

03 March 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 Frankland is an adult male high security prison situated just north of Durham in northeast England. The prison's occupational capacity is 652, and it is currently full. All prisoners are sentenced and are serving four years or more. Approximately 40 per cent of its population are serving life sentences and two-thirds are classified as vulnerable. The education department provides full-time and part-time courses with a focus on literacy, numeracy, key skills and Life Skills. Vocational qualifications are provided in bricklaying, information technology and physical education. In addition, there is training for work in large timber-machining, furniture assembly, polishing and upholstery workshops. Prisoners are also employed in other areas of the prison, such as kitchens, serveries, gardens, the wings and laundries. They cannot gain qualifications in these areas. The areas of learning inspected were construction, physical education, literacy, numeracy, key skills and Life Skills.

Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Foundation training is satisfactory, as is training in construction. Training in physical education is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Equal opportunities is satisfactory, but quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

KEY STRENGTHS

- good linking of education and training activities
- involvement of all staff in self-assessment
- good achievement rates in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and in foundation programmes
- good teaching
- good integration of literacy, numeracy and key skills with vocational programmes

KEY WEAKNESSES

- no overall quality assurance framework
- too few opportunities for prisoners to gain vocational qualifications
- little specialist provision for those with particularly poor literacy and numeracy skills

HMP FRANKLAND

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better use of feedback from learners
- more sharing of good practice

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of four inspectors spent a total of 15 days at HMP Frankland (Frankland) during March 2003. The inspection was carried out in conjunction with a team of inspectors from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons. They visited training workshops, production workshops, the physical education department, kitchens, wings during cleaning and the education unit. Inspectors interviewed 65 prisoners and 31 staff. They examined 15 learning plans and 16 examples of learners' work. Sixteen training sessions were observed, 15 of which were good or better. Other relevant documents were scrutinised, including external verifiers' reports, minutes of meetings and learners' files. The prison produced its first self-assessment report in December 2002 for education and training across the prison. The education department has produced its own self-assessment report each year for the past four years.

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. Frankland is an adult male high security prison, four miles north of Durham. The prison opened in 1980 as a temporary prison staffed by the army. After a three-month closure for modification, it opened again as a dispersal prison in April 1983, and is now one of the six high security prisons in England and Wales. Two new wings have been added to increase capacity, and a new unit for 100 prisoners with personality disorders was being built at the time of inspection. The prison has 652 prisoners, 261 of whom are serving life sentences and 184 of whom are Category A prisoners. The prison is divided into two sections. One holds the two-thirds of the prisoners who are classified as vulnerable and the other holds the remaining third, who are normal location prisoners. Fourteen per cent of prisoners are from minority ethnic groups. All prisoners are sentenced and serving four years or more. The average age of the prisoners is 38 years. Some are over 65, with the oldest being almost 80. Prisoners work in a variety of jobs across the prison. One hundred and seventy-four are employed in furniture production, around 120 are wing cleaners, 16 work in the kitchens, and others work in the gardens or on routine maintenance. Twelve work in furniture production, 12 in a bricklaying workshop and 12 translating written material into Braille. All except 40 were employed or in some form of training at the time of inspection, some for as little as three hours a day.

3. Training for work is carried out in the production workshops. All prisoners receive an induction into their work and most prisoners complete a manual handling qualification. Those working with food in kitchens and serveries gain a basic food hygiene certificate. Vocational qualifications are available in bricklaying, information technology (IT), sport, and Braille translation. The furniture production workshops make furniture for a large distributor of office furniture and for the prison estate. The Braille workshop translates written materials for publishing companies, schools and private individuals.

4. Education and training at Frankland are provided through a contract with a local further education college. At the time of inspection, 61 per cent of prisoners were attending. Of these, 151 were attending education full time, while 368 were studying part time. The education department provides training in literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), IT, Life Skills, yoga, humanities, modern languages, music, art and design. The education department also organises charity workshops, to refurbish wheelchairs, sewing machines and typewriters for less economically developed countries throughout the world. This department employs 12 prisoners. There is no education or training provision in the evenings. There are 14 full-time and 28 part-time education staff. Learners can gain qualifications at entry level, level 1 and level 2. Degree courses are offered through distance learning. There is one national vocational qualification (NVQ) on offer, in the physical education department.

Education and training in prison

5. The standard of learners' work is good in all areas of education and training. Learners are well motivated and enthusiastic about their studies. Retention, achievement and progression rates of learners in the education department are good. Targets are set for achievement at entry level, level 1 and level 2. Targets for level 2 achievements have been achieved.

