

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HMP Cookham Wood**

**10 October 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 **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.

# INSPECTION REPORT

## HMP Cookham Wood

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Cookham Wood (the prison) is a closed prison for women. It is situated a few miles to the south of Rochester in Kent and was built in the 1970s. There are 134 prisoners at the prison, which has an operating capacity of 150. Thirty of the prisoners are young offenders. The prison has 120 single cells, some of which have been modified to accommodate two prisoners. Until the summer of 2002, the prison held a significant number of foreign national prisoners and no young offenders. At that time, a decision was made to move most of the foreign national prisoners to other prisons and to bring young offenders into the prison. All the women either work or attend education. Many work part time and attend education part time.

2. The responsibilities of the governor for resettlement include management of the education department contract, the library contract, vocational training, the gymnasium, the kitchen and the workshops throughout the prison. He is assisted by a senior officer whose main responsibility is the organisation of work opportunities and the allocation of prisoners to them.

3. The prison's education department is run by a college of further education which also runs the education departments in a number of other prisons. The department is managed by the education manager who is supported by eight full-time members of staff, three permanent part-time teachers and up to eight sessional part-time members of staff. Education is voluntary and is only offered part time. The education department offers courses in numeracy, literacy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), art, and information and communications technology (ICT). A number of other courses are run occasionally. The library is provided by a local authority library service and has one part-time librarian. There is some support for learners studying for a degree through distance learning.

4. The prison has a writer in residence who runs a range of workshops in, for example, creative writing, drama and singing. An external theatre company also gives occasional drama workshops.

5. Prisoners are employed in the tailoring and contract services workshops, or in the cleaning, gardening and kitchen work parties. Vocational training in these areas is a recent development, and few learners are involved. The prison has recently recruited a qualified gymnasium instructor having been without one for some months. The emphasis is currently on recreational use of the gymnasium and there is no training in this area.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Information & communications technology

6. All ICT courses offered in the prison lead to nationally recognised qualifications at

either introductory or intermediate level. Learners who choose to do a computer course all start on the same introductory qualification, unless they have already completed it at another prison. The introductory course teaches learners the basics of word processing, spreadsheets, databases and graphics. An intermediate course is available for those who have completed the introductory course, and covers the same applications. There are also short courses on text and word processing. Trainers from the college are all trained and qualified, although none has a basic skills qualification. Two of the staff members are on the permanent staff of the college, and a third is on a sessional contract. Learners work through the programmes at their own pace. Each module is certificated separately, so if learners are moved before they complete the course, they should be able to continue it elsewhere. Because of the pressure on places, each learner is rationed to two sessions a week. There are 45 learners following computer courses, of whom 13 are working towards intermediate level qualifications.

### **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

7. There are five learners working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 1 in food preparation and cooking. Ten staff are employed in the prison's catering department, which provides meals for the prison and a neighbouring prison. Five staff hold assessors' qualifications and three are involved in the prison's NVQ programme. An outside consultant is used for internal verification. Learners attend training and background knowledge sessions on two nights a week. The assessments are carried out in the kitchen at the prison. Staff in this kitchen prepare and serve lunch, and serve the evening meal. The evening meal is delivered, ready prepared and cooked by the neighbouring prison. No learners are working towards qualifications in physical education (PE). There is only one PE instructor at the prison.

### **Visual & performing arts & media**

8. There are 42 learners taking art courses. Most are working towards formal qualifications. These range from entry level to advanced courses. There are courses in silk painting, decoupage, batik, and card-making and packaging, as well as a range of courses leading to general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs).

### **Foundation programmes**

9. There are 68 part-time learners on foundation programmes. The education department provides a range of programmes for literacy and numeracy, and social and life skills including citizenship and preparation for work. All prisoners have an induction to the education department and complete an initial assessment before joining their course. All courses are externally accredited. Some learners receive numeracy, literacy and key skills support in the workshops.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	17
Number of learner interviews	29
Number of staff interviews	17
Number of subcontractor interviews	9
Number of partner/external agency interviews	2

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

10. The quality of the provision is inadequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the leadership and management of education and training at the prison are unsatisfactory. Its equal opportunities arrangements are unsatisfactory and quality assurance is very weak. Training is unsatisfactory in ICT, hospitality and sport. However, the training in art is good, and in foundation subjects it is satisfactory.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

