

REINSPECTION REPORT

HMP Erlestoke Reinspection

11 February 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

| SEVEN-POINT SCALE | FIVE-POINT SCALE |
|-------------------|------------------|
| grade 1 | grade 1 |
| grade 2 | |
| grade 3 | grade 2 |
| grade 4 | grade 3 |
| grade 5 | grade 4 |
| grade 6 | grade 5 |
| grade 7 | |

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 **learndirect** 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.

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HMP Erlestoke Reinspection

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Erlestoke is a category C training prison for adult men, which is situated in a rural area near Devizes, Wiltshire. At the time of the inspection, 418 prisoners were held at the prison, which has an operating capacity of 426. This is a significant increase since the previous inspection in 2003, when there were 374 prisoners. HMP Erlestoke has recently opened a small unit for 16 category D prisoners, who are accommodated in a dedicated resettlement unit. The prison offers vocational training in sport and recreation, catering, construction, and industrial cleaning. Seventy-nine learners were following vocational training courses in the week of the reinspection, and 91 were attending education classes, most on a full-time basis. The prison education unit is operated by a local college, which also has contracts with 10 other prisons. The college took up the contract in September 2004. It offers a range of courses including basic literacy and numeracy, art, information and communications technology (ICT), carpentry, and business. In addition to classes within the unit, education is provided for learners in workplaces and on the residential wings. The prison has contract services workshops where prisoners work on tasks such as light electrical assembly, computer data entry, and package labelling. Prisoners are also employed in the gardens, and as orderlies and wing cleaners.

2. The prison appointed its first head of learning and skills in October 2004. She manages the education and library contracts and is responsible for developing opportunities for vocational education at the prison. The head of regimes and resettlement is an operational prison governor who manages the workshops, industries, gymnasium and kitchen. Each training workshop is managed by an instructor. The physical education department is managed by a senior officer, and has four instructors. The education department is managed by two education managers who job share. There are four full-time and 28 part-time tutors, and a temporary administration assistant. The library is managed by a local authority library service. It is open for 24 hours a week, staffed by a library officer, two orderlies, and a professional librarian who works for two days a week.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Construction

3. There are currently eight learners on carpentry and joinery programmes and seven on painting and decorating programmes. Painting and decorating is managed by the vocational training section of the prison and the workshop is open for four and a half days a week. The carpentry workshop is open for four days a week and is part of the prison's education section. In addition, there is a weekly leisure evening class in carpentry. Both trades offer external accreditation, and painting and decorating also offers opportunities for progression to an intermediate craft award. There is a waiting list of around four weeks for each course.

Information & communications technology

4. There are currently 30 learners taking modules of an examination-based qualification in information technology, of whom 24 are registered through the education department. The other six learners are registered with PS Plus, a prison service initiative part funded by the European Social Fund. PS Plus learners are registered and assessed through a centre in Warrington. Both sets of learners work in the same room but they use separate computer hardware and software and are taught in different ways. PS Plus learners use computer-based training materials and have individual support from tutors. Their learning materials include simulations of software applications and of the internet. The learners registered through the education department do not use simulated applications, and have text-based materials, training sessions and individual support to complete their modules. They are tested by education department staff. There are also four learners taking an introductory computer literacy course, based in a smaller ICT room.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

5. Prisoners can participate in a range of recreational physical education activities including basketball, badminton, volleyball, football, and weight training. The sports accommodation comprises a three-court sports hall, a weight training and fitness room, an all-weather pitch and an outdoor sports field. Recreational physical education is organised on a weekly timetable that includes daytime, weekend and evening sessions. The prison offers a programme of vocational training in physical education, including an Open College Network (OCN) certificate in understanding physical education and team games, an assistant gym instructors' NVQ at level 1, a gym instructors' national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2, a course in community tag-rugby coaching and a course in the treatment of injuries. In-house sports skills development courses are offered in volleyball, basketball and football. The Heart Start emergency life support award is offered to learners on the prison induction programme. In the week of the inspection, 13 learners were working towards the OCN award.

6. Sports courses take place on four and a half days a week, from Monday to Friday lunchtime. Six gym orderlies work on a shift rota covering seven days a week. There are also two cleaners who have completed physical education courses. There is one senior physical education officer, and one part time and four full-time physical education officers. The physical education department currently has one member of staff off on long-term sick leave and others who are covering other duties within the prison.

Health, social care & public services

7. There are 13 learners following certificated cleaning programmes. Learners first work towards the certificate in cleaning proficiency at level 1 which comprises 10 units, then at level 2 which comprises 20 units, or level 3 which comprises 30 units. They can also take additional qualifications in dealing with bio-hazards, and cleaning food preparation areas. Training takes place over four and a half days a week in the dedicated training area or around the prison. One member of staff provides the training and assesses the learners. Three learners have also been trained as assessors and trainers.

Foundation programmes

8. The education department offers a range of learning programmes from entry level to level 3 and above. Foundation programmes include literacy, numeracy, ICT, social and life skills, art and craft, parenting, cookery and family literacy. There are opportunities to achieve a range of A levels and other qualifications, including degrees through distance learning. All new prisoners take part in an induction which includes an assessment of their literacy, numeracy and language support needs. The results of the assessment determine the appropriate course for individual prisoners. All courses are externally accredited. Many learners attend more than one course. There are currently 91 learners on education programmes.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of inspectors | 5 |
| Number of inspection days | 22 |
| Number of learners interviewed | 45 |
| Number of staff interviewed | 36 |
| Number of partners/external agencies interviewed | 2 |

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

9. At the previous inspection, training in construction and in health, social care and public services was judged to be good. Foundation training and training in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel were satisfactory. HMP Erlestoke's leadership and management and its quality assurance systems were unsatisfactory. Its arrangements for equality of opportunity were satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, training in construction and in health, social care and public services was still good. Foundation training and training in ICT and in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel were satisfactory. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity were satisfactory but quality assurance was still unsatisfactory. The provision is now adequate to meet the reasonable need of those receiving it.

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

10. Construction learners demonstrate good skills and produce work of a high standard.

Their rate of achievement of qualifications is satisfactory. Approximately half of starters achieve units towards their qualification. Many others do not achieve because they are transferred to another prison or released. In painting and decorating, learners have the opportunity to progress to the intermediate craft award, which improves their employment prospects after release.