6. Teaching is good in all areas. Teachers and trainers are appropriately qualified and experienced, and vocational trainers work to industrial standards. There is not always cover for staff absences and classes or workshops have to be closed. Vocational workshops are generally well equipped. The production and light engineering workshops, kitchens, gardens and wings offer good opportunities for vocational qualifications which are not being taken. In the physical education department qualifications are offered to the few prisoners who will be eligible to work in this area in the future. Movements around the prison are handled effectively and prisoners are able to get to classes on time.

7. The library is situated in the education block and library services are provided by Durham County Library Services. Resources are satisfactory, with an appropriate range of books. There are taped books and books in languages other than English. There are also books for those with poor literacy skills and in large print for the visually impaired, but these are rarely borrowed. The library is open during the day for learners in the education department, all weekday evenings, and on Saturday and Sunday mornings. All prisoners have an opportunity to visit the library for 20 minutes each week. Access to the library is poor for prisoners with restricted mobility. Lack of space in the library restricts study space and access to computers. The library has recently taken part in a project with the education department, helping learners to make sacks containing toys and story tapes for their families. A small selection of books is available for prisoners in health care or the segregation unit. There is a satellite library in the education department for normal location prisoners.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

8. The leadership and management of Frankland are satisfactory. The head of regimes manages education, training and employment activities in the prison, including the library. He is a member of the senior management team and reports directly to the governor. The head of regimes works closely with the education manager, the industries manager and the physical education manager. At the time of inspection, over 90 per cent of prisoners were employed or in education. Some were employed for only three hours a day. The education department provides induction, assessment and interviews for all prisoners. Those working or in education or training have similar wages. Those attending education on a part-time basis, over 50 per cent of the population, are not financially disadvantaged when not attending work. Equal opportunities is the responsibility of the personnel manager. There is an equal opportunities policy for the prison and a document detailing the rights and responsibilities of prisoners in the education department. There are no overall training and education quality assurance policies or procedures. The education department uses the contracted college's quality assurance policy. The first self-assessment report for all aspects of education and training in the prison was produced in December 2002.

STRENGTHS

- good links between education, training and industries
- strong links with external agencies
- innovative activities to re-engage learners in education and training
- involvement of all staff in self-assessment

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient planning of education and training
- insufficient opportunities for prisoners to gain qualifications
- poor access to education and training for some learners
- inadequate quality assurance procedures

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more awareness of gender issues among learners
- more detailed recording of training and assessment
- better use of feedback from learners
- better use of data for long-term planning

9. There are good communications between all those at Frankland involved in education and training. Most learners benefit from a package of activities suited to their needs which often includes attendance at literacy, numeracy and key skills workshops

linked to work, physical education or workshop activity. Those responsible for the various areas meet the head of regimes regularly, both as a group and individually to ensure these activities are integrated and run smoothly. Daily informal meetings ensure there is minimum disruption for prisoners. Formal meetings are recorded and action monitored. The education manager is also well supported by the manager at New College. Staff have opportunities to visit other prisons to share good practice.

10. Good links with external agencies enrich the education and training on offer to prisoners, and provide experience of different types of work. Examples include a parenting programme run in conjunction with the local health service and contract with charities and commercial enterprises.

11. Frankland has developed some innovative ways of engaging disaffected prisoners in education and training. Many are serving long sentences and some are unlikely to be released. Others have not previously appreciated the benefits education and training can bring. However, nearly all are taking part in education and training and are enthusiastic about and motivated by their learning. The prison uses the education department to re-engage the more challenging prisoners by a carefully designed stepped programme whereby prisoners attend the gym and key skills sessions closely supervised by staff. Every summer the prison holds a four-week summer school during which a wide variety of taster sessions are held. Each lasts a week and examples include Black music, jazz appreciation, first aid training and computing skills. Prisoners may choose a different activity each week. The library has recently involved prisoners in a story sack project. The prisoners choose a children's book, prepare an audio tape of the story, and make a toy and a storage bag for all the items. The sack of items is then sent to their children or grandchildren. The prison also has a writer in residence who works with prisoners to improve their creative writing skills. A recent play was written and performed by prisoners.

12. There is insufficient planning of education and training. Most learners attend courses run by the psychology department but these are not planned into their learning and sentence plans in detail. Prisoners are sometimes moved onto these courses at short notice, sometimes when external examinations are imminent. There are long waiting lists for most education programmes. Some waiting times, particularly for computing courses, are as long as six months. Some individual learning and sentence plans lack detail. There are few measurable targets set. Time for training in workshops is not accounted for.

