

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP Altcourse

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 and Jobcentre Plus programmes. 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
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training 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

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 Altcourse

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Altcourse is a category B local prison with a contracted maximum of 903 prisoners, although the prison has a physical capacity for up to 1,000 prisoners. The number of prisoners at the time of the inspection was 897. The prison usually has approximately 200 prisoners who are on remand and 700 sentenced prisoners. Of the total population, approximately 100 are young offenders, all of whom are on remand. The prison's population of remand and sentenced adults comes primarily from Cheshire and North Wales. The catchment area for young offenders is North Wales and Merseyside.
2. Education is subcontracted to a college of further education. It is run by the education manager, who is supported by a deputy. The education department has a total of 30 staff, nine of whom are full time, two are part time and 19 are sessional. Courses are offered in information and communications technology (ICT), call centre operations, visual arts and foundation programmes.
3. The prison aims to engage every prisoner in some form of activity. There are over 200 part-time and 140 full-time places in education. Full-time education takes place on the residential wings. The prison has a range of workshops, including one which manufactures double-glazing units, and a welding and fabrication shop that produces, for example, skips. There are also workshops that reduce surplus CDs to pellets suitable for recycling. There is a similar workshop for video cassettes. There are 250 places in these workshops and most have access to literacy and numeracy training. Some prisoners work for the prison's facilities department, maintaining the prison's grounds, or working in the kitchens, laundry or maintenance department. Others are involved in cleaning the residential units. Some prisoners work as orderlies in areas such as the library, the gym and in education. Accredited training is offered in the double-glazing workshop, the gym and the kitchens.
4. The prison's education and training is led by the head of regimes and services, who is also the deputy director of the prison. He has a very wide range of responsibilities, apart from education and training, and works directly with the education manager, the workshops manager and the facilities manager, who is responsible for training prisoners who work in the facilities department.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

5. Accredited training in engineering is provided in one workshop manufacturing double-glazing frames. Some training is carried out in other workshops, such as welding and furniture production, which fulfil external contract work. Other areas, including the laundry and the facilities maintenance team, which support activities around the prison,

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carry out non-accredited training on specific machinery or aspects of work. In April 2004, accreditation was gained to offer national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1 and 2 in performing manufacturing operations. There are nine learners working towards level 1 and two who have started to work towards level 2. All the practical training is carried out by occupationally experienced staff in the workshops. There is one member of staff who is a qualified assessor. This assessor carries out all assessments in the workshop and offers a weekly evening class to cover background knowledge and any aspects of the qualification range not available through workshop training.

Information & communications technology

6. There are 102 learners enrolled on ICT courses, of whom 77 are working towards accredited nationally recognised qualifications at entry level and levels 1 and 2.

7. There are seven ICT tutors and one ICT manager. Two tutors work full time, one works substantial part time and four others work part time. All tutors are examiners and four are internal verifiers. The ICT manager is the lead internal verifier.

8. Most learners attend the learning resource centre (LRC) in the education building (the college) during the day. The sessions are run on a workshop basis, with learners working at their own pace and using workbooks with the support of a tutor and a trainer. Most learners also have access to the LRC during the evenings. There are ICT rooms on some residential wings. On one wing, learners have timetabled sessions in the ICT room and are supported by a tutor. On another wing, learners book their own slots to use the ICT facilities during the day and are supported by a tutor. All learners use the testing facilities in the LRC. Learners working in the CD workshop have the opportunity to access the LRC one day each week.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

9. There are 15 learners on the call centre operations programme in the education centre at HMP Altcourse. Learners are working towards, or have completed, the level 1 accredited qualification. One classroom in the education department is dedicated to call centre operations, where there are nine industry standard computers with call centre simulation software, headsets and telephone equipment. Learners spend 15 hours each week in training, with one and a half hour sessions planned for mornings and afternoons. The programme is delivered in a workshop setting and learners can join at any time. There are two tutors who share responsibility for training and assessment. There is an internal verifier who moderates the portfolios of evidence. Learners are assessed for their level of literacy and numeracy and are given the opportunity to attend additional training sessions to develop their skills.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

10. There are eight learners working towards NVQs at level 1 in food preparation and cooking in catering and hospitality. Catering in the prison is provided by an external contractor which employs a catering manager, two head chefs, eight assistant chefs, and two store men. A team of 64 learners supports them. The contractor also employs a catering NVQ manager, who is responsible for the training in the kitchen. The NVQ manager is a qualified internal verifier. There are two qualified NVQ assessors and three who are working towards their assessors' award. The assessments are carried out in the kitchen and learners receive individual coaching for skills and background knowledge development.

11. In sport and recreation there are eight learners working towards a nationally accredited weightlifting leaders' award. There are two learners enrolled on an NVQ at level 1 in sport and recreation, and they work as orderlies in the gym. The physical education (PE) department is staffed by one PE manager and 12 activity development officers. Five orderlies support them. One member of staff is working towards the assessors' award and internal verification services are brought in. For the weightlifting leaders' award, learners attend two half days a week, which consists of one theory lesson and one practical lesson. The course is run over a three-week period. NVQ candidates are assessed as part of their daily routine. There is also a significant amount of recreational PE, which is outside the scope of this inspection.

Visual & performing arts & media

12. Visual arts classes are offered from Monday to Friday in the morning, afternoon and on Tuesday evening. Painting and drawing lessons last for one and a half hours and are attended by 124 learners. All classes take place in the prison college's art room. Learners have the opportunity to work towards qualifications in art and communication and improve own learning key skills from level 1 to 3. Thirty-one of the current learners are registered for art qualifications at level 1 to 3, and four are registered for key skills in communication at level 2. Learners also submit their work in competition with other prisoners for external awards. Many of the learners are young offenders, and older learners attend classes with them. The two tutors are employed by the education subcontractor. One tutor teaches full time and another for a day and a half each week. Occasionally, workshops are taught by staff from external organisations and practising artists.

Foundation programmes

13. Foundation programmes at HMP Altcourse are run by the subcontractor college, which has a full-time manager of foundation programmes. Foundation training in the residential units is delivered by two part-time and six part-time tutors. The ICT manager manages all training delivered in the units. Foundation programmes include literacy and numeracy, and English for prisoners whose first language is not English. The prison also offers cookery, drug awareness, key skills, and parenting skills. At induction, prisoners are told about the prison's education service and given information about foundation classes. They complete initial assessments in literacy and numeracy during the induction period. All prisoners are recommended to take a literacy and/or numeracy class each week, while those who obtain low initial assessment scores are encouraged to attend literacy and numeracy training. All learners who enrol for literacy or numeracy classes also take a diagnostic test to identify more clearly their areas of weakness.

