

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP Askham Grange

19 March 2004



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 Askham Grange

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Askham Grange is an open prison for women. It is situated in the village of Askham Richard about seven miles to the west of York. The prison's usual operational capacity is 151 and its certified normal accommodation is the same. It currently holds 133 prisoners, of whom six are young offenders. Nine prisoners are serving life sentences. The prison provides 30-bed residential accommodation and crèche facilities for mothers and their babies aged up to 18 months old. It has a 22-bed pre-release employment scheme hostel and a long-term independent living unit in its grounds. All prisoners are sentenced and are sent to HMP Askham Grange from other prisons, which consider them to be worthy of placement in open conditions. For many prisoners HMP Askham Grange is the last prison in their sentence before release. Prisoners at the final stages of their sentence can attend local colleges, and participate in community work and paid employment in York and the surrounding areas.

2. The head of learning and skills is the senior manager responsible for all education, training and enterprise activities for HMP Askham Grange prisoners. She is responsible for the education contract and the library contract. The head of residence is responsible for work in the residential houses, the deputy governor for work in prison catering and the head of works for maintenance and gardens work. All report directly to the prison governor. The prison has a link adviser from the offenders' learning and skills unit.

3. The education provision is subcontracted to a further education college in the north-west of England. The education department offers qualifications in literacy, numeracy, information technology (IT), key skills, business administration and hairdressing. All provision is for part-time attendance and some prisoners attend classes in more than one subject. The prison service offers qualifications in food preparation, food hygiene and horticulture. Eight prisoners are attending courses at two local colleges of further education, 27 prisoners are in paid employment outside the prison and 30 prisoners are on community placements in the local area. The nursery provision in the 30-bed mother and baby unit is in the process of being transferred to a new local provider. This provider will take over management of the provision on 1st April 2004 and will offer national vocational qualifications (NVQs) units in baby care at the prison and further NVQ units on placement at their own early years centre. Prisoners working in other areas such as cleaning, the laundry, the prison kitchens, physical education (PE), the library and driving cannot gain qualifications in the skills they learn. The library provision is by the local city library services.

4. The areas of learning inspected were: business administration; information and communications technology (ICT); hospitality; hairdressing; and foundation programmes. Judgements about other education, training and training for work in employment areas, are reported on in the leadership and management section of this report.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

5. HMP Askham Grange has 10 learners on the administration training programme, working towards externally accredited examinations. Three learners are working towards a level 3 qualification, four learners towards a level 2 qualification and three learners towards a level 1 qualification. Learners can join courses at any time, although there is sometimes a waiting list. Each course is scheduled to last for 12 weeks for each level of qualification. Learners on level 1 and 2 attend classes for three days each week in the education department. On completion of the workbooks, learners take an examination. Level 3 learners have specific time set aside to study, but may choose where they study. One learner attends a local college on a day-release basis to study for a higher national certificate in business administration. Learners act as administration support for conference events and produce a range of documents for prison departments. Some learners act as peer tutors for less experienced learners. Learners' previous qualifications and experience are assessed on entry, to determine the most appropriate level of qualification. Literacy, numeracy and language skills are assessed on entry and support for literacy and numeracy skills is provided to those learners who require it. A tutor formally reviews each learner's progress every four weeks.

Information & communications technology

6. Eighteen learners are working towards an entry level qualification and 18 learners towards a level 1 qualification. All training takes place in the education department, and the ICT suite is on the second floor. Learners have a flexible timetable of study arranged to allow for their other duties and responsibilities within the prison. Learners are also able to study in the evenings, or on Saturday mornings in their own time. One learner attends a local college three days each week to study for a higher national diploma in computing. Examinations are taken on demand. Learners have two opportunities to pass examinations. Some learners provide peer support for less experienced learners when they join the group. Learners' previous qualifications and experience are assessed on entry to determine the most appropriate qualification level. Literacy, numeracy and language skills are assessed on entry and support for literacy and numeracy is provided to those learners who require it. Learners' achievements are recorded at the end of each class.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

7. Seven learners are working towards NVQs at level 1 or 2 in catering, food preparation and cooking. These learners also complete the essential food hygiene award. They attend classes in the food preparation kitchen three days each week and produce a wide range of dishes. All staff are employed part time. Two are hospitality trainers, assessors and internal verifiers, working for three days each week between them. The third staff member teaches life skills classes in the training kitchen, one day each week. The provision is managed by the head of learning and skills. NVQ learners can join the programme at any time throughout the year. For two weeks in the summer period they learn related skills such as cake decorating. There are no weekend or evening classes. Some NVQ learners carry out commercial hospitality activities, such as providing buffets and gourmet lunches for prison events and community organisations. The prison kitchen is used for some NVQ assessments and it has a qualified work-based assessor. Food hygiene qualifications are offered to all prisoners and staff. Some prisoners obtain these qualifications before going on community placements, or starting paid work outside the prison. No prisoners working in the prison kitchen are working for qualifications and none hold food hygiene qualifications.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

8. Ten learners are on hairdressing training programmes. Eight of them are following level 1 NVQ programmes and two learners are working towards NVQs at level 2. Learners enrol on programmes for 12-weekly periods. The prison salon is on the top floor of the education department. Learners attend three days each week for hairdressing practical and background knowledge training and assessment. Learners start on the level 1 NVQ programme unless they have started the NVQ at level 2 in hairdressing at another establishment. There are two part time hairdressing tutors, one is a qualified assessor and the other is working towards the assessor award. The education department manages the hairdressing provision. The NVQ internal verification services are provided by the subcontracting further education college. In addition, two learners are attending a further education college close to the prison and working towards a level 3 NVQ in hairdressing.

Foundation programmes

9. Foundation provision in the prison is subcontracted to a further education college. Classes operate for 47 weeks of the year. There are 80 places in literacy and numeracy sessions and 24 places on social and life skills programmes. Literacy and numeracy classes are offered in mixed-ability workshop-style sessions. Learners have the opportunity to gain externally accredited qualifications in literacy and numeracy or life skills at entry level, level 1 and level 2. There are 65 learners on the literacy and numeracy provision and 21 learners on the social and life skills courses. The foundation programmes are managed by the education manager, supported by a part-time tutor who co-ordinates the literacy and numeracy provision, with four further part-time tutors delivering the sessions. Literacy and numeracy classes take place in the education department, mostly in second-floor classrooms.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	7
Number of inspection days	26
Number of learner interviews	56
Number of staff interviews	27
Number of employer interviews	7
Number of subcontractor interviews	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of partner/external agency interviews	3
Number of visits	9

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

10. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Business administration and foundation programmes are good, and ICT is satisfactory. Hospitality is unsatisfactory and hairdressing is very weak. The leadership and management of education, vocational training and training for work are unsatisfactory, as is quality assurance. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

11. **The retention rate is excellent on business administration, ICT and foundation programmes.** Retention on courses is mostly over 90 per cent on these short courses, which last four weeks for ICT and approximately 12 weeks for business administration. Enrolment figures are very good; for example, since 2003, 686 learners have enrolled on ICT courses and 49 learners on business administration courses. There are currently over 100 learners on foundation programmes. Attendance and punctuality are good; this is important as the learners are not escorted to classes, this being an open prison. Progression by learners thorough levels 1, 2 and 3 is good on business administration courses.