11. **In ICT, most learners who stay to the end of the course successfully achieve their qualification.** In 2002-03, 84 per cent of learners who were entered for the introductory examination, and 56 per cent of those entered for the intermediate qualification, achieved their awards. The ICT course is focused on examinations and does not give learners a broad enough knowledge of the software they are using. The standard of work is not satisfactory. **Learners receive too much help from teachers and often do not work through problems themselves.**

12. Five learners are taking NVQs in food preparation while they work in the prison's kitchens. These qualifications have been available at the prison since June 2003. The learners are enthusiastic, working to a satisfactory standard and are making appropriate progress. Seventy-five per cent of all prisoners who work in the kitchens have achieved an introductory certificate in food hygiene. There is currently no training available in sport, the gymnasium having been closed for a number of months before the recent recruitment of a PE specialist.

13. **Standards of learning on art and design courses are generally very high,** producing very good pass rates at both entry and GCSE level. Seventy-five per cent of those who took GCSE art in 2002-03 achieved passes at grade C or above. Fifteen per cent gained an A\* grade.

14. Overall, foundation learners produce satisfactory work. Achievement rates in the level 1 numeracy and literacy classes are satisfactory. Seventy per cent of learners who

were entered for the numeracy qualification were successful as were 74 per cent of learners entered for the literacy qualification. The success rate for level 2 literacy is satisfactory at 72 per cent. However, the success rate for numeracy at this level is poor at 55 per cent. Progress for ESOL learners is slow although pass rates are satisfactory.

### Quality of education and training

#### 15. **ICT lessons are planned carefully and learners have clear goals for each lesson.**

There is a generous ratio of staff to learners in most ICT lessons. Resources are good. Some prisoners work in the ICT scanning workshop on equipment provided by a commercial client. Learners in this area can receive a qualification from the manufacturer of the equipment. There are few links between the ICT training and learners' work. **Assessment in ICT is not thorough enough**, particularly when learners are carrying out examination work. There is a narrow choice of qualifications. Learners progress from an introductory course in ICT to a similar course at intermediate level. **There is no substantial course at a higher level.** Initial assessment provides information about learners' numeracy and literacy needs but these are not met within the ICT courses. In other ways, however, learners are well supported by teachers.

16. A significant proportion of learners working in the prison's kitchens choose to take part in the NVQ training which has recently been introduced. They are making good progress. **Assessment-planning for catering learners is poor.** There are no individual learning plans and learners have little prior warning of an assessment. Record-keeping for these learners is inadequate and internal verification is poor. However, **there is very good support for catering learners**, with one assessor providing an evening class twice each week. At present there is no planned training taking place in physical education.

17. **In art and design lessons, the teaching is good and learners develop good exploration and experimentation skills.** They develop the confidence to take risks, and explore new boundaries in their work and reflect on the results. Lessons have a range of learners at different levels and are well planned and managed by the teacher. There are good resources which are used imaginatively by teachers. Learners benefit from the wide range of different art and design activities which are available. Individual learning plans are used, but although learners' progress is reviewed against these plans it is not recorded in sufficient detail.

#### 18. **Foundation learners benefit from good individual support from their teachers.**

Group sizes are small and those who are experiencing difficulties receive good advice and guidance. There is good use of ICT to support learning. There are seven up-to-date computers which are used in the learning of literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Resources for the teaching of social and life skills are insufficient, being limited to a small number of paper-based resources which have been developed by the teacher. **There are not enough ESOL classes to meet the needs of the current prison population.** Learners only attend for one session each week, and some ESOL classes have learners at different levels of ability.

## Leadership and management

19. **The prison has made good use of external organisations to provide additional programmes for prisoners.** There is a writer in residence project, and visits from a drama company. Both of these increase learners' self-confidence and self-esteem.

20. The prison has recently taken action to deal with weaknesses it had identified. The actions include meetings to link education, training and work to avoid duplication and ensure that the three areas work together. Where no formal accredited training is available, the prison has started to identify possible qualifications to meet the needs of the learners. A quality improvement group has been set up. All these actions are very recent and it is too early to judge their effectiveness.