14. There are 108 learners on full-time foundation programmes and 222 on part-time programmes. Part-time learners can attend the college within the prison for two one and a half hour training sessions a day for up to five days each week. Training in the residential units is full time from Monday to Friday for six hours each day. Learners must attend at least one session a day in the study area. If they wish, they can spend the remainder of the time in their cells working through self-study packs. There is a recreational cookery class on one evening each week. All learners who attend literacy and numeracy classes have the opportunity to take the national tests and to gain accreditation if they are successful.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	8
Number of inspection days	31
Number of learners interviewed	168
Number of staff interviewed	22
Number of subcontractors interviewed	24

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

15. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and foundation programmes are unsatisfactory. However, courses in ICT are good and those in engineering, technology and manufacturing and visual and performing arts and media are satisfactory. Leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality assurance are all satisfactory.

GRADES

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality assurance		3

Engineering, technology & manufacturing		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Manufacturing - Other government-funded provision	11	3

Information & communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Other government-funded provision	102	2

Retailing, customer service & transportation		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Customer service - Other government-funded provision	15	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering - Other government-funded provision	8	4
Leisure, sport and recreation - Other government-funded provision	10	4

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Other government-funded provision	124	3

Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas - Other government-funded provision	330	4

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

16. **The standard of learners' work is high in many areas of learning.** In particular, learners on courses in call centre operations, engineering and ICT develop skills of a good level. In these areas, learners use the skills that they have developed with confidence and value what they have learnt. Welding learners are encouraged to use the skills more widely and have produced prize-winning sculptures and models. In ICT, two learners are developing a database of commercial standard. Some learners in art have progressed to higher and further education. Similarly, there is good progression of ICT learners from level 1 to level 2 and level 3 programmes.

17. Recent achievement rates are satisfactory in most areas, although much of the prison's data is not sufficiently robust before September 2004 to make judgements. Additionally, in foundation programmes there is evidence that some learners are being entered for qualifications below their current level. In sport and hospitality courses, achievement rates are satisfactory, although the numbers of learners who have taken qualifications are very small. Achievement rates in engineering are improving, with some evidence of learners progressing on to higher-level courses.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Visual & performing arts & media	0	1	0	7	0	0	0	8
Foundation programmes	0	0	0	4	1	1	0	6
Total	0	1	0	11	1	1	0	14

18. **Teaching on ICT courses is good.** There are clear and detailed lesson plans, which have references to individual learners and are linked to qualification aims. Art lessons are particularly well planned to engage and interest learners and to introduce them to a wide range of styles and cultures. These lessons are also used innovatively to improve the learners' literacy skills. Individual coaching for learners on sport and catering programmes is satisfactory. Similarly, the teaching on the call centre operations courses is satisfactory. The structure of the programme is clear, with lessons plans which give a broad outline of how each session will be taught. In foundation programmes, however,

much of the teaching is unsatisfactory, with poorly planned lessons that do not engage the learners. In these lessons there is insufficient vocational relevance of numeracy and literacy work.

19. Resources are particularly good for learners in ICT, engineering, and call centre operations. In these areas, learners benefit from clean and bright classrooms and workshops with up-to-date equipment. They have a realistic experience of what to expect in a work situation. However, in foundation programmes there is a narrow range of learning resources, with too much reliance on photocopied handouts which learners do not value. The accommodation for arts courses is too small for the number of learners wishing to join these classes and learners are sometimes sent to classes or back to their cells. The lighting in the art room is inappropriate. Catering learners learn in the production kitchen, which is appropriate. However, the prison has a fully equipped training kitchen which it is not using. The sports facilities are very good.

20. Staff are generally appropriately qualified, except in PE, where most tutors are not qualified in the discipline that they are teaching and none have received training in how to teach a PE programme.

21. In most areas of learning, assessment practices are appropriate and meet awarding body regulations. **In engineering, however, there are insufficient internal verifiers.** The prison is aware of this and has agreed special arrangements with the awarding body until more staff can be trained for this role. ICT learners are disadvantaged by the noisy environment in which they complete external assessments and invigilation records are not kept. In art lessons, assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory, although there is an over-emphasis on recording what the learner has done rather than on how well he has done it. Recording of learners' progress and target-setting is insufficient for learners studying the call centre operations course.

22. Learners on call centre operations programmes are well supported by tutors. They receive individual coaching to build their confidence. Staff are helpful and encouraging to learners. ICT learners receive appropriate individual support from their tutors. Learners in engineering workshops receive particularly effective support from staff through the use of a good one-week course introducing them to the workshops. Most learners have access to literacy and numeracy support.

Leadership and management

23. HMP Altcourse has a clear strategic direction for education and training, with clear links to the prison's overall strategic plan. The education department also has a strategic plan. These plans are clearly understood and supported by staff in the prison. The director of the prison has played a full part in the development of the plans.

24. The prison has too little accredited vocational training. There has been a detailed evaluation of which work areas in the prison could offer accredited training, and plans are well advanced to put these recommendations in place.

HMP ALTCOURSE

25. The management of the areas of learning is generally satisfactory. Area of learning teams work well together and communications are generally good, although sometimes informal. Regular meetings are held in most areas, although these are sometimes poorly recorded, with insufficient detail about actions. In addition, the education department holds short daily briefings for staff. The prison has yet to develop and implement a skills for life strategy to meet the needs of foundation programme learners. The prison does not analyse results adequately to determine the success of art programmes. Accredited courses in catering and sport are poorly managed. The prison has introduced new processes but many of these have not yet been implemented. However, there have been some good recent initiatives to identify how to improve the sport and catering provision and the actions required. This includes the recruitment of an NVQ manager for catering.

26. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The prison takes effective action to meet the learners' welfare needs. There are appropriate written policies and procedures, which are displayed in various locations throughout the prison. Learners have a good understanding of these. Learners attending education and training are treated with dignity and respect. However, learners attending education receive a lower rate of pay than most who are employed.

