

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP Rye Hill

20 June 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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learn**direct 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.

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP Rye Hill

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Rye Hill is an adult category B training prison for men, which is situated close to the town of Rugby, Warwickshire. Opened in January 2001, it is a modern prison with a certified normal accommodation of 600 and an occupational capacity of 664. Currently, there are 659 prisoners, of whom 120 are serving life sentences. Most other prisoners have at least four years of their sentences to serve. The number of prisoners includes approximately 25 per cent of vulnerable prisoners, who have their own vocational training and educational facilities. The prison population consists of 35 per cent minority ethnic prisoners and 25 per cent foreign nationals.

2. The education department offers full- and part-time courses that focus on literacy and numeracy, social and life skills, and languages. A variety of other subjects are offered, including information and communications technology (ICT) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Some prisoners are taking university and other distance-learning degree courses. The prison's production workshops offer basic employment and teach a range of skills. Other employment opportunities exist for prisoners in horticulture and gardening, industrial cleaning, painting and decorating, and cooking. These areas do not formally accredit the training that takes place, although two prisoners working in the kitchen are working towards a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 1 in food preparation and cooking. The prison's physical education department offers recreational activities, but does not offer accredited training courses.

3. The prison's senior management team is led by a director, who has overall responsibility for the prison and was appointed six months ago. The head of regimes is responsible for vocational training, education and workshops. The education department is subcontracted to a college of further education and the day-to-day management is operated by an education manager. There are a further five full-time staff in the education department with all other staff employed part time or on short-term contracts. Some tutoring is provided by prisoners who are selected to support learners, either in groups or individually. The prison provides education for 274 learners. Staff meet each week to review the learners' progress and to discuss any problems. The education manager holds meetings every three months with the head of regimes to review the education contract.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

4. There are 41 learners on ICT training programmes in the education department and on the vulnerable prisoner units (VPU), and 22 learners who are training and working in the media centre. Learners in the education department work towards an entry-level certificate in word processing or a basic computer literacy qualification. There are two classrooms in the education department dedicated to computer training. The number of

hours each week that the learners spend in education varies according to their individual needs. Learners in the media centre are employed by a specialist subcontracted company and work in the media centre for 35 hours each week. The company provides a website design, maintenance and usability service to external clients.

Foundation programmes

5. The education department provides a broad range of foundation programmes. There is training in literacy, numeracy, ESOL, business start-up, social and life skills, and open learning for distance-learning degree courses. There are also courses in French, German, art and cookery. There are 187 full- and part-time learners across the range of foundation programmes. A further 24 learners are taking part in ESOL courses. As well as the head of education, there are six full-time tutors. There is a long-standing vacancy for the post of basic skills co-ordinator. There are six peer mentors working to support the delivery of foundation programmes. Learning takes place in the main education centre for most learners. There is a separate education centre and outreach support for vulnerable prisoners. There is also a separate room for students following university and other distance-learning courses. Learners following these courses are placed on one unit so that they have access to the correct level of support. On arrival at the prison, prisoners take part in a week-long induction programme where they are informed of the educational programmes on offer as well as receiving an initial assessment. During this time they can make an application to take part in an educational programme.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	21
Number of learner interviews	50
Number of staff interviews	19
Number of subcontractor interviews	4

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. HMP Rye Hill's leadership and management are satisfactory, as is its provision for equal opportunities. The arrangements for quality assurance are unsatisfactory. The quality of learning in ICT is good and the quality of learning on foundation programmes is satisfactory.

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

7. **Achievements on all education programmes are good.** Over 80 per cent of learners starting courses complete and gain a qualification. Prisoners who learn to do industrial

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cleaning in the kitchens and facilities department are given an in-house certificate, although this is not accredited with a national award. The facilities department provides a good range of employment opportunities in painting and decorating and maintenance, but provides insufficient accreditation of the skills that the learners gain. There is no vocational training in the sports department. This area is only used for recreational purposes. The prison has plans to develop this area for vocational training.