11. In industrial cleaning, achievement of qualifications is good. Standards of work are high. Some learners progress to act as trainers and assessors. Learners can work towards a bio-hazard qualification which significantly improves their chances of securing good-quality employment on release.

12. Retention and achievement rates on NVQ programmes in physical education were poor at the previous inspection but are now good. However, progress is sometimes slow. The prison also offers a range of other awards. Progression opportunities are provided for learners who successfully complete the physical education course. They can work in the gymnasium as gym orderlies.

13. Learners on ICT courses attain good skills and receive a good introduction to industry standard applications. Most learners produce a good standard of work using the self-paced learning materials, and achieve units towards the examination-based qualification in information technology award.

14. Achievement rates on most foundation courses are good. Learners produce good work during their learning sessions. Their folders are well organised and presented and contain good evidence of their achievements.

Quality of education and training

15. Training in construction is good. Tutors are knowledgeable and have good experience in their respective trades. Practical activities are well planned and learners' progress is well monitored. Background knowledge is delivered sensitively, acknowledging any learning difficulties. Learners also benefit from attaining key skills in application of number in a vocational context.

16. There is good support for learners who have literacy or numeracy needs. Education staff visit all the workshops weekly and provide individual tuition as required. In some areas, such as construction, this support is occupationally focused, allowing learners to develop literacy or numeracy skills in an industrial context. Many learners who have previously resisted tuition in literacy and numeracy now benefit from this good support and are keen to learn further.

17. There are good resources for painting and decorating. The training unit has a

realistic work situation for skills development, and a separate classroom with a new computer and printer. Consumable items such as paint, paper and brushes are in good supply. Tools and equipment for carpentry are also good, but the carpentry workshop is housed in unsuitable accommodation which makes supervision difficult.

18. Construction learners do not have sufficient opportunities to practise their skills in realistic conditions. They do not practise by decorating areas of the prison or take part in community projects outside the prison.

19. Vocational trainers do not receive information about learners' basic skills needs when they start work or training. This makes it difficult to plan learning effectively to meet learners' needs.

20. Learning plans have recently been introduced throughout the prison. In most areas, they are not yet used effectively, and in some they are not used at all. In physical education, they are not used to record learners' objectives, progress or learning outcomes. Learners are rarely set individual targets, and their achievements are often poorly recorded and incomplete.

21. Good use is made of the learner monitoring system in ICT. All ICT learners have an individual learning plan that contains target dates for module completion. They are closely monitored during their training sessions and their progress is recorded in a logbook. Learners who are transferred to other prisons are issued with an up-to-date training record that allows them to quickly establish their status with the new institution and avoid delays in completing their qualification.

22. Standards of training in industrial cleaning are good. Instructors and learners are enthusiastic and pass on their experiences well. Learners develop confidence through practising their skills throughout the prison, and are able to state clearly the techniques they would use for different situations. They are also offered training in formulating business plans, through a link with the education department. The programme includes marketing, finance and time management. Many learners have ambitions to run their own businesses or to pursue careers in the industry after release.

23. Physical education learners develop good skills and can identify personal gains such as improved fitness, increased self-esteem and confidence. Progression routes are good, enabling learners to move from taster courses to vocational training at levels 1 and 2, according to their level of ability or interest.

24. The new NVQ programme in catering is well supported by the education department. An instructor provides individual sessions for NVQ learners on one morning each week. These concentrate on improving literacy and numeracy. In addition, NVQ learners attend a background knowledge session in the education department on one afternoon a week.

25. There are some unsatisfactory resources in education. Many classrooms are too small and there is very little access to ICT during lessons. However, tutors have made

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great efforts to make the classrooms and environment as welcoming and supportive as possible. Many examples of learners' work are prominently displayed on the walls of the education department together with up-to-date posters and other relevant materials.

26. Training accommodation is satisfactory in most areas. **However, training areas for industrial cleaning are cramped and cannot accommodate the current number of learners.** There is **poor use of resources in ICT.** Of the 20 computers in the computer room, 10 are set aside for the sole use of PS Plus learners even though there are only six such learners.

27. **Teaching and learning on foundation programmes is good.** Lessons are well planned and tutors make good use of a variety of techniques. Learning materials are differentiated to cater for different ability levels.

28. There is a **wide range of options for learners who need to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.** In education, they can progress from entry level to level 2, or take key skills qualifications at levels 1 and 2. There are opportunities to study for these qualifications in the evenings and at weekends. There is also outreach from the education department to wings and workplaces, and a 'Toe-by-Toe' reading programme.

29. There are **insufficient links between foundation courses.** There are few integrated assignments that involve learners in using a range of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Learners do not collect evidence from their other activities to support their learning.

Leadership and management

30. The prison has maintained and developed its strategy for improving and expanding education and training. The new head of learning and skills has worked effectively with the head of resettlement and regimes to develop clear plans for new provision. The plans are well understood by staff at the prison, and have received good support from the prison management team.

31. There has been a **significant increase in the size of the education contract.** This has enabled the education department to extend its outreach provision to prisoners working in industries and workshops, and increase support for open learning courses. The number of unemployed prisoners has dropped from over 100 at the time of the previous inspection to 21 in the week of the reinspection.

32. The prison has **productive links with a range of agencies** which it uses to enhance education and training and to help prepare prisoners for resettlement on release. An example is the 'Firmstart' programme, which enables prisoners to develop business plans with a view to setting up their own companies after release. This programme runs in the education department with support from outside agencies.

33. **The relationship with the new college contractor is good and this been used to improve provision and integrate education more fully with the prison regime.** The college has responded quickly to requests for additional provision and has improved the

effectiveness of its input into the sentence planning process. Links between the education department and the prison library, which were poor at the time of the previous inspection, are now good.

34. The education department still has insufficient links with the prison's vocational training departments. The results of literacy and numeracy assessments are not passed to tutors in painting and decorating, catering, or physical education. This weakness was identified at the previous inspection but it has not been dealt with.

35. Despite the increase in education and training programmes, **there is still not enough vocational training.** Less than half the employed prisoners are in workshops where vocational training is available. Many still carry out unskilled repetitive work which does little to improve their future employment prospects. Pay for education has improved, and is now the same as for most workplace activities, though it remains significantly below what can be earned through piecework in the highest paying workshops.