13. For many prisoners who are working there are no opportunities to gain vocational qualifications from their work. Although many gain moving and handling, food hygiene or key skills qualifications there are no vocational qualifications available to wing cleaners, kitchen staff, or those in production workshops and the light industrial work shops.

Equality of opportunity

14. Equal opportunities in education and training is satisfactory. There are policies and statements on equal opportunities, discrimination and bullying. Staff receive training in equal opportunities, and learners are given information on equal opportunities at induction. The part of the induction programme relating to race relations is led by a prisoner who is a member of Frankland's race relations group. Prisoners from minority ethnic groups currently make up 14 per cent of the prison's population. Only 1 per cent of the staff are from minority ethnic groups, and efforts to recruit more have been unsuccessful. There are opportunities for prisoners to practise a variety of religions, and prison menus cater for cultural and religious needs. Little reference is made at induction to gender or disability. The information on equal opportunities given during induction is not formally reinforced.

15. Frankland has a clear and well-understood complaints procedure for prisoners. Complaints are dealt with thoroughly and sensitively. They are analysed and steps taken to improve provision.

16. Sentence planning meetings and labour boards include representatives of the education department, industries and uniformed staff. Clear records are kept of decisions. Participation in education and training by minority ethnic group and disability is monitored. The education department also monitors retention and achievement rates by ethnic group but not enough use is made of this information in planning.

17. The process to identify those with additional learning needs does not apply to all prisoners. There are no specialist staff to deal with the needs identified and a lack of provision for those with particularly poor literacy and numeracy skills.

Quality assurance

18. Quality assurance of education and training is unsatisfactory. There are no quality assurance systems in the prison to monitor all aspects of training provision. There is too much reliance on monitoring carried out by external agencies. Sharing of good practice in the prison has just begun but as yet has had little impact on provision. Good practice is not recognised sufficiently to ensure continuous improvement.

19. The prison carried out its first prison-wide self-assessment before inspection. The education department had previously carried out its own annual self-assessment. All parts of the prison where there is potential for training and qualifications to be offered, assessed provision. The report was detailed and accurate. It identified strengths and weaknesses. The process was overseen by the recently formed quality assurance committee, which includes representatives from different areas of the prison. No strengths and weaknesses were produced for leadership and management. The prison found the process useful and involved all appropriate staff.

20. The education department has exceeded targets for level 2 achievements but has not met its somewhat unrealistic targets for level 1. Targets for the number of teaching hours provided have almost been met. The education department uses parts of the contracted college's quality assurance framework. A system has recently been introduced to observe teaching. This does not include the observation of elements of the education programme such as induction. The education department collects learners' feedback on courses. The questionnaire it uses is not designed to enable a detailed analysis of provision. There is no system to collect learners' views on workshop training.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

21. Construction training at Frankland is satisfactory. There are currently 12 learners working towards a basic bricklaying skills qualification and 12 learners on a furniture crafts programme at level 2. A further 174 prisoners are receiving training in the furniture production workshops. All learners are expected to achieve any available qualifications within a 12-month period. All instructors hold recognised qualifications in their field of work. A training contract is agreed with each learner after an initial assessment. On entry to the workshops, all learners receive a health and safety induction. All learners have the opportunity to achieve key skills units in addition to vocational qualifications.

STRENGTHS

- good integration of key skills in bricklaying
- good training programmes
- excellent quality of work in production workshops

WEAKNESSES

- limited opportunity for normal location prisoners
- no accreditation of training in furniture production

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better classroom in furniture craft
- better cleaning facilities in assembly shop

22. The quality of work in the production workshops is excellent. Learners work to demanding industrial targets in an environment that reflects the standards of a commercial workshop. They are involved in timber machining, furniture assembly, polishing and upholstery. Most learners are able to reach a level of competence that meets the demands of industry. The high standard of work produced has allowed the prison to secure contracts from both internal and external clients. These include a major American supplier of office furniture. Learners are also able to progress from practical activities to a more advanced role in quality control. Instructors make every effort to help the learners to reach their full potential. There is an excellent working relationship between the instructors and learners.