12. Administration learners are involved in business and commercial activities which enhance their skills. They produce items for prison departments, such as menus and posters. They act as receptionists at prison conferences and events, they prepare delegate lists, set up a conference reception area, and meet and greet guests. **The skills acquired by learners involved in these activities are not accredited.**

13. **Learners' achievement rates are good for externally accredited qualifications on the business administration, ICT and foundation programmes.** Prison service key performance targets for literacy and numeracy were met in 2002-03 and achievement rates are on target for 2003-04. In the period January 2003-January 2004, 89 per cent of

learners who completed literacy courses and 78 per cent on numeracy courses achieved qualifications. Some learners progress well from entry level to achieve level 1 and 2 in literacy and numeracy. Skills development is particularly good for ICT learners who have rarely had any previous experience of computers. **Learners' development of confidence and self-esteem is good on the foundation programmes and food preparation courses.** They are proud of their achievements, which helps them to feel prepared to take up community placements and external opportunities for paid work.

14. Learners develop good hospitality practical skills on the NVQ in food preparation course. They produce commercial buffets and gourmet lunches for prison events and a number of local organisations. Dishes produced are of a good quality and involve a wide range of practical skills. There is a good-quality menu, and the meal is served by the learners. Activities involve learners devising menus, costing events and purchasing the food from shops, often for the first time for many years. A healthy eating club meets one lunch time each week. This is organised by the PE instructor and the assessor who is based in the main prison kitchen. They offer advice on weight loss, healthy eating and exercise.

15. **Internal verification arrangements on food preparation and hairdressing courses are inadequate. Management action to resolve the problems is ineffective. NVQs in food preparation cannot be accredited** and no alternative arrangements have been made. Training for learners working in the main prison kitchen is inadequate and poorly recorded. No prisoners currently working there hold the required food hygiene awards. **Hairdressing NVQ approval was reinstated in September 2003, but there is still insufficient internal verification.** The retention rate for the 12-week training period is very good. Initial development of level 1 NVQ hairdressing skills is good.

Quality of education and training

16. Teaching is satisfactory on all courses and the teaching of social and life skills is good. In the better sessions tutors use a good range of teaching methods, activities and resources. All teaching on foundation programmes is satisfactory, or better. **There is good individual coaching and support for learners on administration, ICT and hospitality courses.** A weaker aspect of some foundation programme sessions is the over-emphasis on the use of worksheets.

17. Overall, resources are satisfactory. Administration and ICT staff have produced good learning materials for the learners and have developed an interactive software package as a beginners' guide to word-processing. Workbooks contain non-technical language and have clear, well-designed text, with regular testing of learners' knowledge. Staff are appropriately qualified, but there is a shortage of qualified staff for internal verification of NVQs in hospitality and hairdressing.

18. **Access to all the education provision, except the food preparation training kitchen is by stairs. This is restrictive for people with limited mobility, such as mothers with small children. The spacious open learning computer suite, the hairdressing salon and literacy and numeracy classroom are all on the top floor.** Some foundation classes use the computer rooms which are inappropriate for the topics learners are studying. There is a

shortage of the professional products for hairdressing chemical treatments required for the NVQ programmes. The food preparation kitchen has insufficient suitable working surfaces, and insufficient space to produce buffets and ranges of dishes without causing delays. There is a potential for the cross-contamination of foods.

19. Prospective learners have a thorough induction, with good individual support and guidance provided by the education manager and an adult guidance worker. Literacy and numeracy skills are assessed initially and learners attend education department classes to develop their skills if necessary. There is no initial assessment of vocational skills at the beginning of the hospitality and hairdressing NVQs. All hairdressing learners are enrolled for the level 1 NVQ, unless they have started the level 2 at another establishment. **Training and assessment activities are poorly planned.**

20. Learners' work is marked promptly on foundation, ICT and administration courses. Assessment of hospitality learners' skills is good and uses many of the commercial activities in the prison. ICT staff monitor learners' progress well, setting them realistic, but challenging targets to complete modules of learning; progress is well recorded at the end of each lesson. **On foundation programmes there is insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress** and staff do not always carefully evaluate and record learners' progress in lessons.

21. **The prison does not provide enough social and life skills training and the range of ICT qualifications is limited.** There are no art and creative studies, apart from some special projects. The ICT suite is open and staffed in evenings and on Saturdays. Learners use these sessions to continue with work for qualifications, or for preparing curriculum vitae, writing letters for job applications, or official correspondence relating to their sentence.

22. **The education department staff are particularly supportive to learners.** Advice, information and guidance encourage learners to choose qualifications that will contribute towards their resettlement plans. In addition, the Yorkshire prisons' employment, training and education project staff have an office in the education department and provide preparation for work courses, before learners start external, paid work. Facilities include diagnostic computerised career guidance software, careers advice and information about a range of education and training opportunities.

Leadership and management

23. **Senior managers at the prison have clear plans for the development of learning and skills.** The strategic focus of the prison is on resettlement and family-centred learning and development. The new mother and baby unit and nursery is a key feature in promoting this strategy. A new resettlement policy was drafted in February 2004, and learning and skills are to be extended into all prison work areas to prepare prisoners for resettlement.

24. **Good new developments enhance the training provision.** These include the new resource centre in the gardens work area and the introduction of nationally accredited qualifications. The prison has good new initiatives to further develop provision for

mothers and their babies and to extend relationships training for other prisoners. The recently revised induction programme provides a good introduction to the learning and skills opportunities for new arrivals. The library has held a range of events to promote literacy and these have included a poets' day, black history month, international women's day, creative writing workshops, a poetry competition and a project based on women's separation from their children.

25. The prisoners who work as library assistants are very active in trying to promote the library as the hub of the prison. A national baby book scheme has been introduced, where a free book is given to every baby who joins the library. Eighty-three per cent of prisoners are members of the library and there are on average 1,022 visits to the library each month. It is easily accessed, being on the ground floor of the main residential building. Despite there being no security system to prevent the unauthorised removal of books, losses are below the 4 per cent target set by the prison service.

26. **The prison does not have sufficient operational management planning for the delivery of learning and skills.** There are no plans for priority areas, targets, deadlines or for the actions to identify them. Two vocational programmes are severely affected. Senior managers are aware that not enough accreditation of skills is taking place, but there are no plans to outline the requirements for successful implementation of each qualification programme.

27. **Some internal and external communications are ineffective.** Formal communications between the prison and the local colleges and work placements are inadequate. Employers and college tutors do not always receive appropriate information from the prison. The situation is confused regarding access to the internet in the prison to allow learners to continue their college studies, and about extra study time. The two catering areas in the prison kitchen do not have effective communications regarding assessment.