8. **Retention rates are good.** In ICT, the retention rate is exceptionally high, with over 80 per cent of those who started between 2002-03 still in training. Those learners who leave have either completed their training or are transferred to other prisons. Some learners were leaving to go into employment due the high wages that they could earn. Prisoners are now given the opportunity to work in employment and study part time, which has helped prevent learners leaving training programmes early. Employed prisoners earn more than prisoners opting for education. Attendance for education classes is good.

9. **In education programmes, learners gain good practical skills and background knowledge.** There is a wide range of practical skills taught in workshops and other areas of the prison, such as horticulture, catering, and painting and decorating. These areas allow prisoners the opportunity to develop employability skills, although they do not offer nationally accredited qualifications.

Quality of education and training

10. **All learning sessions observed were good or better.** Peer tutors provide learners with good support. Learners respond to them well and appreciate the support they get from them and the education staff. Many learners receive particularly good learning support from their peer tutors.

11. **The quality of work produced by learners is good.** Learners in ICT use technology creatively to develop projects, some of which are technically complex. All learners make good progress relative to their previous attainment. Learners in ICT develop additional skills, such as team-building, communications, and teamworking. The teaching and learning improves the learners' self-esteem considerably. However, there are few qualifications available to enable formal recognition of learners' skills and no qualifications at level 3 or above.

12. **Access to the library is good and all prisoners have time allowed to go to the library.** The range of books for foreign nationals is good, although there are insufficient specialist learning materials for those working towards distance-learning degree courses.

Leadership and management

13. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is good operational management in education and training which leads to good teaching, learning and achievement. Resources are well managed but funds are not sufficient to support adequate staff and curriculum development. Although there is a broad range of vocational skills where training is to a high standard, there is no accreditation of training

other than in catering. This impacts on resettlement opportunities.

14. In March 2003, the prison carried out its first and most recent self-assessment of education and training. The process involved all departments providing learning and skills training, including education, catering, facilities, sports and physical education, and workshops and industries. The self-assessment report was comprehensive and self-critical in its approach. The outcome was an honest assessment of the quality of education and training in the prison, although a number of strengths were overlooked or understated. There is good management awareness of the changes needed to bring about improvements and there are clear action plans for departments and the prison.

15. **The management of literacy, numeracy and ESOL is poor, and there is no basic skills co-ordinator.** The tutors do not receive initial assessment data. There is little structured support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning outside of the education department. The prison does not record retention data for these learners or test them for dyslexia.

16. **Quality assurance is unsatisfactory.** There is no overall quality assurance framework, although the education department does have its own clearly written quality assurance procedures. The prison does not take sufficient notes of learners' views. There have not been any observations of teaching and learning within the past year. Some quality assurance issues acknowledged over a year ago have not been rectified.

17. Assessment and verification within the education department are satisfactory. Internal verification in vocational training is good, although external verification outcomes have not been shared with assessors.

18. **There is a strong focus on the promotion of equality of opportunity in the prison.** Posters are displayed throughout the education department and the training facilities, and equality of opportunity is reinforced at induction. There is good use of data, and there is a fair allocation of education opportunities when a prisoner applies. Jobs in the workshop areas are allocated fairly, with good opportunities for prisoners to progress from the simpler activities and tasks to the more complex.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good operational management of education and training
- wide range of vocational skills training
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- constructive and critical self-assessment process

Weaknesses

- inadequate accreditation of training
- poor management of literacy, numeracy and ESOL
- insufficient staff development
- unsatisfactory quality assurance of teaching and learning

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- good retention and achievement rates
- excellent training in the media workshop
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient resources for some learners
- inadequate range of qualifications and opportunities to progress to further education and training

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good attainment and achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- good range of foundation programmes

Weaknesses

- insufficient literacy, numeracy and language support for learners in units and workshops
- incomplete use of individual learning plans
- inadequate progression routes beyond level 2

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HMP RYE HILL:

- good, supportive staff
- the opportunity to learn new skills
- the access to computers
- it improves their self-esteem and confidence
- the good support from peer tutors and being taught by other learners
- the good, safe environment
- the opportunity to work in teams
- the ability to learn at a steady pace