36. **Education and training resources remain inadequate in some areas.** Education staff have too little time to manage the curriculum well, and facilities for staff in education, training and physical education are poor. While some workshops have good accommodation, others, particularly industrial cleaning, do not.

37. At the previous inspection the promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum was identified as a weakness. This has not improved. **There is little evidence that equality of opportunity and diversity are discussed or dealt with after the induction process.**

38. Since the previous inspection, new systems for monitoring and reporting on the quality of provision have been introduced. These now cover all aspects of education and training. However, most of this work has been done since autumn 2004, and it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of the new procedures.

39. The quality improvement group is at an early stage of development. Its meetings focus on operational issues and on establishing a cross-department dialogue. The group has yet to spend substantial time on its main remit which is to monitor the quality of provision and share good practice.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear strategy for learning and skills
- good links with external agencies
- close and effective links with the education subcontractor

Weaknesses

- insufficient vocational training opportunities
- some poor accommodation and resources
- little promotion of equality and diversity within the curriculum
- quality assurance systems not fully established

Construction

Strengths

- good development of practical skills
- good training
- effective support for learners
- good resources in painting and decorating

Weaknesses

- few opportunities for work experience
- insufficient sharing of initial assessment information with vocational tutors

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good attainment of basic ICT skills
- good use of monitoring systems

Weaknesses

- limited range of courses
- poor utilisation of resources

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates on NVQ courses
- good progression routes for learners

Weaknesses

- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- slow implementation of quality assurance systems

Health, social care & public services

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good training
- good opportunities to apply practical skills
- good support

Weaknesses

- inadequate accommodation for practical training
- insufficient feedback to learners following assessment

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good achievement rates on most courses
- much good teaching and learning
- wide range of provision from entry level to level 2

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory resources
- insufficient linkage between foundation courses
- slow introduction of a literacy, numeracy and language strategy

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

40. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- clear strategy for learning and skills
- good links with external agencies
- close and effective links with the education subcontractor

Weaknesses

- insufficient vocational training opportunities
- some poor accommodation and resources
- little promotion of equality and diversity within the curriculum
- quality assurance systems not fully established

41. Since the previous inspection there have been many changes in the management of the prison. Both the governor and the deputy governor left the prison in January 2005, and the prison is currently headed by a 'caretaker' governor seconded from another prison. The management team responsible for education and training has completely changed, as has the education contractor. Despite these changes, the prison has maintained and developed its strategy for improving and expanding education and training. In the summer of 2004, a survey of prisoners' views was conducted to help in this process. A head of learning and skills was appointed in October 2004, and has worked effectively with the head of resettlement and regimes to develop plans for new provision. These include courses in subject areas which correspond to job opportunities outside, such as lift truck operation, catering, computing and performing manufacturing operations. There are also plans in place to expand the painting and decorating training programme. The plans are clear and are well understood by prison staff. They have received good support from the prison management team and have considerably raised the profile of education and training within the prison.

42. The prison has been active and successful in bidding for external funds to help it develop its provision. It has purchased one lift truck and secured funds for another. Funds have been secured to create a new classroom, and there has been a significant increase in the size of the education contract. This has enabled outreach provision from the education department to be extended to prisoners working in industries and workshops. The number of unemployed prisoners has dropped from over 100 at the

time of the previous inspection to 21 in the week of the reinspection. At the previous inspection there was insufficient provision for learners at level 3. In response, the education department has increased its support for open learning courses. Seventy-seven learners were supported on a variety of courses between September and December 2004, including more than 20 who were following university programmes by distance learning.

43. The prison has productive links with a range of external businesses and agencies, and uses them to enhance education and training and to help prepare prisoners for resettlement on release. The businesses include building and manufacturing employers that provide opportunities for prisoners who have had training or work experience while at HMP Erlestoke. The links have been enhanced because the prison has successfully applied to develop a resettlement stage two unit. Prisoners in this unit will work outside the prison during the day and have been found placements with employers. The prison receives support from the Prince's Trust and other training agencies for its 'Firmstart' programme, which enables prisoners to develop business plans with a view to setting up their own businesses after release. This programme is run in the education department, but business start-up courses are also offered to learners in industrial cleaning and will shortly be extended to workers in the gardens. Prisoners are made aware of sources of business start-up funding available to them on release. A good range of information, advice, and guidance is provided by several agencies, including Jobcentre Plus, PS Plus, and the education contractor. Charitable organisations are used to provide help to prisoners approaching release. A team of four prisoner orderlies recruits prisoners who are approaching the end of their sentence onto the resettlement scheme. Using their links with outside agencies, they are able to steer prisoners towards help with housing, employment, training and benefits, as well as more specialised help with drug misuse and offending behaviour.

44. At the time of the previous inspection, the relationship with the contracting college was poor. The relationship with the new contractor is much better and has been used to improve provision and integrate education more closely with the prison regime. Managers from the college visit the prison regularly to monitor performance and discuss improvements. They collect detailed data on the performance of programmes, for instance on rates of attendance, early withdrawal, and achievement, which are regularly shared with the head of learning and skills. At contract meetings, there is robust evaluation of performance as well as planning for new provision. The education managers now attend monthly meetings with managers from the contractor's 10 other prisons, enabling them to learn about good practice elsewhere. The college has responded quickly to requests for additional provision. For example, the number of tutors involved in outreach work has increased from one to six and new appointments have been made for lift truck driving. The education department is helping catering staff to provide NVQ training in the prison kitchens by teaching the background knowledge needed for the qualification. Opportunities for staff development have improved. All staff recently attended equality and diversity training, and four are currently enrolled on level 4 study programmes. Links between the education department and the prison library, which were poor at the time of the previous inspection, have improved. The library officer attends meetings of the foundation teaching team, and the tutors keep the

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library informed of the projects and subject areas they are working on. This enables library staff to acquire the appropriate materials and provide better guidance to learners. The education department has enrolled the two library orderlies on a library and information skills qualification.

45. The department has improved the effectiveness of its contribution to the sentence planning process. Procedures for initial assessment are more focused and the results are communicated to the prison's labour allocation board with a clear recommendation from the education department. The education department attempts to ascertain each new arrival's needs by telephoning their previous prison, rather than make them take another initial assessment. Where prisoners do need a literacy and numeracy assessment, the results are given to them on a laminated card, so they can take them on to their next prison. Where a prisoner needs additional help with literacy or numeracy, this can be offered in a choice of ways, including full-time education, individual coaching in the workplace, or participation in the 'Toe-by-Toe' scheme which uses prisoner volunteers as tutors. However, there are still not enough links with the prison's vocational training departments. The results of literacy and numeracy assessments are not passed to tutors in painting and decorating, catering, or physical education. This weakness was identified at the previous inspection but it has not been remedied. A standard individual learning plan has been introduced for all departments to use, but there are major inconsistencies in the ways it is completed.