28. **A good range of external networking is available to support learning and progression.** Eligible learners can attend local colleges to broaden their choice of qualification. Learners receive good advice, guidance and support from the Yorkshire prisons' employment, training and education project staff based at the prison, from the new adult guidance worker and Connexions. Courses are offered by a project based in East Yorkshire, which uses training in work on the waterways as a resettlement resource to prepare women for leaving prison. The prison has a good range of links with community placement providers and employers. Effective use of external funding recently paid for a new member of staff to visit employers and engage 75 new organisations, whose names have been entered into a new database, ready for prisoners to apply for work. The prison plans to integrate placements with the learning, skills and resettlement process.

29. **Prison staff do not receive sufficient equality of opportunity and diversity training.** There is not enough promotion and monitoring of equal opportunities. Although monthly ethnic monitoring statistics are recorded for learners participation in training. Management meeting notes illustrate that there are extensive discussions about ways to promote diversity. There is less awareness by other staff; inappropriate learner

comments are not corrected sometimes, and inappropriate staff comment about placement providers are not challenged. Lesson observations do not record the use of equal opportunities or diversity teaching.

30. **The quality assurance arrangements are incomplete.** A quality assurance policy has recently been drafted, which has procedural documents. There are no procedures to accompany these and the policy is not yet implemented. The self-assessment report is the first to be produced for all prison learning and skills areas. The education department section does not differentiate between the different subject areas and has insufficient detail in order to be able to action plan effectively. No areas in the report have an overall grade, although the nursery provision did allocate itself a grade for each 'Common Inspection Framework' key question.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear leadership vision for learning and skills
- good new developments for learning and skills provision
- good external links to support learning and progression

Weaknesses

- insufficient operational management planning for programme delivery
- some ineffective internal and external communication
- insufficient equality of opportunity and diversity training for staff
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- excellent retention rates
- good achievement rates
- effective individual support for learning
- particularly good advice and guidance for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient accreditation of related skills and knowledge
- restricted access to specialist resources for some learners

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- excellent retention rates
- good achievement rates
- effective individual support for learning

Weaknesses

- very limited range of qualifications
- poor access to specialist facilities for learners with restricted mobility

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good standards of work
- good support for learners
- good use of commercial activities to improve learners' employment and life skills

Weaknesses

- poor achievement of nationally accredited qualifications
- insufficient kitchen space for food preparation
- ineffective management

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Strengths

- good initial development of level 1 NVQ hairdressing skills

Weaknesses

- poor NVQ achievements
- poor planning of training and assessment activities
- poor internal verification

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- excellent retention rates
- good achievement of nationally accredited qualifications
- good development of learners' confidence and self-esteem

Weaknesses

- some inappropriate accommodation
- insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- insufficient life skills provision

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HMP ASKHAM GRANGE:

- the new mother and baby facilities
- 'having learnt grammar and punctuation, I never learnt at school'
- to be able to study and gain qualifications
- education tutors are helpful and supportive
- good, relaxed, clean environment
- being treated as a human being, an adult
- learning to use a computer
- 'a sense of self-worth'
- 'success, I feel I'm getting somewhere'
- helping at conferences and doing real work for commercial buffets

WHAT LEARNERS THINK HMP ASKHAM GRANGE COULD IMPROVE:

- the wages
- the number of training courses - 'a wider range of courses with qualifications, that will help you get a good job'
- the range of classes - 'include evening classes'
- interest levels - 'some teaching sessions are boring'
- the amount of individual support
- class sizes - 'sometimes there are too many in classes and it's noisy'
- continuity of staff - 'too many tutor changes'
- reduce cancellation of crèche places because of staff shortages - 'that makes me miss my education'
- the range of products for the NVQ in hairdressing
- recognition for good work
- the packed lunches for daily placements/college courses
- the daily allowance for work placement/college courses

KEY CHALLENGES FOR HMP ASKHAM GRANGE:

- maintain good retention and achievement levels in administration, ICT and foundation programmes
- continue to provide effective individual support for learning
- resolve the problems affecting the hospitality and hairdressing provision
- implement an effective plan for the development of good learning and skills
- increase social and life skills provision
- further develop the use of external activities to support learning/skills development
- improve internal and external communications
- implement equality of opportunity and diversity training for all staff
- review the use of accommodation to provide good-quality, accessible learning environments
- implement effective quality assurance arrangements

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

31. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory, as is quality assurance. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- clear leadership vision for learning and skills
- good new developments for learning and skills provision
- good external links to support learning and progression

Weaknesses

- insufficient operational management planning for programme delivery
- some ineffective internal and external communication
- insufficient equality of opportunity and diversity training for staff
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

32. HMP Askham Grange has a clear vision for the development of learning and skills. The focus is on resettlement and family-centred learning and development. The introduction of the new mother and baby unit and nursery is a key feature in promoting this, and the residential areas are already in use. The new accommodation has been designed to create a family environment to help with socialisation of the children, relationship-building and to provide peer support for the mothers. The emphasis is on mothers taking responsibility for the care of their own children, recognising the individuality of the child, and cultural and other child rearing practices. An external provider will operate the nursery facilities which open on 1st April 2004. This is a pioneering development and links are being made with a range of family support initiatives and social researchers to evaluate the success of the development. The work to extend this type of activity is already beginning with other prisoners. The refurbished existing nursery will be used for some of this provision.

33. In February 2004 a new resettlement policy was drafted to emphasise the resettlement planning process. Learning and skills development are to be extended into all work areas to enhance skills in preparation for resettlement. The learners' community placements and paid, outside prison work are to be integrated with the learning process. The self-assessment report outlines the developments, and the new head of learning and skills position for operational management, reinforces the holistic approach to education and training throughout the prison.

34. The prison has good new developments to improve the provision. The staff in the gardens area have developed a new resource area/study room for their learners. It has recently been converted from a storeroom and is well placed for ease of use. The warm, bright facilities provide desk space, computers, white boards and learning resources. The floor is painted concrete which enables learners to use the resources without needing to change from their working clothes. Nationally accredited skills testing has been introduced for prisoners working in the gardens. Two learners began courses at the nearby agricultural college in September/October 2003. One is taking a nationally accredited gardening certificate and the other an NVQ at level 2 in horticulture. The prison has good links with the awarding body verifier and with the local agricultural college, allowing the introduction of NVQs, using a combination of prison and college training and assessment.

35. Good initiatives exist to further develop the provision for mothers and their babies. In the past year the prison has successfully planned and developed new facilities that meet the needs of mothers and their young children more appropriately. There is accommodation for 30 mothers and their babies. The new nursery facility has been developed to high standards and meets the national regulatory requirements for the care and education of young children. The nursery facilities are available to mothers attending education and work. It is planned to deliver NVQs in early years care and education which will be available through the partnership with the external nursery provider. Mothers will be able to complete the baby units of the NVQ on site and the remaining units will be delivered through a placement in the external provider's 'early years excellence centre'. The external provider has close links with other development schemes and plans to make a range of other accredited and non-accredited courses available to the mothers.