21. **Strategic-planning of education and training in the prison is weak.** There is no coherent plan for all the work, education and training which takes place. There is no link to the strategic objectives of either the prison or the education subcontractors. There is no analysis of the training needs of the prison's current population, and in some areas, there is insufficient provision to meet the needs of prisoners.

22. **Communication is poor.** The head of resettlement meets the education contractor infrequently and has no scheduled meetings with the staff responsible for vocational training. The senior management of the prison meets regularly, but rarely discuss education and training. However, there is good day-to-day communication about learners between the education subcontractor and prison staff.

23. **There are poor health and safety practices in the workshop.** Prisoners wear unsuitable footwear, and jewellery which could get caught in machinery.

24. **The formal complaints procedure is ineffective.** Some complaints take up to nine months to be dealt with, although the response time has recently improved dramatically. The prison has been without a race relations officer for some time and race relations policies in the prison have not had enough direction. Neither prisoners nor staff are clear about how prisoners are allocated to education or work. There are waiting lists for most areas but there is no policy or procedure to manage these.

25. There are insufficient processes to assure the quality of the provision. There are few written procedures to ensure consistency of approach by staff. There is no monitoring of retention and achievement rates, and the rates are not used to set targets. There is little monitoring of the quality of the education subcontractor's provision. The self-assessment process included all staff but failed to identify many of the weaknesses identified by inspectors.



*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- good use of external organisations to provide additional programmes
- good recent management actions to remedy identified weaknesses

### **Weaknesses**

- weak strategic-planning
- poor communications
- poor health and safety in the workshop
- poor formal complaints procedure
- little direction in race relations
- insufficient clarity in the criteria for the allocation of education and work opportunities
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

## **Information & communications technology**

### **Strengths**

- good lesson-planning and progress recording for individual learners
- good-quality ICT training resources
- good support for learning

### **Weaknesses**

- poor teaching strategies
- insufficiently thorough assessment practice
- no integrated support for ICT learners with literacy and numeracy needs

## **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

### **Strengths**

- very good support for learners
- high level of participation in NVQ programmes by kitchen workers

### **Weaknesses**

- poor assessment-planning
- inadequate record-keeping
- poor internal verification
- no planned training in PE

## **Visual & performing arts & media**

### **Strengths**

- very high examination pass rates
- good skills development in art and learning
- imaginative use of resources
- wide variety of art and craft activities available

### **Weaknesses**

- weak formal reviews of learners' progress

## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- good individual support in teaching sessions
- good use of ICT to support learning
- very effective communication at operational level with prison staff

### **Weaknesses**

- poor achievement rate in numeracy at level 2
- inadequate resources for social and life skills
- insufficient ESOL provision
- inadequate reviews of learners' progress

**WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HMP COOKHAM WOOD:**

- the support in lessons
- being treated with respect by teachers
- the opportunities given by the writer in residence scheme
- gaining useful qualifications

**WHAT LEARNERS THINK HMP COOKHAM WOOD COULD IMPROVE:**

- the length of time it takes for complaints to be dealt with
- the pay differential between education and the different types of work opportunities
- the equal opportunities arrangements - by appointing a race relations officer

**KEY CHALLENGES FOR HMP COOKHAM WOOD:**

- develop a comprehensive quality assurance strategy and processes to monitor the quality of education and training and provide a basis for improvements
- develop a coherent strategy for education, training and work
- establish clear criteria for the allocation of work and education, and ensure that they are known and understood by staff and prisoners
- enforce good health and safety practices in the workshop
- improve assessment practices especially in ICT and hospitality
- increase the number of ESOL classes

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

26. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Equality of opportunity is unsatisfactory, but quality assurance is very weak.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good use of external organisations to provide additional programmes
- good recent management actions to remedy identified weaknesses

#### Weaknesses

- weak strategic-planning
- poor communications
- poor health and safety in the workshop
- poor formal complaints procedure
- little direction in race relations
- insufficient clarity in the criteria for the allocation of education and work opportunities
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

27. The prison makes good use of external organisations to enhance its curriculum. The prison has a writer in residence who works with prisoners in creative writing, drama, singing, poetry and story-telling. These sessions are popular with the prisoners, particularly those who do not participate in education or training activities. They take part in plays and musicals that they have written themselves. They develop confidence and improve their self-esteem. In the story-telling sessions, prisoners record a story onto tape. This is transferred onto a CD and appropriate sound effects are added. The prisoner is able to send the CD to her children to help her stay in touch with them. A drama company visits periodically to run drama workshops at the prison. These are also effective in improving prisoners' self-esteem and confidence. One prisoner has written a play as a result of these workshops, and it has been performed by nationally and internationally known actors at a theatre in the West End of London.