WHAT LEARNERS THINK HMP RYE HILL COULD IMPROVE:

- the pay for education
- the ICT facilities in the VPU
- more education opportunities
- the range of library books
- more teaching aids
- more accreditation and certification of skills

KEY CHALLENGES FOR HMP RYE HILL:

- developing a coherent and inclusive quality assurance strategy and procedures
- gaining accreditation for its good range of vocational training
- ensuring support for literacy, numeracy and language training is given across the prison's education and training provision
- increasing the ICT resources in some areas
- developing and providing a range of training programmes and courses beyond NVQ at level 2
- training staff to deliver the improvements needed

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

19. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good operational management of education and training
- wide range of vocational skills training
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- constructive and critical self-assessment process

Weaknesses

- inadequate accreditation of training
- poor management of literacy, numeracy and ESOL
- insufficient staff development
- unsatisfactory quality assurance of teaching and learning

20. The education department, vocational training areas and workshops are well managed. The prison provides a good range of learning opportunities at entry level, level 1 and level 2, and distance-learning degree courses. A responsive, flexible approach to group and individual timetabling enables flexible access to learning. The prison uses its resources to give good value for money, with particularly effective staff management. Regular staff meetings support good communications within the education department. With the support of the staff in the education department, the learners produce an excellent quarterly magazine for the prisoners. It contains sections on 'Ask the Management', where the director answers prisoners' questions, and there is also a section which celebrates the learners' successes. Operational targets have been met for basic and key skills teaching, work skills and contract efficiency. The facilities department is good and well managed. Vocational training in the kitchen, gardens and workshops is well managed. Learners are engaged and committed to their tasks, with effective time management which maximises their learning opportunities.

21. Prisoners are able to access a wide range of vocational skills training. The prison has a technologically advanced media workshop and provides a good range of manufacturing opportunities, including electrical component assembly and industrial sewing. It also provides vocational skills training in catering, horticulture, painting and decorating, and industrial cleaning. However, there is no vocational training in sports

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and leisure, although the prison has good facilities which are widely used for recreation. All of the training in the prison is good and is particularly good in media, electrical component assembly, catering and horticulture. The range of skills which can be learnt in painting and decorating is restricted by the lack of practical resources.

22. The only accredited training is in catering, where two learners are working towards NVQs. However, one learner is an experienced and qualified chef and is completing his assessor's award in order to help assess other learners. This learner is involved in the training and induction of new prisoners into the kitchen. Although skills training is good throughout the prison, and very good in a number of vocational areas, learners are not following accredited courses, despite most of them working to a standard which is sufficient to achieve accreditation.

23. The management of literacy, numeracy and ESOL is poor, and there is no basic skills co-ordinator. The tutors do not receive initial assessment data and there is little structured support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning outside of the education department. The recent introduction of peer tutors to support learning of literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills on the prison's wings is part of a wider strategy to rectify this weakness. The prison does not record retention data for these learners. There are well-developed plans to locate classrooms in vocational workshops to deliver literacy, numeracy and key skills but, at present, the only provision is within the workshop for vulnerable prisoners. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between the vocational areas or between the education department and the workshops.

24. Staff development is insufficient in education and vocational training. In education, part-time staff carry out over 80 per cent of the teaching, but most of them have little previous teaching experience. There is no-one qualified to test learners for dyslexia, and only one teacher has a qualification to support ESOL teaching. There is no planned staff development programme to remedy this. Teaching staff are enthusiastic and hardworking. Although vocational tutors are skilled in their own specialism and in instruction techniques, no members of staff are qualified to assess for NVQs. Two catering staff members are awaiting final verification for their assessor's awards. The lack of appropriately qualified members of staff in vocational areas prevents the introduction of accredited courses.

Equality of opportunity

25. The prison has detailed equality of opportunity and race relations policies and procedures, which include education and regular staff training. However, staff attendance at the training events is unsatisfactory due to insufficient cover to release prison staff. The subcontractor also has an equality of opportunity policy and procedures. The race relations group, which is chaired by the prison director, administers equality of opportunity and meets regularly every month.