36. The recently revised induction programme provides a good introduction to the learning and skills opportunities in the prison. The weekly induction morning is managed sensitively by the education manager and is non-threatening for learners. Learners complete computer-based assessments in literacy and numeracy, with technical support from a business administration learner. Each learner has a confidential individual interview with the education manager. The education manager gives good advice and encouragement for appropriate training routes. This is supported by a further individual interview with a qualified career guidance worker contracted from the local adult careers service. The education department is piloting progress development files for learners, which enable them to record all achievements and celebrate good work. All information will be recorded in a standardised format.

37. The library has recently instigated some good initiatives to promote literacy. Events have included poets' day; black history month; international women's day; and a set of three creative writing workshops with a Malawi writer; a poetry competition; and a recent project based on women's separation from children. The library assistants are very active in trying to promote the library as the hub of the prison, arranging talks about a variety of subjects, evening sessions for cross-stitching and working with a drama group from the university. The library works particularly well with the mother and baby unit and has introduced the national baby book scheme where a free book is given to every

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baby who joins the library, combined with a talk about the importance of reading books to babies. Eighty-three per cent of the prisoners are members of the library and visits average 1,022 per month. It is easily accessed, being on the ground floor of the main residential building. Despite there being no security system to prevent the unauthorised removal of books, losses are below the 4 per cent target set by the prison service.

38. HMP Askham Grange does not have enough operational management and planning for the delivery of learning and skills training. Planning is inadequate to implement the management strategy for learning and skills throughout the prison, to show priority areas, targets and deadlines and actions required. Senior managers are aware of many prison activities where accreditation of skills relating to resettlement work could be introduced, such as domestic and industrial cleaning, laundry, customer service, library work and PE instruction. However, there is not enough operational management planning to outline the requirements for each programme. The poor life skills provision was recorded in the HMP service advisory service report in 1997 and has not yet been resolved. Difficulties with NVQ internal verification in the hairdressing and hospitality areas have not been resolved effectively by managers. The learning and skills action plan 2004, identifies weaknesses, actions, target dates and status, but does not state systematically how and by whom the action will be taken.

39. The introduction of accredited PE courses is being explored as managers become aware of the need for more accreditation of skills. Learners must apply for funding to attend external sports courses. There is only one PE instructor for all activities and learners do not lead sessions; three sports officers cover her if she is absent, offering some activities. The PE instructor does not hold a first aid certificate and has not received sufficient continuous professional development.

40. Some internal and external communication is ineffective. Formal communication between the prison and the colleges and work placements is inadequate. Although there is some paperwork, there is not enough and it is not used consistently. Learners sign a contract before going on placement, or to the college, to indicate that they understand and agree to the detailed expectations and requirements set out in the contract. However, employers and college tutors do not always receive a copy of the document, so that they have no understanding of the restrictions placed upon the learners. There is an advice document for employers, but some do not receive it, and others receive it too late. In one instance, a new employer asked for paperwork and did not receive it until two months after employment had begun. Employers are aware that in such circumstances they may be inadvertently contravening some of the prison requirements. An evaluation sheet for community work placements is not regularly requested or returned. Some employers have been asked for a brief report about how the learner on placement is progressing, but this process is inconsistent and has not been formalised. The amount and effectiveness of communication varies considerably. The prison does not use work placements to accredit learners' work sufficiently, particularly in retailing placements.

41. Communication by the prison about access to information resources for those learners on college programmes is unsatisfactory. There is some confusion about the

availability of internet access at the prison for study research and the granting of extra study time at the college. Learners are concerned that they are not completing aspects of their work on time or to the standard they would wish. Confusion has arisen about attendance at interviews, learners having been given the wrong information. Learners taking NVQ assessments in the prison kitchen are also affected by ineffective communication between the two catering areas.

Equality of opportunity

42. The prison has a variety of equal opportunities policies and documents, some of which include prisoners, others do not. The equal opportunities policy statement entitled Diversity, dated February 2004, refers to recruiting, developing and retaining staff, but it does not refer to prisoners. The race relations management and equal opportunities terms of reference document is also entitled Diversity and dated February 2004; this document does refer to the prisoners when it states that 'staff, visitors and residents (prisoners) are kept informed regarding diversity'. The diversity group meeting has a standing agenda, which does not mention prisoners/residents. The race relations/diversity action plan, dated January 2004, has many references to prisoners. Objectives are stated, but how actions will be completed is not made clear and many of the target dates/deadlines are not specific.

43. Statistics for minority ethnic groups involved in training are produced monthly. These show that the highest representation of minority ethnic group prisoners is in the mother and baby unit. The education department informally monitors participation by minority ethnic groups in various classes and has identified a trend for significant participation in the hairdressing group.

44. There is a good range of external networking to support learning and progression. Eligible learners can attend local further education colleges for qualifications not offered at the prison. Two learners are attending programmes at a local agricultural college, and six are at a local further education college. The learners are well supported by staff from the Yorkshire prisons employment, training and education project, who are based in the education department at the prison. There are other good links with Connexions and adult guidance services. A new adult guidance worker has recently been appointed to the prison and is involved in the improved induction process for prisoners. Learners on college programmes are highly motivated and gaining in confidence, self-esteem and social skills. Courses are also offered by the a project based in East Yorkshire, which uses training in work on the waterways as a resettlement resource to prepare women for leaving prison.

45. The prison has links with a good range of local employers which provide community placements or paid work opportunities for learners at HMP Askham Grange. The employers are committed to the scheme and its purpose and value in preparing and supporting the women at a crucial period of transition and resettlement. Some employers have been working with the prison for a number of years. The importance of these links in providing learning and development opportunities for the women is recognised by the prison, especially in light of the resettlement agenda. Standards fund

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money has recently been used successfully to fund a worker, who has visited employers and increased the resource by a further 75 employers. The women on community placements and in paid work are developing confidence, self-esteem and social skills, as well as general and specific employment skills.

46. The prison library is subcontracted to the local city library services. It has a good selection of books by black authors. There are very few foreign language books, although four books have been acquired in Portuguese at the request of a prisoner. There are 100 books for basic skills learners. The library has no designated budget for new books. The prison purchases a good range of periodicals and magazines and newspapers based on a periodic survey of prisoners. The library contains 2,826 volumes, of which 1,969 are fiction, and 857 are non-fiction.

47. About 100 library books are suitable for children. Some of the books particularly in social sciences and hairdressing are outdated. There are not enough books on parenting and pregnancy, and very few art and creative studies books, other than those on needlecraft. The library provides a good range of audio books, although demand is low. The good range of recreational videos is well used by the prisoners, but does not include Asian films. The library has a good range of music tapes and CDs. There is a small careers section in the library, but some books for careers educational guidance are outdated, for example the occupations catalogue is for 2002. The library stock includes all the legal volumes required by Prison Service Orders.