27. Quality assurance is satisfactory. The self-assessment process is appropriately consultative. The prison's most recent self-assessment report is self-critical and evaluative, and it represents an accurate description of the provision that the prison offers. Staff recognise and accept the main findings. However, the prison does not use data effectively to monitor the quality of the provision. Monitoring of the subcontractor is largely concerned with the contract compliance and clear targets are not set to improve the quality of the provision.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear strategic direction
- effective action to address the welfare needs of learners
- realistic and accurate self-assessment

Weaknesses

- insufficient accredited vocational training
- insufficient use of data to monitor the quality of the provision

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Manufacturing

Strengths

- good standards of learners' work
- good workshop resources
- very effective support for learners

Weaknesses

- narrow range of courses
- limited skill progression within work areas
- insufficient assessors and verifiers

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good development of practical IT skills
- much good teaching
- good resources

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory arrangements for external testing
- insufficient opportunities for learners to progress

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Customer service

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- good resources for call centre operations training
- high level of individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient target-setting and recording of learners' progress
- insufficient opportunities to progress
- poor use of data to improve provision

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good new initiatives and actions to improve the quality of the provision

Weaknesses

- poor links with the education department
- poor management of accredited courses

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good new initiatives and actions to improve the quality of the provision

Weaknesses

- insufficiently qualified PE staff
- poor links with the education department
- poor management of accredited courses

Visual & performing arts & media

Arts

Strengths

- good use of art to develop literacy skills
- very well-planned, staged development of learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate accommodation and physical resources
- insufficient analysis of achievement data to measure success

Foundation programmes

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good progress for literacy and numeracy learners
- very effective systematic diagnostic assessment
- good recent action to improve the provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning and recording of individual learning
- unsatisfactory teaching
- very narrow range of learning resources
- inadequate skills for life strategy

HMP ALTCOURSE

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HMP ALTCOURSE:

- the helpful staff
- good access to PE
- learning new skills and improving their literacy and numeracy skills
- being treated with respect
- learning to cook
- using computers

WHAT LEARNERS THINK HMP ALTCOURSE COULD IMPROVE:

- the quality of the food
- more time in the library
- the size of the weight-training facility

KEY CHALLENGES FOR HMP ALT COURSE:

- more and better use of data
- increase the range of accredited vocational training
- develop and implement a skills for life strategy
- review the quality and use of accommodation
- better sharing of good practice

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- clear strategic direction
- effective action to address the welfare needs of learners
- realistic and accurate self-assessment

Weaknesses

- insufficient accredited vocational training
- insufficient use of data to monitor the quality of the provision

28. The education and training at HMP Altcourse have a clear strategic direction. The prison as a whole has a clear strategic plan that is shared with prison staff. Within this plan there is a commitment to the development of education and training within the prison. The head of regimes and services has worked with others within the prison to determine the strategic planning for education and training for the next three years. There are well-defined links with the prison's overall strategic objectives. The education and learning plan clearly identifies a range of actions that are to be implemented. Some have already been put in place. However, the plan does not describe the full range of objectives that the prison has for education and training. Despite this, all staff are fully aware of the prison's strategic objectives in this area, and many are very enthusiastic about it. The education department has produced its own strategic plan to contribute to the strategic objectives in the plan for education and training. The process leading to the plan was very consultative and led to some staff development. The prison's director takes a full part in the agreement of the strategic objectives in these plans.

29. The prison has an appropriate appraisal system to monitor the performance of its staff, although there is some inconsistency in the way that this is applied. In one area, staff are not appraised effectively, and in another area the appraisal system is very effective in identifying and meeting staff development needs.

30. Communication within the prison is satisfactory. There is an appropriate range of meetings, most of which are minuted effectively. Actions are identified clearly and monitored effectively at subsequent meetings. Individual meetings with line managers take place at all levels each week. There are short daily briefings in the education department to identify any immediate issues. These are recorded and distributed in a weekly newsletter. Full team meetings are held six times each year. Meetings of curriculum teams take place every six weeks. However, these are sometimes poorly recorded, with insufficient detail about actions.

31. The prison regularly monitors the subcontractor's performance. The emphasis of this is performance against the key performance targets rather than quality targets. However, discussion about broader issues does take place.

32. There is insufficient accredited vocational training in the prison. The head of regimes and services commissioned a report to identify where prisoners who work within the prison could gain accreditation. The report is detailed and identifies 11 areas where accredited training could take place, offering a potential total of 14 qualifications. However, at present, accredited training is taking place in only two areas. Plans are well advanced to introduce other qualifications in the other areas as staff gain appropriate training.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

33. The prison takes effective action to meet the learners' welfare needs. Learners attending education and training are treated with respect and dignity. They speak favourably about the help and support they receive from staff. Staff show an active interest in the learners' progress and provide them with effective help and guidance to allow them to overcome their barriers to learning and achieve the qualification. Learning and training facilities provide a safe and suitable environment for learners to focus on their work. Learners generally display mutual respect for each other to create a positive environment for effective personal development. However, some young offenders do not always integrate well with adult learners in the prison. A small number of learners choose not to attend classes that have a large proportion of young offenders.

34. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. There are appropriate written equal opportunities policies and procedures that cover a range of issues, including harassment, complaints and appeals. Copies are displayed throughout the prison and learners have a good understanding of them. Reinforcement of equal opportunities to prisoners is an ongoing process that builds upon the information and training given during induction sessions. The prison takes the issue of bullying seriously and has a range of effective strategies and procedures to ensure that prisoners are not subjected to intimidation. The prison considers prisoners' complaints and usually makes appropriate responses within an appropriate timescale. Staff have an awareness of equal opportunities and diversity issues, and most of them have received some specific training.

35. Learners state that healthcare and help with other personal welfare issues are good and that there is very good access to the sports and recreation facilities.

36. Learners attending education receive a lower rate of pay than most who are employed. However, this does not appear to discourage them from becoming involved in education. The general rates of pay to learners across the prison is higher than many other similar establishments.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

37. The self-assessment process at HMP Altcourse is good, with all staff contributing to the compilation of the self-assessment report through their curriculum review activity. The report is appropriately self-critical and represents a realistic and accurate description of the quality of the prison's provision in education and training. It contains many clear judgements and highlights most of the strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection. All staff understand and accept the main findings of the report.

38. There is a documented system for assuring the quality of education and training, with standardised procedures that cover both the business contracts and delivery of education and training. These quality standards are accessible to staff and constitute agenda items at management and staff meetings. The development of these procedures is ongoing and the quality assurance manual and documentation are reviewed and updated. Many procedures are new and have yet to make a significant impact on the quality of the provision.

39. The prison has appropriate procedures for monitoring staff performance. Staff receive frequent supervision to monitor, discuss and record performance. If a training need is identified, appropriate development opportunities are considered. Within the education department, all managers and, in specialist areas, main grade lecturers carry out the observation of teaching and learning in the classroom and there is effective standardisation of grades. Where the observation of staff is established, the prison uses it to give feedback on performance that can be used to improve effectiveness. However, in some areas of training there is no formal monitoring of performance and there is an over-reliance on informal arrangements with limited feedback given to staff.