46. Despite the increase in education and training programmes, there is still insufficient vocational training, a fact recognised in the prison's self-assessment report. Surveys have identified a demand from prisoners for training in bricklaying and other construction skills, but the prison has not yet developed plans to provide these, and there is still no accredited training for prisoners working in the gardens or recycling unit. Vocational training workshops are operated by one instructor, and are disrupted when he or she is absent for any reason. This was a weakness at the previous inspection, and has not been dealt with. Less than half the employed prisoners are in workshops where vocational training is available. Many still carry out unskilled repetitive work, which does little to improve their future employment prospects. The number of learners on vocational training programmes has doubled from 38 at the time of the previous inspection to 79 now, but the increase in the prison's population means that the number who work in areas without training has also increased slightly, from 199 to 209. However, these areas are now all visited regularly by tutors from the education department, who offer assistance with literacy and numeracy skills and encourage men to consider attending education classes. At the previous inspection, there was a wide differential between wages paid to prisoners in these workshops and the rates of pay for those attending education. Pay for education has improved, and is now the same as for most workplace activities, though it remains significantly below what can be earned through piecework in the highest paying workshops. The prison has recently introduced 'booster' courses which enable a small number of prisoners to attend part-time education while retaining their place in the workshop and the extra income it brings.

47. The prison has well-developed plans to improve resources for education and training, and in some cases, funding for these has been achieved through successful

bids. However, these have had little effect on the experience of prisoners so far, and resources remain inadequate in some areas. Education staff have insufficient time to manage the curriculum. Almost all tutors are hourly paid, and are only paid for the contact time they spend with learners. There is insufficient paid time for curriculum management and tutorial functions. Facilities for staff in education, training and physical education are poor, with insufficient desk space or access to computers. There are too few classrooms and many are very small. While some workshops have good accommodation, others, particularly industrial cleaning, do not.

Equality of opportunity

48. The prison has an equal opportunities policy and there are signs explaining its commitment to equal opportunities prominently displayed on notice boards throughout the establishment. The education department has adopted its contracted college's equal opportunities policy, student compact and student charter. These were written specifically for use in prisons, and learners are given copies of them at induction. The prison's anti-bullying posters and self-harm awareness statements have recently been updated, and they are clearly displayed around the establishment. There is a network of prisoner 'listeners' who are available to discuss issues and concerns. The prison generally displays a culture of respect for individuals, and relationships between prisoners and staff are good.

49. The prison monitors groups of prisoners in education, training and work to identify possible under-representation of particular minority ethnic groups. Quarterly statistics are reported to the race relations management team, which meets regularly and includes the prison Imam and prisoner representatives. The race relations management team and the healthy prison team meet quarterly and receive reports on incidents relating to equality and respect. The allocation of prisoners to activities is fair and takes proper account of their sentence plans. Prisoners are encouraged to join education and training programmes, and are offered incentives to obtain basic skills and other qualifications. However, there are still significant pay differentials between training and some workshop activities.

50. Since the previous inspection, the prison has re-established events to celebrate cultural diversity and different faiths. This has included the introduction of a black culture awareness course and a recent Caribbean evening where staff were invited to sample meals prepared by the prisoners. A member of staff has also attended a Jamaican awareness and patois course. Cultural events and religious celebrations are displayed in the staffroom. The prison has a multi-faith room, and other rooms are available for prayer.

51. Prisoners' access to the library is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, the library has moved because of damage to the building. This has resulted in slower access for some prisoners who have to be accompanied on visits to the library. All prisoners receive at least their entitlement to use the library for 20 minutes each week. The library is open on five days and two evenings a week but closed at weekends. There is a satisfactory range of religious books, law books and books to support the development

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of literacy, numeracy and language. Prisoners have access to the legal books required by prison service orders, and a wider range of books through arrangements with the local county library system.

52. Seventy-five per cent of all staff have now attended diversity training organised and delivered by the prison, and the remainder will have done so by March 2005. All prisoners receive a prison induction that includes an introduction to equal opportunities, and they are made aware of the procedures for making a complaint. All complaints are registered and passed on to relevant post holders. For example, complaints relating to race relations are passed to the race relations management team. There have been no significant complaints made about the education and training provision since the previous inspection.

53. The prison has not formally audited the accessibility of its buildings to disabled staff and prisoners. However, it has long been recognised that the sloping site and range of old buildings make it very difficult to provide access for prisoners with restricted mobility, and such prisoners are usually sent to other prisons. The induction includes screening for dyslexia, which has led to specialist help being made available for several prisoners.

54. At the previous inspection, there was little promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum. This is still a weakness. Equality of opportunity and diversity are discussed at induction but not subsequently reinforced in teaching sessions. Teaching materials are not screened to ensure they reflect diversity, and schemes of work do not mention the topic.

Quality assurance

55. Quality assurance of education and training are the responsibility of the head of learning and skills. Since the previous inspection, new systems have been introduced for monitoring and reporting on the quality of provision, and these now cover all aspects of education and training. However, most of this work has been done since autumn 2004, when the head of learning and skills was appointed and the new college contractor took over. So far the new procedures have not had enough time to bring about significant improvements. Data collection has improved, and the head of learning and skills now receives monthly statistical bulletins on the performance of each training unit, including physical education and the vocational training workshops.

56. In education, the college contractor has a comprehensive quality assurance manual which is written specifically for its work in prisons, and which covers all stages of the education process. Some parts of the manual have been implemented at HMP Erlestoke. The procedures for induction are in place and have improved the quality of initial assessment and links between initial assessment and sentence planning. Procedures for lesson observations have been recently introduced, following training for all staff. Sixteen observations have been carried out, with assistance from the college's quality manager. These have resulted in useful feedback to the tutors observed. However, many other procedures are not yet implemented. There has been no appraisal of education staff since the previous inspection, though managers have recently received

training in appraisal. There is no audit process for records and planning documents. All programmes have schemes of work and lesson plans drawn up by tutors, but these are not moderated or quality checked. There is a wide variation in the format used and the amount of detail recorded.