28. The prison has recently implemented a number of actions to remedy identified weaknesses. The head of resettlement is very new to the post and has started to introduce a number of new practices. For example, there have been meetings to try to bring together the providers of education and vocational training and those responsible for special projects. In one of the vocational areas, learners were not making sufficient progress. Positive action has been taken to deal with this. A new teacher has been

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employed and advice has been sought from outside the prison. These actions are very recent and it is too early to determine their long-term effectiveness. There have been recent discussions about ways to improve the quality of the vocational training, primarily through increased staffing. A new head of physical training has been appointed, and managers have agreed to increase the number of PE instructors.

29. There is little strategic-planning of the education and training at the prison. The prison is required to produce a business plan, but this does not give any overall direction to education and training. The prison does not effectively analyse the prisoners' likely training and education needs and plan the provision accordingly. For example there is no plan to deal with the varying demand for ESOL classes. There is no coherent plan for the development of education and vocational training in the prison. Although the writer in residence and drama workshop projects are very valuable, they do not form a part of an overall plan. The enhanced thinking skills programme, which is offered by the behavioural psychologists in the prison, is not linked to any other training. There is some informal strategic-planning by the education subcontractor. However, this takes place in isolation from the prison and the vocational training. There is little rationale for the programmes offered by the education department, and no reference to the prison. There have been very recent meetings to consider the education and training provision as a whole, but these have yet to decide on any strategic objectives.

30. Communications within the prison's education and training departments are poor. There is a range of formal and informal meetings, but these are not effective in communicating education and training issues to the prison's staff or between the prison and the education subcontractor. The head of resettlement meets the education subcontractor formally four times each year. There is some additional informal contact between meetings, but it is not enough to ensure that prison staff are aware of any problems. There are no scheduled meetings between the head of resettlement and the staff responsible for vocation training. They meet informally but these meetings are not recorded and do not adequately deal with problems. The head of resettlement meets the prison governor three times each week to discuss operational matters, but education and training are rarely discussed. The senior management team meets monthly, but there is no evidence of education and training being discussed at these meetings.

31. There is poor health and safety practice in the tailoring workshop. Learners do not wear appropriate footwear. Some have long hair or wear jewellery which could become caught in machinery. One learner observed had long hair which was not tied back, multiple earrings, a neck chain, and cords on her jacket, any of which could have caught in the machinery she was using. Learners are aware of health and safety requirements but these are not enforced by staff. Risk assessments in the gymnasium are out of date and due for review. However, health and safety notices are displayed and there are appropriate procedures to report accidents. Health and safety procedures in the kitchen are appropriate.

### **Equality of opportunity**

32. Prisoners and prison officers are generally well informed about their rights and

responsibilities and expect the regime to be fair. Most officers show respect for prisoners' rights and prisoners respect the officers.

33. There has been a waiting time of six or nine months for some formal complaints to be dealt with. This is longer than the average length of stay for prisoners at the prison. Some complaints have never been dealt with. The response time has improved dramatically over the past few weeks.

34. Since the recent transfer of the race relations officer and promotion of the equal opportunities officer to other prisons, there has been little direction or activity in race relations. There has been no staff training on equal opportunities in the past year. There is an equal opportunities statement, which is displayed on the wall in the administration department. Race relations management team meetings take place three times a year, but no actions are specified in the minutes, there is no system for following up issues, and there are no substantial items on the agenda.