40. Internal verification and assessment practices in most areas are generally satisfactory. They are planned and monitor learners' progress towards achieving their qualifications. There are procedures in place for the effective administration of internal verification. Most areas have appropriately qualified and competent staff who co-ordinate internal verification activity and liaise with awarding bodies. There is a documented system for the monitoring of the learners' completion of units and appropriate procedures for the sampling of learners' work. Staff and learners' surveys, in the form of questionnaires and evaluation forms, are used to help assess the quality of provision. Feedback is obtained on learners' opinions and how to improve the learners' experience.

41. The prison makes insufficient use of data to monitor the quality of the provision. It uses learners' data to satisfy audit requirements and help develop management, but it makes insufficient use of this data to influence and improve the provision and practice in education and training. There is limited setting of targets for learners' achievement, beyond those associated with contract compliance, that would allow the prison to measure progress as part of a strategy of continuous improvement.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Engineering, technology & manufacturing

Engineering, technology & manufacturing		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Manufacturing - Other government-funded provision	11	3

Manufacturing

Strengths

- good standards of learners' work
- good workshop resources
- very effective support for learners

Weaknesses

- narrow range of courses
- limited skill progression within work areas
- insufficient assessors and verifiers

Achievement and standards

42. Learners produce good standards of work in the production workshops. The windows workshop is the fabrication department of a commercial window company. The frames produced meet industrial and customer standards, with a good quality control system. Learners in the engineering workshop develop good skills in welding and fabrication. They produce prison furniture, prison doors for staff training, and waste skips for commercial sale. The products are of very high quality and the prison receives many repeat orders. Some learners progress to broader uses of the skills they have learnt. For example, there are prize-winning objects, including a small-scale truck and a sculpture of a heron on display in the prison's entrance, both of which were made in the welding and fabrication shop.

43. There is good achievement for those who have started the programme. Since April 2004, six learners have achieved at level 1, and two have gone on to achieve at level 2. There are nine learners in training for level 1, with two close to completing and who have started to work towards level 2.

Quality of education and training

44. The workshop resources are good. The high-quality machinery is for production purposes and is to industrial standards. The workshops are clean and light, with a dedicated cleaner employed in the windows workshop. The use of personal protective equipment and adherence to safety regulations are monitored regularly. There is adequate space for the number of learners in the workshops. Other learning resources, such as the task sheets in the learners' portfolios, are of a good standard.

45. There is effective support for the learners. There is a general one-week preparation for work course, which introduces new prisoners to the workshops and raises their awareness of health and safety issues. Learners appreciate and are motivated by the work of their assessor. Assessments are well planned around the specific jobs that learners carry out and are then cross-referenced to the NVQ criteria. At the start of the programme, the learners retake the basic skills assessment to measure any change in results following the settling-in period in the prison. There are no formal learning support arrangements but the engineering assessor is also a qualified basic skills tutor. Progress reviews take place fortnightly and clear, achievable targets are set to promote the learners' progress. The assessor offers a weekly evening session to provide background knowledge to support the practical activities. Portfolios are of a satisfactory standard and contain a variety of diverse evidence, including observations, task sheets, questions and answers, photographs, and witness statements. There is a good rapport between learners, the assessor and the tutors. The windows workshop is the fabrication department of a commercial company and the manager of the workshop is an employee of the company. When the manager writes a reference for a learner, it is always on the company's headed notepaper, so that there is no reference to the prison.

46. There is a narrow range of accredited training available in the commercial workshops to fully meet the employment needs of learners on release. Some of the learners in the windows workshop are working towards the NVQ at levels 1 and 2 in performing manufacturing operations. Learners in the furniture and welding workshops have no opportunity to work towards an accredited qualification, even though they are performing manufacturing operations as part of their normal duties. Non-accredited training also takes place in the books workshops. There are opportunities to accredit training in the laundry and through the facilities department of the prison. A survey of possible accreditation has been carried out. The external verifier for the NVQ in performing manufacturing operations has agreed that the prison could offer the qualification to learners in the furniture shop, who are producing filing cabinets from flat packs. This resulted from a learner being transferred to the furniture workshop before he had completed his NVQ. It was agreed that there are sufficient manufacturing skills to enable the learner to complete the unfinished units. Plans are underway to introduce more qualifications very shortly. These include a one-day certificated health and safety programme and an introductory welding certificate, leading on to the NVQ in performing manufacturing operations. Other qualifications under investigation include warehouse distribution and horticulture.

47. There is limited skill progression within work areas. In most workshops, learners are

trained to carry out one specific task. Although this gives sufficient evidence to achieve the NVQ at level 1, learners lack the breadth of skills to progress to higher levels and to enhance their job prospects. Once trained on an area of work, the experienced learner becomes a valuable member of the production team and there is sometimes some reluctance to move him on to new area. Examples of this attitude were observed in the windows, furniture and books workshops. Transfers to other tasks rely on learners' requests and an appropriate vacancy being available, rather than planned progress.

Leadership and management

48. The communication between the assessor, tutor and manager in the windows workshop is appropriate. However, the manager has no knowledge of the qualification the learners are working towards. The assessor is an hourly paid member of the subcontractor's staff. Although working in training, rather than education, he is fully involved in meetings and has been observed as part of the quality assurance process.

49. There are insufficient assessors and verifiers. The assessment process is satisfactory. Assessments are continuous, thorough and effective, with clear monitoring sheets to record learners' progress. However, there is only one assessor in engineering, which restricts the number and frequency of learners' assessments. There is no contingency to cover any long-term absence of this assessor. There are at least two tutors prepared to gain assessors' qualifications, but this has not yet started. There has been some difficulty getting an appropriately occupationally competent internal verifier. Special arrangements have been agreed with the external verifier to allow an internal verifier from another skills area to carry out the process in the short-term. The awarding body has accepted this situation to prevent delaying the learners' progress further. Plans are in place to rectify these issues.

50. The strengths and weaknesses stated reflect those identified in the prison's most recent self-assessment report. The management staff of the area are new to accredited training. They have identified the limitations of the provision and have plans in place to deal with issues over time.

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Using IT</i> - Other government-funded provision	102	2

Using IT

Strengths

- good development of practical IT skills
- much good teaching
- good resources

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory arrangements for external testing
- insufficient opportunities for learners to progress

Achievement and standards

51. There is good skill development. Learners develop a good range of skills in the classrooms and are able to use the software applications with confidence. Many learners have increased in confidence since starting on the programme. Some learners have not used a computer before and quickly gain confidence in using the keyboard and develop good mouse control skills. All learners make good progress and many achieve nationally recognised qualifications. Learners on the spreadsheet units are able to manipulate data by entering complex formulae and can insert images. There is good progress of learners from the level 1 course to the level 2 course. From January to August 2004, 211 learners were registered with the awarding body. Of these, 52 per cent achieved the full certificate in an examination-based qualification in information technology (IT) and another 16 per cent achieved the level 1 award and an additional 17 learners achieved two units.