57. In physical education, the officer in charge has responsibility for quality assurance. The unit has conducted surveys of learners' views and has produced a self-assessment report. However, there is no overall strategy for quality assurance within physical education, and reporting mechanisms are not well integrated with the overall learning and skills quality assurance process.

58. The prison produced its most recent self-assessment report in June 2004. The report includes all areas of the prison, including those where no training is carried out, such as the contract services workshops. It follows the 'Common Inspection Framework', and provides a clear picture of the scope of provision in each area. However, some key questions are not considered, and the report does not provide evidence for the strengths and weaknesses it identifies. The education section of the report has greater detail but is still not supported by evidence for the judgements made. There is an action plan at the end of the report, but this not derived directly from the weaknesses identified, some of which are not dealt with. Many of the action points have not been achieved by the dates set. The prison produced an update of the report for the inspection, which identified the improvements made since June 2004.

59. The process for producing the self-assessment report was overseen by the prison's quality improvement group which met quarterly through 2004. The main activities of the group in this period were to monitor action plans and introduce a standard individual learning plan to the prison. Since December 2004, the membership of the group has widened and minutes show that a wider range of topics is discussed and that quality improvement is being pursued more vigorously. In preparation for the 2005 self-assessment report, all areas have been asked to set out their quality monitoring processes so these can be evaluated by the head of learning and skills. Training needs have been identified, and the group has begun to develop new links across the prison, for example between education and the drug rehabilitation unit. However, the quality improvement group remains at an early stage of development. Its emphasis has been on operational issues and establishing a cross-department dialogue, and it has yet to spend much time on its main remit, which is to monitor the quality of provision and share good practice.

60. Internal verification processes are satisfactory. Staff in each area have received appropriate training and are suitably qualified for their role. In most vocational training areas, verification is carried out by a colleague from another prison. The head of learning and skills receives and, where necessary, acts upon both internal and external verifiers' reports. However, there is no designated lead verifier for the prison, who could act as a point of reference for assessors and ensure that standardisation activities are carried out. In one area of work, a misunderstanding over the internal verification requirements led to a temporary suspension of centre approval by the awarding body. The issue has now been dealt with, but co-ordination of the verification process across the prison remains

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weak.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

61. Provision in construction is good.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good development of practical skills
- good training
- effective support for learners
- good resources in painting and decorating

Weaknesses

- few opportunities for work experience
- insufficient sharing of initial assessment information with vocational tutors

Achievement and standards

62. The achievement rate for qualifications in construction is satisfactory. In painting and decorating over the past two years, 14 of the 54 starters have achieved an externally accredited qualification. A further 14 achieved more than one unit of the award. In carpentry and joinery, 13 of the 44 who started achieved the full qualification. Nine of the 23 who left the programme early did so because they were transferred to another prison or released.

63. In painting and decorating, learners have the opportunity to progress to an intermediate craft award on completion of the external qualification. The craft award forms the technical certificate aspect of the NVQ and is a good qualification for learners who wish to gain employment in the construction industry after release. The work done by learners in both sections is of a high standard. They demonstrate good skills and knowledge and produce work which is neat and accurate. Learners who have been released or transferred often write to staff thanking them for their tuition and telling them how they have progressed at work since leaving prison. Learners also demonstrate good background knowledge of the application of particular paints and finishes, and the timbers suitable for particular jobs.

Quality of education and training

64. Training is good in both carpentry and painting and decorating. Tutors are knowledgeable and have good experience in their respective trades. They use their industrial experience to pass on hints and tips about site working practices. The skills

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certificate which all learners initially work towards does not include background knowledge, but tutors recognise the importance of educating learners in this aspect of their trades. A separate classroom is used for background knowledge sessions and learners appreciate this addition to their programme. The teaching is sensitive and acknowledges any learning difficulties learners may have. Practical activities are well planned and learners' progress is monitored well. Trainers are skilled in asking open questions which help learners consider the advantages and disadvantages of different decorative techniques. Learners also benefit from attaining key skills in application of number in a vocational context.

65. Support for learners is effective. Outreach tutors from the education department visit workshops, typically spending a half-hour session with each learner. The sessions are well planned. Vocational tutors have developed good work packs which learners and tutors work through. For example, painting and decorating learners benefit from working out areas and volumes, using projects related to wall sizes and paint coverage. Many learners who have previously resisted tuition in literacy and numeracy now benefit from this good support and are keen to learn further. At the previous inspection, learners were having too few progress reviews. These are now held regularly and are effective in monitoring their progress.

66. There are good resources for teaching and learning in painting. Accommodation in the workshops is spacious with each learner using a bay in which to carry out preparation, painting and paper-hanging. Each bay has features such as roof pitches and fireplaces which realistically simulate those found in houses. Learners also practise removing and replacing water-filled radiators. The facility has a separate classroom which has a new computer and printer. Consumable items such as paint, paper and brushes are in good supply. Tools and equipment in carpentry are also good, but the carpentry workshop is housed in unsuitable accommodation consisting of a number of small basement rooms which make supervision difficult.

67. Assessment is satisfactory, and the results are recorded and shared well with learners. Internal verification is carried out by a verifier from another prison. In the past, the arrangements for internal verification did not meet awarding body requirements, and the intermediate craft award is currently under a sanction from the awarding body as a result. However, action has been taken to deal with the problem, and internal verification procedures are now satisfactory.

68. At the previous inspection, learners did not have sufficient opportunities to practise their skills in realistic workplace settings. Since then, some have been given the opportunity to decorate areas around the prison, but as these tasks were not considered to be valuable in learners' development, they have now stopped. Similarly, there is no involvement in community projects outside the prison where learners can practise their skills. The absence of practical work experience remains a weakness of this provision.

69. Tutors are not told about learners' basic skills needs when they start work in painting and decorating. Several learners have literacy and numeracy needs which have been identified through initial assessment during induction, but the assessment results have not

been shared with teaching staff. Tutors find it difficult to plan effectively to meet learners' needs. Learning plans are not used in painting and decorating. However, in carpentry and joinery, which is managed by the education contractor, initial assessment results are shared with tutors, and learners have learning plans.