23. Instructors have developed an effective training programme. There are clear schemes of work and lesson plans. All learners sign a training contract that describes their role in the training process. The training programme introduces learners to practical skills at an early stage. This motivates them to progress quickly to assessment. There is a wide variety of visual and text materials. For learners in furniture craft there is a substantial library of videos, textbooks and woodwork magazines. This helps them to gain background knowledge and plan projects. Projects include making tables, and chairs, and smaller items, such as jewellery boxes, which feature marquetry and other advanced technique. Family members can buy these items. This motivates learners and gives them a sense of achievement. On completion of the bricklaying programme learners are able to continue with further training in wall tiling and plastering. There is no accreditation of this additional training.

24. There is good integration of key skills with vocational programmes. Instructors have worked closely with key skills tutors to develop occupationally specific activity packs. These packs make good use of practical activities that occur within the target qualification. For example, learners record training activities that they have completed. The record is used by the tutor to generate a discussion, which is used as evidence towards achievement of the communications unit. This helps learners to understand the relevance of key skills to their chosen occupation.

25. Although the standard of training in the production workshops is good, there is no opportunity for learners to achieve a qualification. The education team is currently in contact with the relevant awarding body and with New College in an attempt to identify a target qualification.

26. At present the opportunity to work in the furniture workshop is only available to vulnerable prisoners. This limits the training opportunities available to normal location prisoners, who are only able to choose between furniture craft, bricklaying, or art and design.

27. Most workshop resources are good. There is a wide range of tools, machines and equipment. However, the classroom attached to furniture craft workshop is too small. The assembly shop requires additional cleaning facilities.

Good Practice

The key skills tutor agreed to take part in brickwork activities if brickwork learners attended key skills sessions. Two learners have now achieved the key skills qualification.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

28. The provision in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel at Frankland is good. The physical education department plays a key role in the development of recreational and educational programmes. Currently there are 324 prisoners out of 653 using the physical education facilities. The department is responsible for providing manual handling and first aid training during induction. This gives prisoners the knowledge and competences they need to work on the prison's industrial workshops or to use the gymnasium safely. The courses are accredited and prisoners receive certificates for successful completion. The amount of time allocated to educational courses has increased over the past 12 months, as has the range of courses offered. The development of courses in diet and nutrition, stress management, yoga, specific needs and basic treatment of injuries has extended the number of sports-related courses on offer. Prisoners also have the opportunity to follow programmes leading to weightlifting awards and NVQs in sport and recreation. Key and basic skills qualifications are taken within the physical education department. The courses are planned to rotate through the year. Prisoners have to be passed medically fit by a doctor before taking part in any activity or course. At the time of inspection, 16 learners were taking key skills, and 12 were following literacy and numeracy courses. Seven were taking courses in stress management, nine in specific needs, four in manual handling, and eight in sport and nutrition. Two were following an NVQ programme. There are currently eight physical education officers, including one principal officer and one senior officer. These staff provide recreational and educational activities. The facilities include two gymnasiums, a sports hall and a classroom. Currently there are no pitches for outdoor team games.

STRENGTHS

- good retention and achievement rates
- particularly good teamwork
- innovative planning of programmes
- good integration of literacy, numeracy and key skills with vocational programmes

WEAKNESSES

- few opportunities to accredit learners' skills
- poor development of vocational training in catering

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better monitoring and recording of learners' progress

29. The physical education department gives training in literacy and numeracy and key skills in a practical environment. Education staff help with the training and give guidance on assessment. The classroom, gym and sports hall are used to reinforce learning. The classroom in the department is adequately resourced. It provides a range of learning materials and equipment appropriate to the development of key and basic skills. There is a good range of activities to reinforce and practise skills in communication, literacy and numeracy. There is the opportunity to develop further key skills within the physical education curriculum. For example, a group of learners who had completed communication at level 2 progressed to working with others. This aspect of key skills was introduced to them by the involvement in practical activities in the sports hall, working in pairs and teams to solve problems. Learners appreciated the opportunity to further develop their skills and work towards another qualification. In the gym the learners practise a variety of numeracy skills by working on gym equipment. For example, exercise machines are used to develop skills in setting time, recording time and reading information on performance. Learners in some sessions measure heart rate and blood pressure before and after exercise. Other learners have to count repetitions of exercises. Learners are enthusiastic about the sessions they take part in and can describe in detail how the activities help to develop their skills from the practical and theory aspect.