52. Two learners are developing a comprehensive data storage programme which monitors all learners' records from entry to destination. This programme is of commercial standard. Learners new to computing demonstrate very good skills for the length of time in training.

Quality of education and training

53. There is much good teaching. The best teaching sessions are well planned, with standardised schemes of work that are detailed and linked to qualification outcomes. Session plans are detailed and refer to activities being carried out, and most include references to individual learners. In the LRC, tutors are often unaware of when they will be having new learners but they deal with the arrival of new learners well. Learners quickly start using the computers and work towards nationally recognised qualifications. There is good individual coaching and checking of learners' understanding. Most learners are involved in the activities and work independently. Tutors and learners make good use made of learning resources in lessons. They allocate a sufficient amount of time to individual learners and are encouraging and motivating. Most learners work on specially designed exercises to develop their skills and knowledge. Other learners use the ICT facilities to word process their key skills work or drug awareness or alcohol awareness programme work. In the less effective lessons, tutors sometimes carry out keyboard and mouse actions for the learners.

54. There are good resources. Most learners attend lessons in the LRC, which is open Monday to Friday during the day and in the evenings. It is well equipped, with 30 computers and two printers. The furniture is of good-quality and the lighting and ventilation systems are good. There are appropriate relevant health and safety posters on the walls. The computers are networked and learners use industry standard software. Learners use good-quality learning materials that are clear, have easy-to-follow instructions and good illustrations through the use of screen shots. All learners value the facilities available. All tutors are appropriately experienced and qualified and have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications. The ICT rooms on the wings are well equipped with good-quality furniture and computers but are small for the number of computers available.

55. All learners complete a short ICT initial assessment and state their previous experience and qualifications. The prison uses this information to determine the programme the learner will first start on. All learners have an individual learning plan, which is updated as they make progress towards their learning goals. Learners who attend classes on their wings complete a weekly progress review with their tutor and agree targets for the following week. The learner and the tutor receive a copy of this review. The reviews focus on task or activity completion and do not always refer to skill development. Tutors give learners positive written and verbal feedback on their work and correct spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. Completion of tasks is recorded on learners' record sheets. All learners have space on the network where they can store their work and, in addition, they have a cardboard folder in which to keep their printed and marked work.

56. Learners agree with the tutor when they are ready take exams for each unit within their qualification.

57. The internal verification procedures are satisfactory. There is a monitoring system

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that records when internal verification of paper-based exams has taken place. Internal verifiers verify a minimum of 10 per cent of exam papers. The internal verifier countersigns the exam marking sheets and confirms the marks awarded for each question.

58. Tutors use information from initial interview and initial assessment to identify the most appropriate starting point and programme for the learners, and are aware of their literacy and numeracy support needs. One of the tutors in the LRC is a qualified basic skills tutor.

59. Tutors give the learners appropriate individual support in lessons. When talking to new learners, they identify any previous experience and highlight the benefits of gaining qualifications and updating or starting to gain ICT skills.

60. Access to programmes and ICT facilities is broadly satisfactory. All learners on the education wings have access to the ICT programmes, and learners working in one of the industrial workshops can access the LRC for one day each week. Learners on three units have access to ICT facilities on their wing. Learners with mobility problems access facilities on the ground floor of their wing or use the LRC, which is on the ground floor. However, learners in full-time work in the laundry have no access.

61. There are unsatisfactory arrangements for learners taking external tests. Learners take the tests in the LRC, which is often noisy. There are no separate areas for taking tests. There are no invigilation records completed at the time of the test. The external verifier has identified this as an action point but actions have not yet been put into place.

62. There are few opportunities for the learners to progress. The highest qualification level available is at level 2. The two qualifications offered have units on most software applications. When learners have completed these qualifications there are no others for them to do and they are unable to broaden or extend their knowledge and skills. There are plans to introduce a web design programme.

Leadership and management

63. Leadership and management of the curriculum area are satisfactory. Regular meetings take place, including daily five-minute briefings. All tutors receive a copy of the minutes and feel well informed. There are no standard agendas for meetings. Minutes do not always state the person responsible for action or any target dates for completion of the action, and they are sometimes very brief, with insufficient details recorded. Staff supervision records are very detailed. Interviews are held with staff at least every three months, with previous action points revisited. Records of observation of teaching are detailed but the grades are often over-generous and do not always match the description of the observation.

64. Standard schemes of work and lessons plans have been developed. Tutors are involved in curriculum development. The range of qualifications was reviewed in 2003 and the decision was taken to change to qualifications that were felt to meet the learners' needs better. A new qualification was introduced for learners with a short intended stay.

Learners can achieve this qualification within one or two weeks.

65. The self-assessment report is an accurate reflection of the provision. It is appropriately self-critical and identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors.

66. Support for learners with identified literacy and numeracy support needs is satisfactory. On the wings there is good communication between the ICT tutor and the tutor providing literacy and numeracy support.

Retailing, customer service & transportation

Retailing, customer service & transportation		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Customer service - Other government-funded provision	15	3

Customer service

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- good resources for call centre operations training
- high level of individual support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient target-setting and recording of learners' progress
- insufficient opportunities to progress
- poor use of data to improve provision

Achievement and standards

67. Learners' work is of a high standard. Their portfolios contain written work that demonstrates a high level of attainment and clear progress. Learners develop very good computer skills and use these skills effectively in presenting their evidence. They take care to present their work and most of them word process their evidence. The quality of the written work is above the requirements for the qualification. Work is marked regularly and thoroughly. However, written feedback is not always given in sufficient detail. The good standard of work in learners' portfolios is confirmed by the external verification reports.

68. The level 1 in call centre operations was introduced in 2003. Reliable data is not available on learners who start the programme and complete. Between August 2003 and April 2004, 17 learners achieved the qualification, 11 achieved in September 2004, and there are currently 10 portfolios for external moderation. Learners sit an external multiple-choice test and achievement in this is very good.

Quality of education and training

69. The call centre operations training room is well equipped. Learners benefit from a dedicated room which provides a realistic simulation of a call centre environment. Learners have access to computers, headsets and telephone equipment. Call centre simulation software is loaded onto the servers, which enables the learners to practise

their call centre skills realistically, using different situations, such as a concert ticket credit card booking line and a council complaints line. Learners practise role-play and receive feedback on their performance from tutors. The training room is bright, spacious and airy, and contains many good examples of learners' work, as well as useful information relating to the call centre programme.