26. During their induction, the prison provides the prisoners with adequate information on equality of opportunity. The material in the library reflects the diversity of the prison's population, but there are insufficient specialist books and tapes to meet the needs of all

of the prisoners. All prisoners receive an appropriate assessment of their basic skills during induction, which the education department administers. The results of these tests do not follow the prisoners to the workshops or education, and staff are unaware of their additional learning needs. A recent initiative has allowed prisoners in the workshops to attend education, on a part-time basis to receive additional support. Another good initiative is the provision of literacy and numeracy support in the workshop for vulnerable prisoners. Workshop activities offer higher pay than education and there is insufficient incentive for prisoners to choose education.

27. There is a strong focus on the promotion of equality of opportunity in the prison. There is a good range of equal opportunities posters displayed throughout the prison, and there is a prisoner's representative on the race relations committee. Prison staff focus very strongly on the prevention of bullying and the prisoner's safety. There is good use of equal opportunities data, which the race relations group analyses. However, the prison does not collect data to monitor the learners' achievements by ethnicity. Staff ensure that there is a fair allocation of jobs and progression from the simpler activities to the more complex in the workshops. Prisoners find the staff helpful and feel safe. The prison caters for a variety of dietary needs adequately.

Quality assurance

28. There is no overall quality assurance manual for education and training, although the education department does have its own clearly written procedures. The operational handbook in the education department includes a comprehensive annual checklist of quality assurance tasks to carry out, but this had not been implemented for the past year. A quality improvement group has been formed recently to remedy a range of quality assurance issues, but this has not yet made an impact. There is no regular observation of teaching and learning in either education or vocational training. While there are areas of good practice in quality assurance, for example in media training, this is not shared.

29. The prison carried out its first self-assessment of education and training in March 2003. The process fully involved all departments providing learning and skills training. Comprehensive and self-critical in its approach, the outcome was a realistic assessment of the quality of education and training in the prison, although a number of strengths were either overlooked or understated. There is good management awareness of the changes needed to bring about improvements and there are action plans for departments and the prison. However, there is inadequate monitoring of progress against the action plans at both strategic and operational levels. For example, a standards audit report in May 2002 indicated the need to introduce literacy, numeracy and language support into physical education. This support is not yet in place. The prison takes insufficient notice of learners' views.

30. Overall, assessment and verification within the education department is satisfactory. There is thorough assessment on ICT, social and life skills, and business start-up courses, with very good monitoring of learners' achievement. Feedback to learners is good. In literacy and numeracy assessment is inconsistent. Internal verification in catering is

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satisfactory, although the external verification outcomes had not been shared with the delivery team.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

31. Education and training on ICT programmes are good.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- good retention and achievement rates
- excellent training in the media workshop
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient resources for some learners
- inadequate range of qualifications and opportunities to progress to further education and training

Achievement and standards

32. Learners acquire exceptionally good skills and knowledge relative to their previous levels of knowledge of information technology. Many learners carry out self-devised projects which are challenging and require them to develop their ability to carry out complex research, work in a teams, solve problems and communicate effectively. Staff support these initiatives and encourage the learners to become peer mentors. One group of learners has worked with other learners in mathematics and English to develop a wide range of online learning material linked to the national curriculum. Learners are encouraged to keep a portfolio of their work, and some are able to have their work copied to CD-ROMs.

33. Attendance is very good. Learners arrive punctually and work diligently. Achievement of qualifications is high. Over the past year, over 80 per cent of learners who started have passed their course. Of 46 learners who started working towards a qualification in the past year, 41 are still in training and have achieved one or more modules towards certification. Five have completed their qualification and left the programme. However, on completion of a level 2 qualification learners are unable to achieve higher-level awards, or progress to more specialised areas of learning linked to ICT. Although many learners demonstrate the attainment of key skills often at level 3 and above, there is no facility to have these skills formally assessed or certificated. There are no formal qualifications available to learners in the media centre.