48. Staff do not have enough equality of opportunity and diversity training. Also, equality of opportunity and diversity are not sufficiently promoted throughout the learning and skills provision. The management meeting notes illustrate that there are extensive discussions by senior staff about ways to promote diversity. They have identified improvements required around the prison, including the content and displays of posters in the education department. However, other learning and skills staff are less aware of the issues. The education department staff have had no equal opportunities or diversity training in the past 12 months. Learning materials, displays and the use of language do not reinforce equal opportunities and diversity. Requests for Asian videos are unfulfilled and there is insufficient food catering for cultural diversity. This is despite an objective on the diversity action plan in January 2004, for 'the catering manager to be given up-to-date training in minority ethnic cookery', with a target of 'as soon as possible'.

49. Lesson observations in the education department do not record comments about equal opportunities, diversity or differentiation. A pale green pen was used on a whiteboard, making learning information hard to see; a negative comment by a learner about Jehovah's Witnesses in an education class was not corrected by the tutor; and inappropriate language was used by a member of staff in referring to a learner's placement provider. Equal opportunities and diversity are not regular agenda items for education staff meetings. Access to most education accommodation is by stairs and the specialist facilities on the top floor are those that attract some people with restricted mobility. Internal doors in the open prison do not open automatically, despite many prisoners/learners wheeling pushchairs through the establishment. There is no formal

monitoring of learners' successes or failures at interviews for community placements, or paid work, to identify trends. The prison does not formally review and record information relating to learners' experiences.

Quality assurance

50. The quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. A quality assurance policy has recently been drafted to cover learning and skills training in the prison. Its purpose is to provide the prison with a sustainable framework that ensures the quality of learning and skills provision in line with its terms of reference. The policy document lists quality standards and performance indicators under seven general headings and has a section of procedural documents. The policy has not been implemented and no procedures relate to the procedural documents. The head of learning and skills chairs the quality improvement group, which has a core membership of 11 staff and a learning and skills adviser. There has not been sufficient management action to resolve the inadequate internal verification in both hairdressing and hospitality, to comply with awarding body and quality assurance requirements. Quality assurance does not sufficiently monitor the reasons for learners continuing on the same courses after the planned end of course deadline, for example on application of number and hairdressing courses. The education department subcontracts are not sufficiently managed to assure the quality of the provision in all areas.

51. The self-assessment report is the first to be produced for all learning and skills areas in the prison. It identifies that some staff have more previous experience of this type of activity than others. The education department report does not report on each area of learning separately and has insufficient detail for specific improvements in different subjects/areas of learning. Action points relating to improvements required for the hairdressing provision are included with the report; these identify that managers were aware of some of the weaknesses in the area, but not of the extent of the adverse effects regarding NVQ achievements. The education department's 2004 action plan has more details about key action points, including costings, than the 2003 version. No areas of learning are graded in the report, although the nursery/childcare provision has graded itself against each of the 'Common Inspection Framework' key questions.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

52. Administration provision is good.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- excellent retention rates
- good achievement rates
- effective individual support for learning
- particularly good advice and guidance for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient accreditation of related skills and knowledge
- restricted access to specialist resources for some learners

Achievement and standards

53. Retention of learners is excellent. Since January 2003, four intakes of learners have been recruited. Retention rates are 100 per cent, 91 per cent, 87 per cent and 95 per cent. Each course is scheduled to last for 12 weeks and learners attend the education centre three days each week. One intake completed the course in 11 weeks, one in 12 weeks and two in 13 weeks. Forty-nine learners were received in total.

54. Achievement rates are good. Of the 40 learners who were not released or transferred out, 78 per cent achieved a qualification. Thorough initial assessment identifies learners' prior educational and vocational experience. All learners demonstrate good attainment of practical skills and personal development. The standard of learners' work is good, particularly in the use of computers to produce multi-coloured posters and other products which include graphic images. Learners frequently refer to the significant improvement in confidence generated by their studies. Attendance and time-keeping at classes are good and all absences from classes are authorised. Most learners who achieve a level 1 qualification progress and complete level 2. Three learners are currently working on level 3.

Quality of education and training

55. Learners receive effective individual support. Rigorous initial assessment ensures that they all start at an appropriate level. Many of the learners have previous experience

of aspects of administration. A thorough induction quickly familiarises new learners with the course, particularly how to use the supporting learning material. In most classes learners work individually at their own pace on work set by tutors. Teaching and coaching is good. There are regular, planned teaching sessions on specific topics, such as completing job application forms and letter writing. Tutors give learners individual assistance as often as required, by demonstrating various techniques and offering constructive advice.

56. Learners are given particularly good advice and guidance. They speak highly of the support they receive from education staff, particularly about ways to achieve their career aspirations on release. Tutors ensure that learners have detailed information about the qualifications they will need to enter further or higher education, a specific career or self-employment. Individual learning plans are detailed, and linked to previous learning and experience and to resettlement plans. Learners are set realistic but challenging targets to complete modules of learning. Regular progress reviews by the education staff help to ensure that learners remain on target to achieve their goals. Mock examinations and tests are marked promptly and constructive feedback is given to learners to support improvements. Learners and staff clearly understand what has been achieved and what remains to be achieved. There are excellent working relationships between education staff and learners.

57. Overall, resources are satisfactory. A good range of printed material is available to help with learning. Learners can use a range of office equipment, such as binders, photocopiers and computers, which they use to produce items such as menus and posters, for prison departments. Learners also act as receptionists for prison events and conferences. They prepare delegate lists, establish a conference reception area and meet and greet guests. Workbooks have been designed by tutors to complement the commercially designed training manuals. The workbooks use non-technical language, have clear, well-designed pages and learners knowledge is tested at regular intervals. Past examination papers can be used until the learner feels confident of success. There are no computer-based learning materials to support the administration course and students have to rely on working with the printed workbooks. Learners who have been assessed as needing additional support with literacy and numeracy attend extra classes regularly. Tutors are often assisted by trained learners who act as peer tutors for less experienced learners.

58. Learners are not sufficiently accredited with related skills and knowledge. For example, on conference support activities, learners are working with others and team-working, they are using communication skills and developing their personal abilities. Many learners also gain keyboard skills which are not accredited.

Leadership and management

59. The management of administration training is satisfactory. Managers have a good understanding of issues surrounding attendance at classes and change attendance times where possible so that the maximum number of learners can attend. Communications within the education department are effective. Resources are well maintained and a

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planned programme of investment ensures that IT resources are kept up to date. Managers clearly understand how to resolve weaknesses such as the inability to offer a wide enough range of qualifications. However, plans are often not sufficiently detailed about timescales, identification of staff training requirements, or resource implications.

60. Access to specialist resources is restricted for some learners, as the resources are on the first and second floors of the education department, and only reached by stairs. The accommodation is good, rooms are spacious and well equipped. Rooms are open in the evenings and at weekends for learners to use. Staff encourage all learners to use the facilities, and this includes mothers with babies and children under 18 months. This is difficult as it means carrying the children and/or pushchairs up the stairs. Staff are willing to give learners with limited mobility individual training, but this limits the learners' experiences, as they do not benefit from working in groups and discussing topics.