70. Tutors provide a good level of support to learners and give them regular individual coaching, which builds their confidence and allows them to move through their qualification at a steady pace. Learners receive timely and appropriate feedback from the tutors on their work and progress towards completing a unit. Staff encourage learners and develop their confidence in using their IT skills. Learners have a very good rapport with tutors, who promote a positive working atmosphere. Learners are appreciative of the support of their tutors and are motivated to succeed. They are encouraged to ask questions and discuss concerns with the tutors. Through these discussions they are able to demonstrate a good understanding of the knowledge required in, for example, consumer legislation and repetitive strain injury. Staff share responsibility for training and assessment for all of the call centre operations learners. They work well as a team and have a good awareness of the learners' progress.

71. Teaching and learning sessions are satisfactory. The structure of the programme is clearly defined and is supported by session plans, which broadly indicate how the programme will be taught. However, records detailing what learners need to do to make progress during the sessions are brief. In observed lessons, all learners participated and appropriate learning took place. Learners can join the course at any time throughout the year. They follow an individual programme. The workshop sessions are appropriately managed without learners having long periods of waiting for help. The tutors' skilful use of oral questioning develops the learners' understanding, assesses their knowledge and builds on their prior learning. Learners are assessed for their literacy and numeracy skills and the call centre tutors are routinely notified of the outcomes. However, the material used in teaching and learning is insufficiently differentiated to meet individual needs. The teaching and learning methods lack variety. The activities are mostly individual tasks, with little opportunity for paired and group work. Learning methods are insufficiently developed, for example research and note-taking. Learners are required to read handouts and then answer appropriate questions. Insufficient interaction arises from this type of study.

72. There is insufficient specific target-setting and incomplete recording of learners' progress. Learners complete a monitoring document which identifies criteria to be covered for each of the units and has target dates. Learners are not given sufficient written feedback and the records do not show what the learner has to focus on to achieve the unit. Learners' action plans are insufficiently detailed and do not clearly specify action to be taken. Learners are given a weekly review of progress. The review document is well constructed and focuses attention on key areas for development. However, the reviews are often either not carried out or lack sufficient detail.

73. Learners who have a higher level of ability are not given the opportunity to progress from the level 1 qualification. Staff are aware of this and have plans to develop the

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provision. Learners who do not achieve all of the modules for the course are not certificated with the awarding body's letters of unit credit, issued for part-completion of units.

Leadership and management

74. The management of call centre operations is satisfactory. The team works well together and internal communications are good. Staff meetings are held every month and are clearly minuted. Most of the communication about learners takes place during informal discussion. The number of learners on the programme is small and staff know all of them individually. Staff share responsibility for both groups of learners. They can clearly recall decisions made about learners' progress and what they need to achieve to complete. There is an effective internal verification system. The moderation sampling strategy and procedures are working efficiently. The two tutors moderate each other's assessments, and two units from all portfolios are subsequently moderated by the internal verifier.

75. Staff are appropriately qualified. They have teaching qualifications and there is a staff development programme to update their IT qualifications. However, staff have not had recent industrial experience in call centre operations and have requested this. Tutors are observed in the classroom and given feedback. However, there is no evaluation of the effect of this on the learners.

76. Data is not collected in a way that is useful for evaluation of retention and achievement rates, and is not used to identify trends or to make improvements to the provision. Staff are not set specific targets which relate to learners' retention and achievement. Learners' views are collected every two months from a written questionnaire and analysed. However, they are not used to produce action plans to make improvements to the programme.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hospitality and catering</i> - Other government-funded provision	8	4
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Other government-funded provision	10	4

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good new initiatives and actions to improve the quality of the provision

Weaknesses

- poor links with the education department
- poor management of accredited courses

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good new initiatives and actions to improve the quality of the provision

Weaknesses

- insufficiently qualified PE staff
- poor links with the education department
- poor management of accredited courses

Achievement and standards

77. Little accredited training has taken place over the past 12 months. However, achievement rates of qualifications on hospitality and sport courses are satisfactory. Most learners who were on these accredited courses achieved their target qualification. Three learners on hospitality programmes have achieved full NVQs. In sport, 12 learners started a gym instructors' course and 11 achieved their qualification. On the sport NVQ programme, 11 learners started their NVQ, three achieved their full NVQ, two have achieved unit accreditation and two remain on the course. Learners in sport use the skills developed to help run circuit-training sessions and exercise clubs. Hospitality learners have developed good culinary skills.

Quality of education and training

78. Coaching and teaching are satisfactory. Hospitality learners receive appropriate individual training during on-the-job training and background knowledge sessions. Coaching on sports programmes is good but tutors do not always have lesson plans to ensure full and effective coverage of the syllabus. On the hospitality programme, there is clear allocation of assessors to candidates, clear allocation of counter-signatories for unqualified assessors, and clear allocation of verification responsibility. However, internal verification has not yet started. Learners on the sports and the catering courses do not benefit from the use of individual learning plans. Staff are aware of what learners' aims are and what they need to do but these are not recorded effectively.

79. Resources overall are satisfactory. Hospitality learners are trained and assessed in the main production kitchen and in the staff mess, both of which are appropriately up-to-date environments. However, there is a fully equipped training kitchen that is not being used, which would provide good training opportunities for the learners. Staff in the kitchens have good industrial experience and there is a satisfactory number of staff to support the programme. Learners on sports programmes use the full range of equipment and have very good sports facilities for their course. Background knowledge is delivered in the fitness area on the first floor of the sports hall. The sports hall has to be closed during these sessions as the noise levels would inhibit learning. This does restrict the opportunities for others to access recreational PE. A wide range of handouts is used to support learning for both programmes, although there is a limited number of course books.

80. The PE staff are insufficiently qualified. Many of them have been transferred from prison officer duties as activity development officer posts become available. Many have some specific sport interest and coaching qualifications for their chosen sport, but none of the staff has done specific training linked to delivering a PE programme. The training programme for staff new to the role of PE instructor for staff in state-run prisons is not available to staff at HMP Altcourse. None of the staff have either a teaching qualification or a group training techniques certificate. Staff have had access to courses focused on delivery of specific courses. For example, some staff are now qualified to teach the gym fitness course to learners.

81. There are poor links with the education department. Learners on sport and hospitality programmes do not receive an initial assessment. The results of their Basic Skills Agency test, completed on induction, are not provided by the education department to help develop any learning plan. The NVQ catering manager and a tutor from education both deliver separate food hygiene training courses, but there is no co-ordination or sharing of good practice. When the course is delivered by the education department, learners receive a recognised national certificate, but if it is delivered by the NVQ manager they receive an in-house certificate produced by the contract caterer, which is not generally recognised elsewhere. The education department provides no support for learners with additional literacy, numeracy or language needs. Key skills have not been introduced as part of the sport or hospitality programmes.