30. Programmes offered in the physical education department are well planned and diverse. The department supports other areas of the prison by delivering courses that learners need to allow them to take part in their programmes. For example, manual handling courses are provided for all learners before they take part in industrial work and before they use equipment in the gymnasium for both recreational and educational activities. A weightlifting leaders' course is taken by some learners. Success in this gives them the skills to help in providing physical training programmes for other learners. First aid training gives learners the skills to recognise and assist with minor injuries. A specific needs programme has successfully been developed to interest older learners. The course promotes health and well-being through physical activities and theory sessions on health and fitness. Learners value this programme. It motivates them to progress to other courses. A stress management course has been developed for learners who find it difficult to attend other programmes. They successfully develop strategies to improve their social and interpersonal skills and their ability to take part in other courses. Programmes in diet and nutrition has been developed at level 1 and 2. The programmes are well planned to meet the needs of different groups of learners. There is a good link between theory and practical activities. Learners on the programmes are knowledgeable about their levels of personal fitness, the impact of diet on health, and the importance of exercise. The co-ordination of the programmes in the physical education department is good. Courses are planned for a year at a time to give as many learners as possible the chance of attending. All learners receive certificates for their achievements in the courses offered. However, there needs to be further development in the recording of individual learners' needs in their learning plan and their individual monitoring of the

progress they are making.

31. There is particularly good teamwork within the physical education department. Staff are enthusiastic, highly motivated and demonstrate commitment to the development of courses and the experience the learner receives. Staff are well organised and their strengths and expertise are used effectively. They have good communication skills and are well respected. Learners praise the support staff give them. There is effective teamwork with education staff in the development and delivery of basic and key skills within the department. They plan well together and demonstrate a good understanding of basic and key skills development in a practical environment. The staff play an active part in the induction processes and link effectively with all parts of the prison in engaging learners in education and training. Staff development records identify their commitment to developing their own personal skills in teaching and learning.

32. The physical education department offered 11 programmes in the period from January 2002 to January 2003. The average rate of achievement for all classes was 93 per cent. Three hundred and twenty-nine qualifications have been achieved by prisoners. Seven out of the 11 programmes had 100 per cent retention and 100 per cent achievement rates. Two programmes in vocational training and key skills numeracy had low retention rates but 100 per cent achievement.

33. The 16 learners who are employed in the prison kitchen have all achieved an essential food hygiene qualification. Prisoners who are working on the wing serveries also completed the same course before taking up their jobs. Vocational training in catering is weak. The department was suspended from offering the NVQ in February 2002. Progress in tackling problems identified in the external verifier's reports has been unsatisfactory. There is insufficient assessment of learners' skills. Staff have not completed all the assessors' training requirements. There is no internal verifier or internal verification processes. Of 16 learners in the prison kitchen, four are unable to complete their NVQ programme and four are waiting to start the programme. Learners who are currently following an NVQ have incomplete portfolios and there is little evidence of work having been assessed during the past year.

34. Learners' skills are not always accredited. Prisoners who work on the wing serveries complete a range of tasks in serving meals to the prisoners and cleaning. These skills are recognised but are not used to gain a qualification. Gym orderlies do not have their work accredited. One of the gym orderlies has been employed for six months in the area. He is soon due for release and wants to pursue similar work in the leisure industry.

Foundation programmes

35. Foundation education and training are satisfactory. There are currently 112 learners on literacy and numeracy programmes. Of these, 59 study literacy and 53 study numeracy. Seven learners are on an ESOL programme. A separate key skills programme comprises 68 learners studying communication, 44 studying application of number, and 29 studying IT. In addition, about 80 learners are engaged in a Life Skills programme with several different modules. In total, about 100 learners are identified as having literacy and numeracy skills below level 1. About 50 have skills at level 1, and the remainder at level 2. Full-time and part-time programmes are provided for learners in the education department and in other locations, such as classrooms on the wings and in rooms adjacent to workshops. All learners receive an induction within a week of arriving at the prison. They are offered an assessment of their skills in literacy and numeracy. This is followed by an interview, and learners are provided with information about the range of programmes on offer. A learning plan is then agreed. There is a strong emphasis on providing opportunities for accreditation. This is available through the Life Skills programme, for English and mathematics, and for literacy and numeracy and key skills.