Quality of education and training

34. Staff and peer group tutors in the media centre challenge and inspire the learners to reach their full potential. Learners are stimulated by the professional working environment which managers have created. They value the trust placed in them, which allows them direct telephone and internet contact with external clients, and they work within the strict guidelines laid down by the prison. There is a highly structured 16-week online learning induction. During induction the learners are mentored, supported by other learners, and have their knowledge tested at regular intervals. In addition, learners are expected to complete a range of additional learning modules. Progress is monitored throughout and constructive feedback given on weaknesses. Most learners spend more than the required number of hours in the media centre because of the highly stimulating environment, learning opportunities, and their enthusiasm for the work. Learning and personal development opportunities are available throughout the learners' time in the media centre. Learners studying ICT in the education department are supported very effectively by staff and peer mentors who provide good individual coaching. One lesson was observed and graded as very good. Staff mark assignments regularly and give feedback to the learners. There are regular opportunities for learners to take module examinations. Teaching strategies and learning opportunities are designed to meet individual learners' needs. All staff are experienced and qualified.

35. In the media training centre, the resources are of a good industry standard. The very latest technology is employed, including a direct high-speed internet link and video-conferencing. Staff are highly experienced and qualified with an in-depth knowledge of the industry. The accommodation is of an exceptionally good standard and promotes learning and development. There are two ICT training rooms managed by the education department, one of which is in the main education department and one is in the vulnerable prisoners' education wing. There are too few staff and computers available to meet the demand for ICT training. Some classes in the VPU are staffed by tutors who are not specialists in ICT or left to peer mentors to manage. There are insufficient books, CD-ROMs and computer-based training materials. Most of the teaching relies on the use of paper-based material devised by staff. Staff are often unable to participate fully in staff training opportunities.

36. Assessment is satisfactory. All learners in the education department receive an initial assessment of their learning needs. A verbal assessment of their ICT skills is carried out by a tutor and learners are then advised on an appropriate course of training. Staff monitor learners' progress and mark their work quickly and fairly. Tutors have a good knowledge of individual learners' progress and, although learners are allowed to progress at their own pace, they are encouraged to achieve in realistic timescales. The initial assessment of learners' suitability to join media training is professional, thorough and planned meticulously. Selection is fair and is based on merit. Following an initial interview, learners have to research a topic and make a presentation to a selection panel, which provides an initial assessment of skills and learning needs. A final interview confirms the learners' selection. The media training company receives applications from

prisoners in prisons throughout the country. Learners' progress is monitored thoroughly by a sophisticated monitoring programme and there is regular feedback to learners on their progress.

37. There are only two qualifications available to learners in ICT. One is a basic introduction to word processing and the other is a basic computer literacy course, which has a number of modules that can be certificated separately. The topics covered are word processing, spreadsheets, databases, graphs, and desktop-publishing. There are no other qualifications available. Although the facilities in education and the opportunities in media allow the learners to reach high levels of competency in ICT, they are unable to gain qualifications to confirm their learning.

38. Support for learners is good. Most training takes place individually and is planned to ensure that opportunities for learning fit in with the learners' other activities. Many learners have had no formal education for many years and staff are aware of their particular needs. They are encouraged to learn at their own pace and given encouragement when tasks are completed. All of the learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs are assessed at the start of training. However, this information is not passed on to tutors.

Leadership and management

39. The media centre is exceptionally well managed, with excellent quality assurance systems. Performance is monitored closely across a wide range of activity. Feedback from learners leads to ongoing improvements to their training, learning and personal development. The education department manages ICT training well, although there are too few staff with ICT qualifications to cover all lessons.

Foundation programmes

40. Education and training on foundation programmes are satisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good attainment and achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- good range of foundation programmes

Weaknesses

- insufficient literacy, numeracy and language support for learners in units and workshops
- incomplete use of individual learning plans
- inadequate progression routes beyond level 2

Achievement and standards

41. Achievement on the recently introduced social and life skills programme is good, with nearly all learners starting the course achieving the accredited outcomes. The recently introduced ESOL programme has not yet been accredited. On the business start-up course, 80 per cent of those who start the course gain partial or full accreditation. Many learners gain accreditation in literacy, numeracy and language at entry level as well as at levels 1 and 2. However, the prison does not keep sufficiently thorough data to establish reliable achievement rates for those learners who start the programme, those who stay on the course, and those who achieve part or all of their intended outcomes.