Information & communications technology

61. The ICT provision is satisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- excellent retention rates
- good achievement rates
- effective individual support for learning

Weaknesses

- very limited range of qualifications
- poor access to specialist facilities for learners with restricted mobility

Achievement and standards

62. The retention rate is excellent for ICT courses. Since January 2003, 686 learners have been enrolled on computer courses. Intakes of learners are recruited monthly. The number of learners in each intake varies, the average being 49. Each course is scheduled to last four weeks and learners attend the education centre three days each week. Five intakes of learners have achieved 100 per cent retention. Retention on the remaining nine intakes varies, from 92.5 per cent to 99 per cent.

63. The achievement rate is good. Although most learners have no previous experience or qualifications in IT, 72 per cent of those who have completed the course since January 2003, have achieved a qualification. Thirty-six learners are still in training. Thorough initial assessment identifies learners' prior educational and vocational experiences. All learners demonstrate good attainment of practical and learning skills and personal development. Most learners who achieve a level 1 qualification progress and complete level 2. Three learners are currently working at level 3. The standard of learners' work is good, particularly in the use of computers to produce multi-colour posters and other products which include graphic images. Learners frequently refer to the significant improvement in their self-confidence generated by their studies. Attendance and time-keeping at classes are good and all absences from classes are authorised.

Quality of education and training

64. Learners receive effective individual support for learning. Thorough initial assessment ensures that all learners start at an appropriate level. Most learners start the course having no previous knowledge of computers. A thorough induction quickly

familiarises new learners with the computer and software packages. Tutors give learners individual assistance as often as required by demonstrating various computer techniques and offering constructive advice. Individual learning plans are detailed, linked to previous learning and experience and also to learners' resettlement plans. Tutors are often assisted by trained, experienced learners who act as peer tutors for less experienced learners.

65. Overall, the ICT resources are satisfactory. Workbooks have been designed by tutors to complement the commercially designed training manuals for the entry level qualifications. They use non-technical language, have clear, well-designed pages and learners' knowledge is tested at regular intervals. Learners on level 1 can either work from printed material, or use a CD-ROM system. A computer-based interactive software package has been developed by staff as a beginners' guide to word-processing, database and spreadsheets. There are no software training packages or qualifications available in IT applications such as accounts or keyboard skills. The tutors' computer is linked to all terminals to allow them to check progress during the lesson. The tutors' computer has not yet been linked to an electronic wipe board, although the equipment has been in the room for some time. Computers and software meet industry standards.

66. Learners' progress is monitored well by staff. Learners are set realistic, but challenging targets to complete learning modules. Learners' progress is recorded after every lesson. Tutors share the information to enable a co-ordinated approach to providing individual support. Mock examinations and tests are marked promptly and constructive feedback is given to learners. Learners who have been assessed as needing additional support with literacy and numeracy attend discrete classes.

67. The range of ICT qualifications is very narrow which does not allow learners to progress effectively. Most learners complete an entry level qualification consisting of three modules; they then progress to a level 1 qualification with five modules. There are no level 2 or 3 qualifications available, despite the fact that staff have developed a good range of advanced learning materials. Learners work through the advanced learning materials, but cannot gain external accreditation for their skills. Learners who wish to progress must attend college, but not all are at the stage in their sentences to be eligible. Related skills acquired by learners and valued by employers, are not recognised, recorded or accredited. These include communication and personal development skills.

Leadership and management

68. The management of the ICT provision is satisfactory. Resources are well maintained, although access to the second-floor rooms is not considered a problem in plans for the provision. A planned programme of investment to ensure that ICT resources are kept up to date is on target. Managers have a clear understanding of the actions required to resolve weaknesses such as the narrow range of qualifications. However, the plans often do not have details about timescales, identification of staff training requirements, or resource implications. The monitoring of teaching does not include equality of opportunity, diversity and differentiation. Quality assurance arrangements are not fully implemented.

69. Access to specialist resources is restricted for some learners as the resources are on the second floor of the education department, reached by many stairs. The accommodation is good, rooms are spacious and well equipped. The ICT training room is staffed during the daytimes, in the evenings and on Saturday mornings. Evening and weekend sessions are well attended by learners. The learners use these sessions to carry on working towards their qualifications to study particular topics at a more advanced level, to work on curriculum vitae and letters of job application, or official correspondence related to their sentence. Staff encourage all learners to use the facilities, and this includes mothers with babies and children under 18 months. This is difficult, as it means carrying the children and/or pushchairs up the stairs.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

70. The hospitality provision is unsatisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good standards of work
- good support for learners
- good use of commercial activities to improve learners' employment and life skills

Weaknesses

- poor achievement of nationally accredited qualifications
- insufficient kitchen space for food preparation
- ineffective management

Achievement and standards

71. Learners develop good standards of work. They produce buffets for prison events and a number of local organisations. Dishes produced are of a good quality and involve a wide range of practical skills, including devising the menus, costing and purchasing the food. A recent initiative is a monthly gourmet lunch, which is offered to other prisoners and their friends. The menu is of good quality and the NVQ learners serve the meal. A healthy eating club takes place one lunchtime each week, to offer advice on weight loss, healthy eating and exercise. This is organised by the PE instructor and prison kitchen assessor.

72. The achievement rate of nationally accredited qualifications is poor and the prison has been unable to accredit hospitality NVQs for nearly a year. It has recently regained NVQ centre status, but cannot accredit learners' completed NVQ units, until the new internal verifier certificate is submitted together with samples of internal verification work. In August 2003, 13 NVQ units at level 1 and 11 units at NVQ level 2 in catering, food preparation and handling were completed. NVQ assessment begins as soon as learners are ready, and takes place on a regular basis. NVQ learners' portfolios contain a good range of evidence and there are completed NVQ units awaiting certification. Twelve learners gained essential food hygiene certificates in 2004 and 12 in October of 2003. None of the prisoners working in the prison kitchen hold food hygiene qualifications.

Quality of education and training

73. Learners are given good individual support and coaching, appropriate to their needs. They also receive good pastoral support which helps learners to overcome personal difficulties, enabling them to continue in learning. For example, a learner who arrived late for class because of personal problems was supported in such a positive way that it enabled her to take a knowledge test and cook a quiche in the session. Staff also resolved a dispute in a busy session, enabling all learners still to produce the required dishes. Learners feel that they are well supported and treated with respect. There is a good rapport between learners and staff in this area.

74. Commercial activities are used well to enhance learners' employability and life skills. Learners are fully involved in producing buffets and gourmet lunches. This includes menu choice, costings, food purchase, preparation and service. Learners use cookery books and magazines in the training area; they collect recipes in a hard-bound book to take with them when leaving the prison. Many learners visit supermarkets for the first time in many years, as part of this process. As learners progress within the class they are able to produce buffets unsupported. Two learners produced a buffet, to a commercial standard, for a local charitable organisation. They got up early, cooked and served the food with no assistance. They received many compliments about the food, which increased their confidence and motivation. The basic food hygiene courses are taught as and when required. They are available to all prisoners and staff.