35. Neither prisoners nor staff are clear about how places are allocated on education courses or in contract work. Most of the education courses have waiting lists. In the workshops, some of the activity is carried out in rooms out of sight of the supervisors, so only trusted prisoners can be allocated to this work. Managers are aware that the allocation should reflect the racial mix in the prison, as that is a key performance target, and that prisoners should be allocated quickly, as they have to stay locked up if they do not have an activity to go to. There is competition for the contract work, as it pays well, but there is no mechanism for managing the waiting list, and some prisoners in the workshop were not aware of having applied to do contract work. Staff and prisoners accept that the system is inequitable, but do not challenge it.

36. There is support for prisoners with physical disabilities. Several staff learnt British Sign Language to level 2 when there was a profoundly deaf long-term prisoner at the prison. However, other learners with hearing impairments have had no support during their time in the education department.

### **Quality assurance**

37. There are insufficient processes to assure the quality of the provision. There are few written procedures to ensure consistency of approach by staff either in education or vocational training. Retention and achievement rates are not measured or used to set challenging targets to improve the quality of the provision. The only targets which the education subcontractor has relate to contractual compliance. The prison does not effectively monitor the quality of the subcontractor's provision, and there is no monitoring of the vocational training. There is no observation of lessons to improve their quality. A quality improvement group has been set up but this does not meet regularly. There is no record of actions to be taken. The subcontracted college reviews every course three times a year. A wide range of information is taken into account, including learners' questionnaires and external verifiers' reports. Staff consider what was good and what could be improved. However, the findings are sent back to the college and not retained at the prison. They are not used to improve the quality of the provision. The

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self-assessment process included all the staff involved in education and training. It failed to recognise many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the inspectors. There was no attempt to make an overall judgement about each area of learning.



## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Information & communications technology

38. Programmes in ICT are unsatisfactory.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good lesson-planning and progress recording for individual learners
- good-quality ICT training resources
- good support for learning

#### Weaknesses

- poor teaching strategies
- insufficiently thorough assessment practice
- no integrated support for ICT learners with literacy and numeracy needs

### Achievement and standards

39. Most prisoners are either moved to another prison or are released before they have time to complete their programme. During 2002-03, 65 per cent of learners who started ICT courses left the prison before completing them. Of those who stay, most complete their introductory level programme. Most of those who progress to the intermediate programme gain at least one qualification. The education department does not gather data on the proportion of learners starting each course who achieve a qualification, and does not routinely analyse the success rates for examinations. Its key performance indicators are for numbers of hours of training offered and numbers of qualifications achieved. There is no requirement for the department to analyse the proportion of successful learners. In the year up to the inspection, 84 per cent of those who were entered for the introductory level qualification, and 56 per cent of those entered for the intermediate level, achieved the award.

40. The teaching strategies used do not develop broad ICT skills in learners. Learners do not generally attempt to work through the ICT problems they encounter. They ask for help as soon as they run into difficulties, even when they have the relevant skills and knowledge to tackle the problem themselves. There is a sign on the classroom whiteboard encouraging learners to attempt things and learn from their mistakes, but they do not do this. Learners are not prepared to take risks. Although they may achieve their qualification, they are not developing into competent computer users. Their participation in the learning process is passive.

## Quality of education and training

41. Tutors plan carefully to make sure that there are sufficient resources for each class, and that each learner expected to attend has clear goals for the session. After each session they evaluate and record what each learner achieved.

42. There is an ICT scanning workshop, with up-to-date hardware and software supplied by a commercial client. A small number of learners carry out contract work there, and scan invoices and bills of loading on to CD-ROMs. Learners who carry out this work accurately, and at the speed required, can gain a certificate from the client after the equivalent of six-months' full-time work. There is no link between this activity and any of the ICT or other training in the education department. The ICT tutors are not aware of the detail of the activity in the workshop. There is no attempt to provide a realistic working environment or any kind of work experience for ICT learners in the education department. The only connection between the two departments is that some prisoners who work in the scanning workshop find it difficult to attend the education department for an ICT course as the timetables clash.

43. The ICT training resources are good. The training room is newly equipped with modern computers, the latest operating system, and industry-standard software. The screens are smaller than would be acceptable in most offices, and learners have difficulty seeing the text in some programs. Most learners are working towards the newly updated ICT qualification, and have up-to-date, commercially produced workbooks, to support their work.