Leadership and management

82. There have been good recent initiatives and actions to improve the quality of the provision. The self-assessment report for hospitality and sport is accurate and actions have been put in place recently to rectify the weaknesses identified. There are newly appointed managers for both hospitality and sport. A new PE manager was appointed three months ago who has clearly identified staff development needs to enable more courses to be offered. Three activity development officers have recently attended courses to qualify as instructors for the gym instructors' course. This has improved the opportunity to provide more accredited courses. A hospitality NVQ manager was appointed five weeks ago to lead the development of NVQ training. He has developed new documents and systems to improve the delivery of hospitality NVQs. Learners now have more frequent contact with their assessor and more individual coaching takes place to support the learners with their NVQ.

83. Management of accredited training courses is poor. The prison has designed new processes to cover some of the key aspects of training but these have not been implemented and have had no effect on the quality of the learners' experience. For example, learners on hospitality and sports courses receive no initial assessment, no individual learning plans, and the induction to their programmes is vague. There is no system for reviewing the learners' progress. A new format has been designed for this to take place in hospitality but it has not yet been introduced. Accreditation of prior learning and achievement is poor. One learner on a hospitality programme is working towards a qualification below the one he already has. A learner in sport did have a previous qualification cross-referenced to his NVQ but this had not been used effectively to fast-track the learner. Some assessment practice is poor. Hospitality NVQ units that had been signed off as complete, had insufficient evidence to meet the awarding body requirements. The internal verification process is incomplete and failed to identify key issues with the NVQ programme. For the sport NVQ, learners receive no action plans and have had limited contact with their assessor. The internal verifier has not carried out any verification activity for some time. There are no training records held of learners who had been on training programmes previously.

Visual & performing arts & media

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Other government-funded provision	124	3

Arts

Strengths

- good use of art to develop literacy skills
- very well-planned, staged development of learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate accommodation and physical resources
- insufficient analysis of achievement data to measure success

Achievement and standards

84. Most learners who attend sufficient classes to meet the specifications of qualifications are successful in achieving them. In May 2004, 23 learners achieved level 2 art qualifications, 17 learners achieved level 1, and two achieved entry level. Four learners gained communication key skills qualifications at level 2. This is low, compared with the previous year, although a significant period of staff absence occurred during this period. In 2003, three learners achieved additional key skills at level 2 in improving their own learning. Eleven learners successfully competed for other external awards. All learners attain an appropriate standard of work in relation to the time spent attending classes and some learners produce good standards of work. Learners develop a personal style and are proud of the progress they have made. Learners' work is displayed around the college and there are examples of exceptionally good pencil drawings. A few learners progress to higher or further education courses.

Quality of education and training

85. There is good use of art to develop literacy skills, and learners' vocabulary is increased considerably. Discussion and debate are carefully instigated and recorded on a whiteboard, often using a mind map. Words and their associations are used as inspiration for art projects and poems. Learners research topical artists' work thoroughly and write essays to contribute to key skill evidence. Those that need it receive additional literacy support. Learners complete simple, short written quizzes that test their written skills and background knowledge of art.

86. Learning is planned particularly well in a series of stages to progress learners in a

methodical way, to include a wide range of cultures and styles of art. It is sequential, starting with a basic understanding of primary and secondary colours and the development of effective colour-mixing techniques. Learners are encouraged to study the wide range of books available in the art room and library. They paint and draw in the style of artists whose work inspires them. Learning is planned to introduce and familiarise learners with art from other cultures. For example, some extremely good Muslim-inspired art is displayed and black art is celebrated and studied for a month. Fantasy art sources are offered that are popular among younger learners and some effective detailed examples are shown. Contributions by the Tate Modern in London and Liverpool enrich learners' experience and give an insight into current art practice.

87. Tutors manage classes effectively with learners of varied abilities. Staff are appropriately qualified and have a wide experience of managing various types of behaviour. Tutors use literacy, numeracy and key skills initial assessment sensitively. English for speakers of other languages support is available, but it is not currently in use.

88. Assessment and monitoring of each learner's progress is adequate. However, these focus too much on what the learners have done rather than on how well they have progressed or how well they have understood the lesson. Tutors give verbal praise and constructive criticism in response to individual learners' efforts. Learners seek feedback from their tutors and value it. Learners have a clear understanding of aspects achieved and tasks that must be carried out to achieve their next goal. Learners are enthusiastic about the work done in the classes and in their cells. Some classes are very quiet and attended by older or more vulnerable learners to provide a more conducive learning environment.

89. Effective individual support is given on the wing to some learners who are unable to attend classes. For example, one learner was arrested a month before he was to start a history of art degree. The full-time tutor gives him tutorials on the wing to support his reapplication to university in preparation for his release.

90. Accommodation and physical resources are inadequate for the number of learners who attend art classes and those who would like to. In 2001 the space available for art was reduced from two rooms to one. Most classes are oversubscribed and learners are sent to other classes or back to their cells. The remaining room is cramped for the 11 learners and the orderly who attend. There is insufficient convenient storage space for materials, learners' work and easels. The floor covering is dirty, damaged, porous and inappropriate for the activities. The room is poorly lit by fluorescent tubes and has insufficient natural light. Curriculum planning is limited by the allocated space available for visual art, and a narrow range of art activities is offered.

Leadership and management

91. The art curriculum is managed satisfactorily. Adequate teaching observations and appraisals are carried out and tutor development is satisfactory. Tutors attend external courses, for example in art therapy, and tutors have links with art tutors in other prisons. They were involved in the development of the prison's most recent self-assessment

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report, which is accurate, although some of the judgements are overstated.

92. Learners are treated with respect by their tutors and are required to respect their colleagues. They are familiar with the complaints procedure, although not always confident in its effectiveness.