75. There are not enough working surfaces in the food preparation kitchen. The space available is insufficient to produce buffets and the range of dishes required without causing delays and the possible cross-contamination of foods. An adjacent classroom is used to create more room, but this is not appropriate. The main prison kitchen is well equipped. NVQ learners only visit this area occasionally, for NVQ assessment, such as when they receive deliveries. Learners do not receive sufficient knowledge and experience of the catering industry given the opportunities available in the prison. Staff are well qualified in their occupational areas, but some do not update their professional occupational skills regularly.

76. NVQ assessment takes place in real working environments. The food preparation kitchen and the prison kitchen both have assessors. Food is often prepared under pressure, for commercial activities. Commercial prison events and lunches and specific activities in the prison kitchen, such as deliveries, are used for assessment. However, communications between the catering areas are not reliable and assessment practices are not shared. The acting catering manager is not involved with NVQs. For example, the NVQ assessor based in the prison kitchen did not receive messages about an early morning NVQ assessment until the day before. This assessment had also been cancelled on a previous occasion. Learners were put under unnecessary pressure in an unfamiliar area.

77. Formal reviews of learners' progress take place every four to six weeks. Targets are set, which are recorded on learners' plans, but these targets are not detailed or thorough. They do not ensure good progression for learners. Individual learning plans

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are not used effectively to monitor individual progress or to plan completion dates. There is no formal initial assessment at the beginning of NVQ courses. Learners who require support with literacy and numeracy skills are required to attend classes in the education department.

78. Only a narrow range of hospitality courses is available, with very few places. This is especially disappointing for the prison's resettlement agenda. York's tourist industry offers eligible prisoners good opportunities to work in hotels and other hospitality outlets. However, there are many learners on the prison's lists for community placements and paid work. Not enough is done to recognise, celebrate and accredit related skills; for example, key skills, laundry work, customer care, industrial cleaning and portering are all taking place within the hospitality area of learning.

Leadership and management

79. The management of the hospitality training provision is ineffective. Training and the management of the operational function of the kitchen and staff mess are the responsibility of two different managers. Prisoners are allocated to kitchen work by the labour allocation board, for weekday work only. Prison kitchen staff are required to negotiate weekend work for prisoners themselves. Training for prisoners who work in the prison kitchen is inadequate and poorly recorded. Not enough accreditation of skills takes place. Prisoners receive a brief introduction to food hygiene during the prison kitchen induction, but none of the current prisoners employed there hold the required food hygiene awards. Vocational training in the prison kitchen and for the NVQ in food preparation is not well managed.

80. Managers have not made adequate arrangements to cover the internal verification role of the catering manager, who has not worked in the prison for nearly a year. Awarding body approval for the hospitality NVQs at the prison was withdrawn. The trainer/assessor cannot internally verify her own assessments under awarding body regulations. No alternative assessment or internal verification arrangements were introduced until a new internal verifier was appointed in January 2004. This person has just re-started the internal verification process, but until his internal verification certificate has been received, verification are invalid unless countersigned. No provision has been made for this. There is no internal verification strategy, or plans to carry out the full range of required internal verification activities, including observation of assessment practice and support for assessors. This is especially important as the prison has an inexperienced and newly qualified assessor. The sampling plan for learners' work is inadequate. It only operates summatively and cannot identify problems with assessment as they arise. There is no standardisation of assessment practice, sharing of good practice or effective utilisation of specialist skills and equipment. Overall quality assurance of hospitality courses is inadequate, including there being no formal evaluation of the food preparation programme.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

81. The hairdressing provision is very weak.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good initial development of level 1 NVQ hairdressing skills

Weaknesses

- poor NVQ achievements
- poor planning of training and assessment activities
- poor internal verification

Achievement and standards

82. The initial development of level 1 NVQ hairdressing skills is good. Learners acquire good practical hairdressing skills early in their programmes. Most learners produce practical work to the standard expected of them. In some cases, learners' work is of a good standard, considering the length of time they have been on the programme. Portfolios and standards of written work are generally satisfactory, but the range of supplementary evidence to support assessment is limited.

83. Achievement of NVQs is poor. In 2003, only 16 per cent of learners achieved an NVQ at level 1 in hairdressing. The NVQ awarding body centre approval was withdrawn mid-2003 for prison hairdressing staffing reasons. No further NVQ assessments or accreditations of learners' work could take place until new staff were employed and centre approval was reinstated in September 2003. Since that date achievement rates have been poor and internal verification been inadequate. The retention rate for the 12-week periods is high and most learners continue into another enrolment period. No reliable data are available before the 2003 period.

Quality of education and training

84. Teaching is satisfactory. Staff use standardised lesson plans for each session. Learners are not given objectives to complete during the session and there is no formal evaluation of learning. Teaching materials are satisfactory, and learners receive written support materials for each NVQ unit of their qualification. Support materials frequently contain a self-assessment test which helps the learner to develop understanding. Some of the support materials do not relate to the awarding body's new standards. There is a good rapport between learners and tutors. Most learners are enthusiastic and motivated about their training. However, some salon practices are inappropriate and do not teach

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good skills for employment. For example, clients walk around the salon with tints on their hair and insufficient protective clothing.

85. The prison salon has recently been refurbished with modern professional hairdressing fittings and equipment. However, it can only be accessed by many stairs. It is not easily accessible for clients or in a position to promote its commercial potential. Visitors who use other prison services are not encouraged to be salon clients. Learners have access to a good range of hairdressing textbooks and professional hairdressing journals. There are facilities to view training videos, but the videos are poor and out of date. The stock of hairdressing products in the salon is inadequate for learners to complete the NVQs at level 1 or 2. For example, hair colouring products are so limited that clients are repeatedly refused colouring services. The salon also has a shortage of clients requiring perm treatments. Learners are unable to complete level 1 NVQ assessments quickly enough.

86. The hairdressing staff are well qualified and occupationally competent. However, they do not have sufficient NVQ knowledge and experience to be able to fully implement the requirements of the qualification without appropriate support. They are very enthusiastic and keen to develop the vocational qualification, but have not received sufficient management support and guidance. One member of staff is a qualified assessor and the other is working towards the award; neither holds internal verification qualifications.

87. Learners have their progress reviewed each week completing a personal development plan. More formal progress reviews take place each month. The targets set in both types of review are not clear enough and do not specify tasks to be completed, with timescales. No long-term targets are set to give learners goals for completing their qualifications, and learners do not know when their NVQs should be completed. The targets for learners' 12-week enrolled periods are inadequate.

88. Most learners receive an induction to the hairdressing programme at the beginning of their training. They are provided with an induction pack, which provides information about health and safety, equal opportunities and the structure of the NVQ. Learners are also made aware of the appeals procedure. Although learners have little understanding of the NVQ process or the assessment process they are aware of the complaints procedure.