44. Assessment is not sufficiently thorough. Learners who were supposed to be taking a test for their qualification under examination conditions were observed receiving help from fellow prisoners or tutors if they got stuck.

45. Learners have little choice of qualification. The introductory course, which all learners follow unless they have already done it, leads only to a similar course at intermediate level. There is no substantial higher level course for them to move on to, although they can do short courses leading to single-subject qualifications, for example in text- or word-processing. The education department is attempting to identify higher qualifications for learners to progress to. Most current ICT qualifications are not available to prisoners of this category, as they are not permitted to use the internet. The department has recently started an administration course, in response to demand from prisoners.

46. There are too few places on ICT programmes to meet the demand from prisoners. The ICT room can only hold nine learners. There are too few classes. There is always a waiting list for places, and learners are rationed to two sessions a week to try to reduce it.

47. The support for learning is good. There is a generous ratio of staff to learners. Although the computer room can accommodate up to nine learners, it is rare for more

than seven to attend, so those who are in the class have plenty of attention from the instructor. The atmosphere in the classroom is supportive and collaborative rather than competitive. The learners help each other, particularly if the tutor is working with another learner and so not immediately available. When prisoners start on the programme, they are given an initial assessment which contributes to their individual learning plan. Most prisoners are transferred to the prison from a large prison where they will have had little access to education. If they have already started a qualification, the education department tries to get any records of achievement or partially completed coursework, so that they can continue, rather than repeating, work.

### **Leadership and management**

48. The initial assessment process identifies most of the learners who need help with literacy, numeracy or language, but there is no facility for them to be supported within the ICT course. They have to enrol separately for literacy, numeracy and/or language courses, and risk losing their place on the ICT programme.

49. Although there is considerable pressure on places, the prison does not attempt to manage the problem of learners' absences by over-booking or forward-planning. Learners and staff are frustrated by a system which means there are empty seats at every session even though the computer class has a substantial waiting list and nobody has the number of sessions they need.

50. Managers and staff in the education department are providing what is required by the education contract, although that clearly falls short of what they would like to offer, and does not meet the needs of prisoners.

51. The department now has the facility to share information with other prison education departments. However, within the prison, there is still no connection between the individual learning plan and the sentence plan.

## Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

51. Programmes in hospitality and sport are unsatisfactory.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### Strengths

- very good support for learners
- high level of participation in NVQ programmes by kitchen workers

### Weaknesses

- poor assessment-planning
- inadequate record-keeping
- poor internal verification
- no planned training in PE

## Achievement and standards

52. Achievement on the NVQ programme in food preparation and cooking is satisfactory. All the current learners started their NVQ in June 2003 and most have achieved units already. One learner has achieved five units. Learners' work is of an appropriate standard. They receive an induction into the kitchen, which includes a food hygiene awareness course, before starting work in the kitchen. They are then signed up for foundation certificates in food hygiene. Of the eight prisoners working in the kitchen, six have achieved the foundation certificate in food hygiene and the other two are booked onto courses.

## Quality of education and training

53. There is very good support for learners on catering and hospitality programmes. One assessor provides an evening class twice a week. This provides training and support in the background knowledge requirements of the NVQ. There are five qualified assessors who all provide constant support, answering learners' questions or guiding them on their programme. There is no specific identification of additional learning needs. However the main assessor is a qualified key skills and basic skills tutor, and is able to provide additional support to learners who need it.

54. There is a good take-up of NVQ programmes from workers in the kitchen. Of the eight workers in the kitchen, five are following an NVQ programme. Others have previously done so. The learners' programme is appropriate to their job role. Learners prepare and cook lunch. The evening meal is prepared at a neighbouring prison and

served by the learners at HMP Cookham Wood.

55. Assessment-planning is poor. There is no initial assessment and there are no individual learning plans. Assessors do not carry out assessment-planning. Learners are told on the day that they are to be assessed, and are verbally given a list of tasks to be carried out for assessment. Learners are not set targets for gaining individual units. They believe they are working towards all the units together.