Leadership and management

70. The responsibility for managing the vocational and educational aspects of construction is clear, and is shared between the newly appointed head of learning and skills and the head of resettlement and regimes. Painting and decorating staff have recently begun to collect information on learners' destinations after release, and also their views on the quality of the provision, although this has yet to be analysed. The carpentry provision is managed by the college. Managers from the college have visited the unit to observe teaching and learning. They provided helpful feedback. No observations of training have taken place in painting and decorating. Both sections have a good proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups.

Information & communications technology

71. Provision in ICT is satisfactory.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good attainment of basic ICT skills
- good use of monitoring systems

Weaknesses

- limited range of courses
- poor utilisation of resources

Achievement and standards

72. Learners on ICT courses receive a good introduction to industry standard applications and attain good ICT skills. They gain confidence in their use of computers and recognise the employment benefits of this training. Education department learners are progressing well and are achieving modules of an examination-based qualification in information technology. Since the previous inspection, nearly half of the 65 learners who have been registered have completed six modules, and over 75 per cent have completed three or more modules. However, no learner has yet achieved the full qualification, as there have been problems with providing one module, which requires internet access. This is not currently available to the college-based learners, but PS Plus learners can complete the module using the internet simulation in their training package. The identification and registration of PS Plus learners has been slow, and there have been relatively few enrolments on the course. From September 2003 to June 2004, 20 learners were registered and 14 achieved their qualification. Since September 2004, nine learners have been registered and two have achieved the qualification. Most learners produce a good standard of work using the independent learning materials.

Quality of education and training

73. Good use is made of the learner monitoring systems. This was identified in the self-assessment report. The examination-based qualification in information technology is run on a roll-on and roll-off basis, and all learners have an individual learning plan that contains target dates for completing modules. When a test is successfully completed, the learners' individual training records are updated and the achievement is recorded on one of two monitoring systems, depending on whether they are PS Plus or education department learners. All learners are closely monitored during their training sessions and their progress is recorded in a logbook that is made available to the next tutor. Useful information on learners' destinations is recorded on the monitoring system and learners

who are transferred to other prisons are issued with an up-to-date record of their learning. This allows them to establish their status quickly with the new institution and avoid delays to their learning.

74. Teaching is satisfactory. Learners are supported well by tutors who provide effective individual support in mixed-ability classes. There is some formal teaching but few opportunities for group teaching. Learners gain their ICT skills using exercises designed to prepare them for exams. The exercises may be text-based or computer-based. The relationships between learners and tutors are good and learners value the peer support that is readily available.

75. The monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. All learners work towards their tests independently through structured learning programmes and are monitored closely by their tutors. They receive regular and constructive feedback. PS Plus learners have regular tests that give them a sense of achievement early in the course. However, tutors sometimes experience difficulties because they do not have access to the test papers, which are administered centrally. The learners registered through the education department have better support and feedback during the testing process as their qualification is administered locally.

76. The range of ICT courses at the prison is limited. This weakness was recognised in the self-assessment report. Currently, ICT learners can work towards units of an examination board course at level 1 and learners on basic skills programmes can follow an introductory computer literacy course. There is no diagnostic testing of ICT learners and no structured progression route between the two courses. There are currently no progression opportunities beyond the examination-based course to challenge or extend learners.

77. There is poor use of resources. The learners are separated into two groups. The main computer technology room is open plan and has 20 computers, of which 10 are set up for the sole use of PS Plus learners. Since the previous inspection, only 29 learners have used these machines, and weeks go by with little or no use being made of them. The remaining 10 machines have been used by 65 education department learners over the same period. New computers and software have been acquired, and learning resources are of a good standard on both programmes. Learners make good use of the independent learning resources, but there is too much reliance on computer-based training for the PS Plus learners and not enough for the rest. At present, learners have no access to the internet, although supervised access will shortly be available. An internet simulation is available to some learners but not to most. There is enough space for learners to work, but there are no specialist resources such as footrests or anti-glare screens and the chairs are not all fully adjustable. This is particularly difficult for the learners who are on the programme full time.

Leadership and management

78. Managers have recently invested in new ICT equipment and software to enhance the curriculum. There is good formal and informal communication between ICT staff, but little sharing of good practice or communication with other departments. The self-assessment process involved all staff and the report generally reflected the findings of the inspection. However, there was no self-assessment of the PS Plus provision. Learners' feedback is collected but not used systematically to improve the provision and support curriculum development. Inductions are not always carried out when learners start their programmes and there is no formal diagnostic test. Tutors generally have little or no prior knowledge of a learner's basic skills needs. There is no discussion or promotion of equality of opportunity during ICT programmes.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

79. Provision in sport and recreation is satisfactory.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates on NVQ courses
- good progression routes for learners

Weaknesses

- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- slow implementation of quality assurance systems

Achievement and standards

80. Retention and achievement rates on the NVQ programme were poor at the previous inspection but are now good. Since the previous inspection, NVQ achievement has increased from 21 per cent (four out of 19 learners) to 89 per cent (16 out of 18 learners). Only those who left the prison before completion failed to gain an award. However, progress is sometimes slow. The retention rate on the NVQ programmes has been 100 per cent since the previous inspection. All learners have to successfully complete an OCN certificate before they can register for an NVQ programme. This course is used as a taster, and gives learners an indication of the work to be expected on an NVQ programme.

81. Data on other accredited qualifications is only available for the 10 months from April 2004. During this period, 16 learners have completed a community sports leaders award, 33 have completed an OCN award, 12 an award in the treatment of injuries, 16 a coaching qualification in tag rugby, 16 an NVQ for assistant gym instructors at level 1, and 16 an NVQ at level 2 for gym instructors. The physical education department offers a good range of local sports skills development awards. There have been 72 football development awards, 50 volleyball awards and 45 basketball awards.

Quality of education and training

82. Progression routes for physical education learners are good. All learners who apply for a place on a physical education course are interviewed. The interview follows a standard format, and takes account of the learner's sentence plan and the length of sentence outstanding. Prisoners with shorter times remaining on their sentence are given priority on courses, providing they meet the security requirements. The department provides a range of skills development courses to give learners a taste of various sports. If they want to progress from these, they can take the OCN award in understanding

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physical education and team games, which can be followed by the NVQ for assistant gym instructors at level 1 and the NVQ for gym instructors at level 2. As the work requirements progressively increase, learners can progress to the level which is appropriate to their ability or interest. One learner is about to start studying for a diploma in food and nutrition by distance learning, as a progression from his physical education course.