89. Learners receive an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy abilities, during their prison induction. Those with identified needs attend separate literacy and numeracy classes in the education department. The hairdressing tutors are generally unaware of their learners' literacy and numeracy support needs. The initial assessment of learners' hairdressing skills is inadequate. All learners are placed on level 1 NVQ programmes, unless they have started on level 2 at another establishment.

Leadership and management

90. Teaching and assessment activities are poorly planned. Hairdressing products are not supplied effectively enough to support learners' work and encourage clients to the salon. Schemes of work produced for level 1 NVQs do not include all the qualification requirements within the planned length of programme, the enrolment period is 12 weeks and the scheme of work is for 16 weeks. There is no scheme of work for NVQs at level 2. The staff are employed only for their teaching time. There is no planned time for them to assess written work, review learners' portfolios, or prepare teaching sessions. Problems with staff development have been identified and a plan has recently been implemented to resolve them. Learners complete a questionnaire to evaluate their training programmes, 90 per cent of responses indicate that learners are concerned about the lack of hairdressing products. The need to order consumables more effectively has been identified by managers. Data are not sufficiently monitored and analysed and the information available is not used in decisions about the management of the vocational programmes.

91. Internal verification is poor. The subcontractor's internal verification visits are not frequent enough, with up to three months between visits. These arrangements do not give adequate support to the inexperienced assessors. Assessors are observed assessing and are given constructive feedback, but this does not occur frequently enough and does not provide sufficient support to standardise assessment procedures. The countersigning of the unqualified assessor's decisions about practical assessments is inappropriate. For example, the internal verifier countersigns without being present and seeing the final result, making the assessment invalid for practical purposes. There is no long-term sampling plan or overall monitoring document, and records do not identify learners' progress or the type of evidence that has been sampled.

92. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory and it is discussed at induction. Quality assurance of the hairdressing provision is inadequate and was not included in the education department's self-assessment report. In the past two months the education manager and hairdressing staff have listed action points which need to be carried out in order to make improvements in the provision.

Foundation programmes

93. The foundation programmes are good.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- excellent retention rates
- good achievement of nationally accredited qualifications
- good development of learners' confidence and self-esteem

Weaknesses

- some inappropriate accommodation
- insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- insufficient life skills provision

Achievement and standards

94. The retention rate on foundation programmes is excellent. In the period January 2003-January 2004, of those who remained in the prison, 94 per cent of learners on literacy courses and 91 per cent of learners on numeracy courses were retained. In the same period, 92 per cent of learners on social and life skills programmes were retained.

95. The achievement rate for nationally accredited qualifications is good. Accreditation achieved by learners met the key performance targets set by the prison service in the period 2002-03 and is on target for 2003-04. In the period January 2003-January 2004, 89 per cent of learners who completed a literacy programme and 78 per cent of those on numeracy programmes achieved a qualification at entry level, level 1 or level 2. Some learners who begin at entry level make good progress from entry level, through level 1 and on to level 2. Learners on literacy and numeracy, and social and life skills programmes make satisfactory progress and improve their skills. The standard of work in literacy and numeracy sessions and in learners' portfolios is satisfactory.

96. Learners' development of confidence and self-esteem is good. The achievement of qualifications and skills relative to their prior achievements and experiences helps learners to establish a positive self-image. Learners are proud of their achievements, become more confident and feel more able to take up opportunities for community work and paid employment.

Quality of education and training

97. Most teaching is satisfactory, but it is good on social and life skills programmes. For example, in a session about improving nurturing skills, learners were encouraged to participate in exploring the concept of anger and how children express unhappiness. The learners are very well motivated. A good range of teaching methods, activities and resources is used to engage the learners and promote learning. In literacy and numeracy sessions tutors give satisfactory explanations of skills, such as the use of grammar and punctuation; however, they do not use a wide enough range of teaching strategies to engage and motivate all learners, and they over-emphasise the use of worksheets. The knowledge and understanding of learners is well checked, and tutors give good individual coaching. However, teaching in literacy and numeracy does not relate sufficiently to help meet the interests or vocational relevance of the learners.

98. Initial assessments in literacy and numeracy abilities are satisfactory and are used well to identify the literacy and numeracy levels of the learners, and to provide information for their individual learning plans. Relationships between staff and learners are particularly good. Learners and staff demonstrate mutual respect and the behaviour and attitude of learners in sessions is very good. Staff demonstrate a genuine interest in supporting individual learners and ensuring that they make the most of their educational opportunities while in prison.

99. Literacy and numeracy tutors are qualified teachers and have experience in teaching literacy and numeracy. However, they do not have recognised literacy and numeracy qualifications and one tutor has not received training in the core curriculum. None of the tutors are qualified or experienced enough to teach or develop a programme for learners who speak English as an additional language.

100. Some accommodation is inappropriate and unsuitable for the teaching of literacy, numeracy or social and life skills. The number of classes has been increased to meet demand, but there are insufficient appropriate classrooms. The IT suite is used for teaching literacy, numeracy or life skills, which restricts group work and communication between learners. All literacy and numeracy classes are on the second floor of the building, which is inaccessible for learners with mobility difficulties.

101. Learners' progress is not sufficiently monitored or recorded. Individual learning plans contain appropriate long-term aims, but reviews of progress in literacy and numeracy are not sufficiently evaluative. Tutors do not always carefully evaluate and record the progress made by individual learners in sessions. However, learners' work is carefully marked and constructive feedback is given to them. Learners on the recently piloted nurturing and personal development programmes have not had an initial assessment from which to measure their progress in learning, and learning is not assessed or measured in classroom sessions.

102. There are not enough social and life skills classes to meet the needs of all prisoners. Many of them are preparing for resettlement and there are not enough classes for personal development and life skills to help them to prepare for the future. As there

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are very few alternatives, the three accredited life skills classes are used inappropriately as placements for learners who are in the prison for just a few weeks. This is disruptive to other learners and sometimes there are too many learners in sessions to meet individual learning needs adequately. In a recent survey of learners, carried out by the education department, the most popular training provision was social and life skills, particularly cookery, positive thinking and confidence building. Twenty-seven per cent of the learners requested further training about being a good parent and 17 per cent on being a good grandparent. A further 20 per cent would like to develop skills to enable them to help their children with their reading and number work.

Leadership and management

103. Managers carefully monitor the retention and achievement rate of learners. Communications are good between staff and they share good practice effectively. Annual appraisals and staff supervision are used to identify training needs. The wide range of staff development opportunities available through the subcontracting college supports curriculum development, but the distance between the prison and the college is prohibitive for some staff. Education department staff have not received equal opportunities or diversity training.

104. Recently introduced quality assurance systems are incomplete. Some observations of teaching and learning have been carried out, although not all tutors have been observed in the current cycle. There is insufficient monitoring and recording of the promotion of equality of opportunity, diversity and differentiation in teaching sessions. Course reviews have not been completed, but are scheduled to take place in the summer term. Learner feedback has been used to improve the quality of some of the provision.