56. There is inadequate maintenance of NVQ records. There are no records of assessment other than what is in the learners' portfolios. One learner who had nearly completed her NVQ had her portfolio stolen. With no auditable evidence of the learner's assessments and achievement to date, she was told to start again. There are no assessors' monitoring records. The awarding body's minimum requirements for record-keeping are not being met.

57. The internal verification process is poor. The whole of one learner's work has been internally verified. This was done at the end of the NVQ. There has been no observation of the assessors. There are no internal verification monitoring records or sampling plans. Learners did not know the name of their internal verifier and had never met her. The NVQ programme at the prison is managed by staff from a neighbouring prison, and records are kept at that site.

58. There is no planned training in PE. There is one new member of staff employed in the gymnasium, who offers recreational sports activities. Before the new appointment, the gymnasium had been closed for 15 months. The new induction programme will include first aid and manual handling courses in the future. There are too few staff for accredited courses to be offered without further restricting the recreational sports programme.

### **Leadership and management**

59. The leadership and management of this area of learning is unsatisfactory. NVQs have only recently been offered in the kitchens and then largely because of the efforts of one person. There has been no overall plan to introduce qualifications. There have been few meetings between the member of staff responsible and the head of resettlement. No PE training is taking place. There is no appropriate member of staff to provide training. Until recently, the gymnasium had been closed for a number of months.

## Visual & performing arts & media

60. Programmes in art and design are good.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### Strengths

- very high examination pass rates
- good skills development in art and learning
- imaginative use of resources
- wide variety of art and craft activities available

### Weaknesses

- weak formal reviews of learners' progress

## Achievement and standards

61. Pass rates for the GCSE short course in art and design are very good. In 2002-03, 14 learners were entered for the qualification. Three-quarters of them passed at grade C or above, and two achieved A\*. At entry level in art and design, all except one of the learners who sat the exam achieved a grade 3 or better.

62. Learners produce a good standard of artwork, develop their artistic skills, and learn to take pride in their work. Several achieved positive results in a recent national art competition. Learners involved in performing arts also work well. Good standards are achieved in music and drama. One learner has been involved in the production at a West End theatre of a play she had written. The production included professional actors. Another learner showed particularly good skills in analysing, writing and performing rap music.

## Quality of education and training

63. Art and design learners develop very good exploration and experimental skills. They discuss the themes for their work with their tutor and then prepare them before starting work. The tutor encourages them to learn by experimenting and reflecting on the results. They are encouraged to be self-critical. They develop the confidence to enable them to take risks and explore new boundaries. The tutor sets clear short-term targets so learners know what they have to do at each stage of their qualification. Lessons are well planned, and the tutor sensitively manages learners working at different levels within the same group. The tutor ensures that learners develop a sound understanding of what they are doing, as well as good technique.

64. The resources provided for art are good, and are used imaginatively. For example, materials are available for watercolour and silk painting, and there is a wide range of materials and facilities for three-dimensional art. Information technology (IT) is integrated with art sessions and used to enhance learners' literacy skills. For example, learners use the computer to produce a storybook. They type the text that they have written and select pictures to add to the story. Learners also have access to drawing software. Facilities for performing arts are adequate. They use the prison's large spaces to rehearse and perform drama and musical productions.

65. Learners have a wide choice of activities within visual and performing arts. Some have worked on silk painting, and a decoupage course has been provided when enough learners have wanted to do it. Some learners also produce imaginative work in three dimensions using wood and other materials. Work with the writer in residence gives learners a wide range of opportunities in the performing arts. There is a project which gives learners the opportunity to write and record stories for their children. Appropriate sound effects are added elsewhere and the whole story is recorded onto a CD. Learners are able to create artwork to go with the CDs. Learners work with the writer in residence on singing, both in groups and solo. Some of this is modern music and some is of a more traditional style. Learners also have opportunities to become involved in drama productions. Most of the plays they perform have been written and produced by learners. The involvement of a London theatre company in running drama workshops further adds to the opportunities for learners.

66. Progress made during each lesson is reviewed by the tutor and is discussed with the learner. Progress against longer-term goals, however, is not reviewed effectively. The art tutors work with learners to determine individual learning plans, but learners' progress against these plans is not discussed or recorded in detail.