42. Two peer mentors work effectively on one of the prison's wings to support learners who had previously considered learning irrelevant to them. This includes some more mature learners and those with health problems who are achieving marked success in literacy and numeracy for the first time in their lives. This outreach facility is not available on the other seven units. Learners receive regular support from the peer mentors, particularly in relation to monitoring progress and offering encouragement. The peer mentors receive insufficient support and supervision from trained and experienced basic skills tutors.

43. Punctuality and attendance at classes are good. The attainment of many learners is good. The small outreach programme is particularly successful in engaging learners and encouraging them to commit to completing a course of study. One learner in his seventies, who originally considered himself to be too old for learning, has recently gained a level 2 qualification in numeracy. There are many articulate learners taking part in foundation programmes. For example, during a social and life skills programme

looking at various behaviour types, learners spoke with clarity and perception about their own experiences and showed respect when listening to the views of others who came from different traditions and backgrounds.

Quality of education and training

44. Teaching on foundation programmes is good or better. For those lessons observed, one was graded as very good, six were graded good and two were graded as satisfactory. Planning for the business start-up course and on the social and life skills course is very good. Course and lesson-planning account for the wide variety of individual needs and interests. The training programmes meet the needs of more able learners effectively, although staff make no attempt to identify the learners' preferred learning styles.

45. The prison offers a good range of programmes at foundation level. These courses include literacy, numeracy, ESOL and parent craft, all of which are well planned and well structured.

46. The education department is in new accommodation but the main department has relatively small rooms and narrow corridors. Few examples of learners' writing or other achievements, such as art and pottery, are displayed either within the department or elsewhere in the prison.

47. There are insufficient basic skills tutors to meet the number of learners with identified literacy, numeracy and language needs. Over 63 per cent of prisoners have identified needs in these areas. Although there is a very short waiting time for learners to get access to education programmes, there is insufficient literacy, numeracy and language support on most of the units and within the vocational training areas. There are six peer mentors, most of whom have received accredited training in teaching initial literacy, numeracy and language skills. These peer mentors are used effectively to provide support to tutors or provide outreach training. Although outreach training is only carried out at the moment in one of the units.

48. Tutors create a wide range of good quality resources to support the delivery of their curriculum area. In numeracy, one peer mentor has worked with the specialist tutor to create clearly cross-referenced resource materials to support the delivery of the new adult numeracy core curriculum. There is a good range of relevant materials available to support learning.

49. The initial assessment procedure involves learners taking the literacy, numeracy and language skills assessment and having an interview with the education manager. The prison effectively records and monitors the start and completion of learning activities. The provision of individual learning plans is relatively recent but not yet implemented for all learners. Individual learning plans are not sufficiently detailed and lack short-term targets. Learners' portfolios of evidence are good, although the work is not always

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marked clearly.

50. Learners were positive about the benefits of the support they receive. This is particularly so on the one unit where outreach support for literacy, numeracy and language skills was available. Learners who may otherwise feel embarrassed about coming to the education centre are able to relate with confidence to the peer mentors. One long-serving prisoner with considerable experience of other regimes was engaging in a learning programme for the first time in his life. Individual and small groups of learners regularly occupy some of the communal space and remain successfully focused on their learning for long periods of time. The prison appoints peer mentors after the staff identify them as being appropriate. The role carries a small weekly salary supplement. Peer mentors working on the unit do not receive good supervision to ensure that any difficulties can be dealt with easily. There is no procedure for formally monitoring the quality of their work.

51. There are few opportunities for learners to progress to courses beyond level 2. The department understands the need to provide clear routes by which learners could progress to higher-level and more challenging courses and has plans to do this.

Leadership and management

52. The education department is well managed, and staff work effectively with a difficult client group. Although the self-assessment report identifies the lack of quality assurance of teaching as a weakness, there is no regular observation of teaching and learning. There is a long-standing vacancy for a full-time basic skills co-ordinator, but no interim measures have been established.