STRENGTHS

- good retention and achievement rates
- clear progression routes
- good progress made by many learners
- comprehensive arrangements for planning learning and recording progress

WEAKNESSES

- lack of pre-entry level literacy and numeracy provision
- inadequate support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- insufficient diversity of teaching styles
- ineffective sharing of good practice

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- a better foundation curriculum
- more specific short-term goals in individual learning plans
- more thorough course evaluation

36. Lessons are well planned and there are comprehensive arrangements for planning

learning and recording progress. Course paperwork is good, with schemes of work, lesson plans and records of work. Monitoring of learners and their progress is effective. Most learners have individual learning plans, but a few have learning objectives derived from schemes of work. Course files cross-reference learning activities to the relevant sections of the core curriculum or relevant syllabus. Learners are involved in the setting of learning goals and understand the process and its purpose. They have progress reviews with a tutor every six weeks, when they update individual learning plans. The short-term goals in many learning plans are not specific enough to help teachers measure learning gains and prioritise future work.

37. Teaching across foundation programmes is of a variable standard. Ten lessons were observed during the inspection. Three were good or better, six were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Learners appreciate their educational experiences and the learning opportunities. Most of the lessons observed were organised as individual tuition. In the better lessons, teachers engaged learners and made good use of question and answer techniques. They made frequent checks on learning and provided helpful feedback to learners. The less effective lessons failed to challenge learners. The development of learners' portfolios was inconsistent. Teachers placed too much reliance on printed learning materials. Weaknesses in teaching and learning were not identified in the self-assessment report. In a few lessons, purposeful learning activity finished some time before the scheduled end of the lesson. Overall, there was insufficient diversity of teaching and learning styles.

38. As the department's self-assessment indicates, retention and achievement rates are generally good. Retention rates for basic skills and key skills during the past year ranged from 81 per cent to 100 per cent; most were over 90 per cent. The retention rate for the Life Skills programme was 74 per cent. About 85 per cent of literacy and numeracy learners achieve their learning goals. Sixty-nine per cent achieve a qualification. In key skills, pass rates for the tests were 48 per cent in IT, 69 per cent in communication and 82 per cent in application of number. Fewer learners gained key skills qualifications in 2002 than in the previous year. On the Life Skills programme, almost all learners achieved at least one unit and most learners achieved several. Learners make good progress on foundation programmes. Standards of attainment are often high. There are clear progression routes for learners from entry level to level 2, and a good range of accreditation is available to recognise learners' achievements. Learners report that they value the opportunity to gain qualifications.

39. Learners are all offered the opportunity to have their literacy and numeracy skills assessed. The assessment materials are up to date, understood by staff and used appropriately. During 2002, 170 learners underwent induction and 144 received an initial assessment. Of these, 30 per cent had numeracy skills below level 1 and 58 per cent were below level 1 in literacy. Five per cent of learners spoke English as an additional language. Learners receive feedback on their performance and are offered places on literacy and numeracy courses. Staff have not yet been trained to carry out diagnostic assessments of learners' needs. Induction is usually carried out within a week of arrival. It includes a description of the range of educational opportunities and an

interview during which learners' may discuss their needs and aspirations.

40. Support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inadequate. Not all learners receiving the basic skills initial assessment have access to dyslexia screening. This is available only to newly sentenced prisoners. During the past two years, 36 learners have been screened in this way. Only one has been identified as having dyslexia during that time. There is no one within the education department trained to administer dyslexia screening, or to provide appropriate support for learners with any of the common learning disabilities. This weakness is acknowledged in the self-assessment report, and training is planned for later this year. Peer volunteers provide some individual support in classes. About 15 learners have been trained as volunteers.

41. There are regular meetings of managers with teachers to discuss quality, and all are encouraged to attend. Feedback is collected from learners and there is an established course review procedure. Staff have detailed and reliable information about learners' performance but do not use it effectively to improve standards. Course evaluation is not thorough enough. The procedure for observing teaching and learning has been introduced this year. Examples of good practice are not shared effectively.

42. There is no pre-entry literacy and numeracy provision. Learners identified as having very low levels of literacy and numeracy are not offered an appropriate curriculum. Such learners are placed in classes where they follow the entry-level core curriculum. Most classes have learners with widely differing needs and this impedes the progress of some. Although all classes are timetabled for the same times, there is a mixture of learners working from entry level 3 to entry level 1, and a few learners working at levels 1 and 2. There is insufficient flexibility. For example, learners have to wait to join classes that prepare them for examinations. These weaknesses were not identified in the self-assessment report.

Good Practice

On entry to the prison, a learner was assessed as being below level 1 in literacy. He followed a basic skills course and then progressed to English and mathematics courses at level 1 and then level 2. He also took a creative writing course and had contact with the prison's writer-in-residence. He began to write fiction and poetry. He also wrote a play and had it performed in the prison. He went on to win a prize from a local newspaper for his writing. He is now hoping to have some of his work published.