83. Learners develop good skills in physical education and can identify personal gains such as improved fitness, and increased self-esteem and confidence. Once a learner has completed the physical education course they can apply for a job as a gym orderly. Gym orderlies help to set up equipment, coach other learners, and maintain class lists and class registers. They also lead physical education sessions and can write individual programmes for recreational weights and fitness users. This allows them to practise and further develop the skills they have gained on the physical education course. There are community links which allow gym orderlies with the appropriate security status to gain coaching experience outside the prison. For example, some teach sports sessions in a local school and another small group achieved a lifeguarding qualification at a local sports centre. These greatly enhance their skills and improve employability.

84. Teaching is satisfactory and a range of teaching methods are used. There are satisfactory schemes of work and lesson plans for the physical education courses. Learners are well motivated and engaged in their lessons. There is a good rapport between learners and staff, and learners receive good informal support. Assessment is carried out by physical education staff and externally moderated as required by awarding bodies. Physical education resources are satisfactory. The fitness equipment is dated but fully operational. Classroom accommodation is adequate for most purposes but is poorly decorated and is too small for some practical sessions such as first aid. The equipment for first aid teaching is satisfactory.

85. Seventeen prisoners are employed in the prison kitchens, of whom four are registered for an NVQ at level 2 in food preparation and cooking. The kitchens are of industry standard and provide a good work environment in which to gain relevant skills. However, the introduction of NVQs into the kitchen has been slow. The prison has recently gained awarding body approval for the NVQ but little assessment has taken place to date, and there has not yet been any achievement. All the prisoners working in the kitchen attend a food hygiene course in the education department. They also receive a kitchen induction, and training in the use of equipment, but for most there is no further training. The five staff employed in the kitchen are all civilians. None have teaching or assessment qualifications, though two are working towards the assessors' award.

86. The catering NVQ programme is supported well by the education department. A tutor provides individual sessions for NVQ learners on one morning a week. These concentrate on improving their literacy and numeracy. In addition, they attend a background knowledge session in the education department on one afternoon a week. Learners value these sessions and feel that they enhance their programme. Learners do not have individual learning plans and are not set targets for the completion of the NVQ.

There is no review process in place to monitor their progress. No internal verification has yet taken place, but plans are in place for the first internal verification meeting to take place early next month.

87. Physical education learners receive support in literacy and numeracy on one morning a week as part of their physical education course. This is a recent initiative. Physical education staff are still not always informed of learners' additional support needs. The key skills qualification at level 1 in communication has been linked into the physical education course. This will enable learners to gain both qualifications, but staff have not yet been briefed on the assessment requirements so have not begun to teach the key skills programme.

88. The use of individual learning plans is ineffective. They are not used to record learners' objectives, progress or learning outcomes. Learners are not formally assessed at the start of physical education courses, and their support needs and literacy and numeracy levels are not recorded on their individual learning plan. Physical education staff do not all use the individual learning plans in the same way. Learners are seldom set individual targets, and their achievements are often poorly recorded and incomplete. The individual learning plans are not effective as a means of monitoring learners' progress. Learners do not have enough progress reviews. For example, during the current 12-week course, reviews have been carried out just once, and that was at the end of the first week.

Leadership and management

89. The previous inspection found that the quality assurance of training, teaching and assessment was ineffective. Since then, HMP Erlestoke has been slow to implement quality assurance systems. There is no systematic approach to quality assurance in physical education. Lesson observations have recently been introduced, but there is no overall strategy or plan for who will be observed, when, or how frequently. Team meetings are often informal and unrecorded. Some evaluation of courses has taken place, taking account of feedback from staff and learners. However, there has been little formal analysis of this information to identify areas for improvement or to help plan future courses. Learners' progress while they are on the physical education course is monitored informally and not sufficiently recorded. The department has not yet fully evaluated the physical education programme, though all staff were involved in the self-assessment process. The department is fully staffed but one member of staff is on long-term sick leave and another has been redeployed onto operation duties. Recreational physical education has been adversely affected by these staff shortages, but few physical education course sessions have been cancelled. Each member of the team has a clear role in the teaching and assessment of the physical education course.

Health, social care & public services

90. Provision in industrial cleaning is good.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good training
- good opportunities to apply practical skills
- good support

Weaknesses

- inadequate accommodation for practical training
- insufficient feedback to learners following assessment

Achievement and standards

91. The achievement rate is good. Twenty-four of the 28 learners who started on the level 1 cleaning programme in the past year have achieved the full award. All the level 2 and 3 learners who started over the same period have achieved their target qualification. Three have gone on to work as trainers and assessors, assisting new learners. Managers use these learners to increase the flexibility of training and assessment. Standards of work are high. Learners work around the prison in positions of responsibility and their role is acknowledged and appreciated by the prison management. The cleaning section has agreements with management to clean and maintain many of the facilities. It is the main cleaning contractor to the prison. Learners maintain floors in the chapel and attend to hazards in the medical centre. Learners can work towards a bio-hazard qualification which significantly improves their chances of securing good jobs on release.

Quality of education and training

92. The training is good. More experienced learners train and assess those who are new, passing on their skills and knowledge. Tutors and learners are enthusiastic and cleaning is viewed as a worthwhile job in the prison. Tutors pass on their experiences well, relating effectively how to apply background knowledge in the workplace, and including examples from the retail and medical industries. Learners develop confidence, and are able to state clearly the techniques they would use for different situations. Further courses in cleaning food preparation areas have just been introduced. This will further enhance learners' employability. Good information is given to learners on where they can train for higher-level NVQs when they leave the prison.

93. The section trains wing cleaners and there are opportunities for suitable learners to

work on community projects outside the prison. This includes work in schools, where carpets and flooring are maintained to a high standard. This external work widens the learners' experience. Very positive feedback is given by school managers, which further develops learners' self-esteem.

94. There is still a shortage of progression opportunities, although the prison has broadened the range of activities, for example by offering the food premises cleaning option. A good link with the education department provides industrial cleaning learners with training in formulating business plans. The programme includes marketing, finance and time management. Many learners have ambitions to run their own businesses or to pursue careers in the industry. Support for learners with literacy or numeracy needs is also good. It is occupationally focused allowing learners to practise numeracy skills using ratios and measurements found commonly in the cleaning industry.