### **Leadership and management**

67. The art department is run well. It has a good reputation, and its learners are prepared to work hard to acquire skills and recognition for their achievements. Those who want to work towards a visual arts qualification are helped to choose appropriately, and external examination results testify to their success. There is, however, limited communication between the visual arts department and the special projects such as the writer in residence and the visiting drama company.

## Foundation programmes

68. Foundation programmes are satisfactory.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### Strengths

- good individual support in teaching sessions
- good use of ICT to support learning
- very effective communication at operational level with prison staff

### Weaknesses

- poor achievement rate in numeracy at level 2
- inadequate resources for social and life skills
- insufficient ESOL provision
- inadequate reviews of learners' progress

## Achievement and standards

69. The achievement rate for numeracy qualifications at level 2 is poor. In 2002-03 the rate was 55 per cent. This year, two learners have taken the examination and neither passed. Achievement rates for literacy and numeracy qualifications at level 1 are satisfactory at 74 per cent and 70 per cent respectively. The achievement rate for literacy qualifications at level 2 is also satisfactory at 72 per cent. Learners are making satisfactory progress towards their learning goals in literacy and numeracy, and produce a good standard of work. Seven learners who were entered for an ESOL qualification in 2002-03 all achieved their certificate. However, there are not enough ESOL classes, and many of those who take part in them do not make sufficient progress to gain a qualification.

## Quality of education and training

70. Individual support in teaching sessions is good. Group sizes are small and much individual advice and guidance is given to learners who are experiencing difficulties with their work. Learners receive a comprehensive induction. This covers course content and includes an initial screening to determine their literacy, numeracy and language skills, and a learning styles questionnaire. There is effective short-term planning to meet individual learners' literacy and numeracy needs. Tutors provide effective personal support which encourages learners to continue with their education. Five teaching sessions were observed during the inspection and all were graded as satisfactory or better. In the best sessions, work was individual to the needs of learners and was interesting. Staff regularly



checked learners' knowledge and understanding, and provided good advice and guidance. Assessment of learners' work is satisfactory. Literacy, numeracy and key skills support is provided for learners in workshops and horticulture.

71. IT resources to support learning are good. Seven industry-standard computers have recently been provided to support literacy, numeracy and ESOL sessions. ICT is being used successfully with learners who have poor literacy and numeracy, and with ESOL learners. Specialist software is being used effectively to develop learners' literacy skills, but this is on trial and it is not clear whether it will be purchased. There are no other specialist resources to use with the computers. The computers have provided good alternatives to working from handouts. There are insufficient resources for social and life skills. They are limited to a handful of paper-based resources mainly devised by the tutor. Literacy and numeracy resources are satisfactory and consist of a range of textbooks, paper-based resources, reading materials and videos.

72. There are too few ESOL classes to meet the needs of individual learners. One ESOL class is provided each week, and its learners are of mixed ability. Classes are not always managed effectively. Learners at basic ESOL levels require most of the tutors' attention. One teaching session a week is not enough for learners to develop and practise their speaking and listening skills.

73. Reviews of learners' progress are inadequate. Many learners attend more than one programme option. Each programme option tutor reviews learners' progress. Learning plans include sufficiently detailed literacy and numeracy targets. However, learners' progress towards the targets is unclear, and progress review documents seldom provide sufficient detail. Some review documents record the learners' activities but are insufficiently evaluative. It is not always possible to assess whether learners are making the progress expected of them over a period of time.

### **Leadership and management**

74. Communication with prison staff is very effective at operational level. Staff from the education department attend the daily prison meeting at which prison officers provide information about individual prisoners and general operational feedback. The meeting raises tutors' awareness of the personal issues affecting learners in their care, and enables them to deal better with issues that may arise. One staff member attends sentence-planning meetings and obtains an overview of progress. Access to courses is discussed at these meetings. All staff have appropriate expertise and qualifications in the subjects they teach. Some staff participated in the production of the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report identified some of the strengths and weaknesses found at inspection but did not identify the poor achievement of numeracy qualifications. There is insufficient analysis of data. The education department is unable to calculate achievement rates based on intake years. A new, more detailed system was introduced in August to monitor success rates, but calculations are not based on intakes. Informal communication takes place within the department, but there is no formal system to review learners' overall progress.