95. At the previous inspection, the accommodation for training was unsatisfactory. There has been no change. Training areas are cramped and not big enough for the current number of learners. A narrow corridor is used as one of the practice areas. Despite warning signs, the trailing cables on the floor present a hazard to people using the corridor or the nearby stairs. Demonstrations are difficult and tuition has to be given individually. Some learners have to wait around for the attention of the tutor. The supply of chemicals and other cleaning materials is good, and learners work with industry standard equipment, such as floor polishers and pressure cleaners.

96. Many learners are not given feedback after assessments. Most recorded feedback simply states briefly whether a learner is competent or not. Often no detail is given on what learners can do to improve their work. There are some exceptions to this but there is no consistency in the standard of feedback, and good practice is not systematically shared among assessors.

Leadership and management

97. Responsibilities for managing the section are clear, with staff well informed on budgetary control, educational issues and matters relating to the prison regime. Staff have started to collect feedback on the quality of the training and data collection is effective in enabling managers to monitor success rates. Formal meetings to share good practice and disseminate information are being held less frequently, and it is difficult for staff to find out information on wider prison issues. There is good participation by learners from minority ethnic groups. Staff development opportunities are also good. The instructor regularly takes training courses to further his own learning and to widen the provision.

Foundation programmes

98. The provision in foundation programmes is satisfactory.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good achievement rates on most courses
- much good teaching and learning
- wide range of provision from entry level to level 2

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory resources
- insufficient linkage between foundation courses
- slow introduction of a literacy, numeracy and language strategy

Achievement and standards

99. Achievement rates are good on most courses. Between April 2004 and January 2005, 296 adult literacy qualifications and 146 adult numeracy qualifications were achieved at entry level and levels 1 and 2, and 30 key skills qualifications at levels 1 and 2. Learners also achieved 31 Firmstart awards, 36 health and hygiene awards, two preparation for employment awards, 37 social and life skills awards, four citizenship awards, six parentcraft awards, 16 art awards, five first aid awards, two carpentry awards and three introductory computer literacy awards.

100. Learners produce good work during their learning sessions. In art, they paint and draw on a variety of materials using a range of methods and media. Similarly, in the ceramics workshops, learners make a variety of ceramic plates, pots and other ornaments. Both rooms have excellent displays of learners' work. In background knowledge classes, tutors encourage learners to keep good records of their work. Their folders are well organised and presented and contain good examples of work which may be used as evidence towards the achievement of a qualification. Portfolio work, which was good at the time of the previous inspection, remains strong. Projects and portfolios on the Firmstart programme are particularly well produced, using ideas for business start-up developed by the learners themselves.

Quality of education and training

101. Most teaching and learning is good. At the previous inspection, the range of teaching methods was narrow. Tutors have done a significant amount of work in this area, and there is now a good range of methods in use. New staff have brought experience from a variety of settings and have contributed new ideas and teaching

methods which have proved effective. Lessons are well planned and suitable resources made available. Clear aims and objectives are explained at the start of the lesson. Tutors make good use of a variety of teaching techniques including whole group and individual teaching. There is good support for learners throughout. Learning materials are differentiated to cater for different ability levels. Tutors make very good use of everyday items to enhance learning and improve understanding. In one lesson, the tutor used a range of empty medicine packets to demonstrate to learners the importance of accurate instructions. Tutors have also developed their own good-quality learning resources. In one literacy lesson concerned with blends of letters, the tutor had devised a set of cards based on 'snap' but with a range of words written on them. Learners enjoyed the activity and were fully engaged in it. However, in some lessons, tutors fail to make full use of learning materials and do not always engage learners fully in practical activities that would enhance their learning.

102. Learners can progress in literacy and numeracy from entry level to level 2. Key skills awards are also available at levels 1 and 2 for learners following a more vocational route. There are opportunities to study for these qualifications in evening and weekend classes. Learners can also take part in recreational classes such as ceramics, drama and ICT during some evenings and weekends. New initiatives include an African studies course and a Toe-by-Toe reading programme. There are opportunities for learners to study to levels 3 and 4 and many learners achieve A levels and university degrees. However, while many learners progress to level 2 there are few opportunities for them to progress from level 2 to higher-level courses.

103. There are insufficient effective links between different aspects of learners' work. While there are some themed classes, such as the Chinese New Year, there are few integrated assignments that would involve learners using a range of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Learners do not have enough opportunities to use evidence from the other activities they take part in to reinforce their learning and use towards their award.

104. Recording of learners' progress is satisfactory. There is an assessment of literacy, numeracy and language needs during the prison induction, and a diagnostic assessment when starting an education course. Results of these assessments form the basis of a realistic and accurate learning plan which clearly sets short- and long-term targets. New progress review documents have recently been introduced, which use realistic targets and are kept up to date. These have not had time yet to make an impact on learners' progress and achievement.

105. Learners receive satisfactory support during their time on foundation courses, in classes, on the wings, and in some of the workshops. There is a mentoring system under which some prisoners give learning support out of hours, and some courses are delivered in the evenings and weekends. A Toe-by-Toe programme has recently been introduced. It is designed to teach learners to read with help from their peers.

106. There are some unsatisfactory resources. This was a weakness at the previous inspection. Many classrooms are too small and cramped, severely limiting the number of learners who can comfortably be accommodated. There is very little access to ICT

during lessons and tutors are not able to use software programmes that would enhance learning. However, they have made great efforts to make the classrooms and environment as welcoming and supportive as possible. Many examples of learners' work are prominently displayed on the walls of the education department, together with up-to-date posters and other relevant materials.

Leadership and management

107. There have been many changes to the management structure of the education department, and the educational contractor has changed since the previous inspection. During this period, the quality of teaching and learning has been maintained and there has been some development of the curriculum. The new contractor has encouraged professional development and currently four members of the teaching staff are attending level 4 training for tutors of literacy and numeracy. However, the department has been slow to introduce a literacy, numeracy and language strategy that includes all aspects of education and training in the prison. There has been slow progress towards routinely linking coursework to practice. The recent appointment of a head of learning and skills, with overall responsibility for the range and quality of the education and training, has already had an effect. A strategy has recently been agreed that will ensure that literacy, numeracy and language become key agenda items at senior management meetings. The new contractor has been active in ensuring that a high priority is given to this important part of the prison's education and training provision.