93. Insufficient analysis of achievement data is carried out to measure success. It is not known how many learners start art courses, are transferred to other establishments, are released, or withdraw from the course in relation to those who achieve qualifications. Every effort is made for learners' portfolios of work and assessment records to be moved from their previous or to their next location. However, arrangements are made on an individual basis and procedures are slow. The success of these processes and subsequent achievement is unavailable. Tutors make every effort to improve achievement. Thirty-one candidates are working towards art qualifications. Seven of these learners have already left the prison, although their portfolio evidence has been retained. A digital camera is sometimes used to record this, but learners are not confident that the prison will forward their work or keep it securely in the art room. Some learners keep their work in their cells in case they leave suddenly.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas - Other government-funded provision	330	4

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good progress for literacy and numeracy learners
- very effective systematic diagnostic assessment
- good recent action to improve the provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient planning and recording of individual learning
- unsatisfactory teaching
- very narrow range of learning resources
- inadequate skills for life strategy

Achievement and standards

94. There is good progress for many literacy and numeracy learners. From mid-September 2004 to mid-January 2005, there were high pass rates in literacy and numeracy at levels 1 and 2. In literacy, 87 per cent of learners who entered the level 1 literacy test passed and 88 per cent passed at level 2. The number of learners who entered is 71 and 56, respectively. In numeracy, 85 per cent of learners passed level 1 and 83 per cent passed level 2. Seventy-four learners entered for level 1 and 40 for level 2. There are no statistics showing how many learners could have entered for the tests but did not. Reliable statistics are not available for entries and outcomes before mid-September 2004 or for learners who have entered for entry levels 1, 2 and 3. A number of learners have been entered for qualifications that are below their assessed level of competence. These learners will raise the levels of achievement artificially.

95. Most learners' class work is satisfactory. However, some are demotivated and do not achieve satisfactorily. Few learners have obtained awards in key skills, parenting craft and dealing with drug and alcohol misuse. Many learners are transferred out of the prison before they finish their portfolios and this prevents them from obtaining accreditation successfully.

Quality of education and training

96. The prison carries out good, systematic diagnostic assessment to identify learners' individual needs. During induction, all learners complete literacy and numeracy tests, and those with low scores are encouraged to attend literacy and numeracy training. All learners who join literacy or numeracy classes complete a diagnostic assessment. The tests are marked quickly and learners are provided with a clear profile of their strengths and areas for development. The areas for development provide a good basis for learners' training tasks. Where learners have few weaknesses on the diagnostic test, they are recommended to take the appropriate national tests and are given higher-level diagnostic tests to reveal areas in which training is needed. There is no provision for further assessing learners who may have dyslexia or other conditions which interfere with the development of language and numeracy skills.

97. Individual learning is insufficiently planned, monitored and recorded. Most learners do not have detailed individual learning plans which set out their short- and longer-term learning targets and the timescales for achieving them. For those learners who have been convicted, there is insufficient linking of individual learning plans with sentence plans. Most staff have had inadequate training to help them plan and manage individual learning effectively. Many learners spend too much time aimlessly working through photocopied handouts that have little meaning and relevance for them. Too little importance is placed upon identifying each learner's training needs and on devising activities that will fulfil those needs. Most learners have insufficient control of their learning. They rely too heavily on tutors telling them what to do and, when they have finished an assigned task, waiting for the tutor's attention. This wastes time and impedes their progress. Learners usually have their progress reviewed weekly but they do not have clearly defined targets against which to monitor progress. In many cases, monitoring is superficial and insufficient information is recorded about what they have done well and where further improvements are needed.

98. Much of the teaching is unsatisfactory. Some tutors' planning is inadequate. For instance, the subject content, teaching methods and learning activities are not clearly defined. Inadequate attention is given to improving learners' literacy and numeracy skills in foundation sessions such as drug awareness and cookery. Visual aids are poorly used. In one observed session, the writing on the marker board was in badly formed capital letters which impeded the learners' comprehension and spelling. In another session, the overhead transparency was difficult to read because the print was too small and the projection was blurred. Some tutors' questioning techniques are not used effectively to check the extent to which learners are learning. Many sessions lack variety and practical work consists almost entirely of learners working through exercises on photocopied handouts. These provide insufficient challenge and stimulation, and many learners resent having to work through them for so long. Much of the literacy and numeracy teaching lacks a relevant vocational focus. Insufficient attention is given to classroom arrangement. For instance, in one observed class three learners were given a lesson on sentence structuring. They had not been grouped together for the tutor's instruction and the teaching distracted the other students in the class who were working on different activities. In literacy sessions, insufficient importance is given to developing learners'

listening and speaking skills.

99. The range of learning resources is very limited. The heavy reliance on photocopied handouts demotivates many learners and increases their resentment of education. Too little use is made of audio recordings, particularly for learners who have poor reading skills or whose first language is not English. Insufficient use is also made of video recordings to provide variety and to inject some realism into teaching and learning. Learners do not have sufficient access to computer-based resources and simulations. Information and learning technology is not available for use by tutors in the foundation classrooms. The self-assessment report also refers to the poor-quality and limited basic teaching aids, such as overhead projectors, televisions and video-cassette recorders. There are too few resources to enable tutors to teach literacy and numeracy, with an emphasis on work-related activities, such as retailing, bricklaying, plumbing and motor maintenance. Tutors do not have sufficient support workers to help them to manage larger classes or classes where learners are working on a range of different tasks. No members of staff have expertise in managing learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, or in working with learners with dyslexia, as identified in the self-assessment. The library contains too few books that are suitable for learners with low levels of literacy and numeracy. Although learners have access to textbooks on the residential units and in the college, they are not regularly checked for appropriateness. There is no policy for purchasing new books and for discarding unsuitable texts.

Leadership and management

100. A new manager for foundation programmes was appointed in September 2004, before which foundation programmes had not been managed or co-ordinated for over a year. The manager has taken a number of actions to improve the relevance and quality of the provision. For instance, all teaching staff have been observed once and some unsatisfactory teaching has been identified. Staff meetings are now held regularly to discuss the foundation programmes and the manager is available twice each week to see staff who wish to discuss curricular or personal issues. The manager is contributing to the implementation of the self-assessment action plan, concentrating on foundation programmes. Formats for schemes of work and lesson plans have been designed by the manager and staff are requested to follow these standardised templates. There has been effective recent action to involve learners who are lacking confidence or who are anxious about accessing the educational provision, to have individual support to overcome their fear and to begin their learning. Good use is made of prisoners who have been trained to act as learning mentors. Responsibility for foundation programmes on the residential units is unclear. As identified in the self-assessment report, procedures for dealing with appeals and complaints are not understood and effectively communicated to all staff and learners. The management information system is used ineffectively. Recruitment, retention and achievement data is not collected or analysed routinely. Although the performance of staff is reviewed, formal annual staff appraisals have not been carried out so far. There is inadequate staff development for foundation programme tutors to help them to improve and extend their skills. Although some action has been taken to quality assure the training programmes, the quality assurance system is inadequate and the programmes are not evaluated satisfactorily. The self-assessment report does not give a

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list of key strengths and weaknesses.

101. There is no adequate skills for life strategy. Although a strategic plan has recently been written for prison education, there are few references to literacy or numeracy, basic training in ICT, key skills or foundation programme training. The number of foundation programme classes is very restricted and inadequate attention is given to reviewing, modifying and extending the range of programmes. Staff are insufficiently experienced and inadequately trained for dealing with learners on literacy, numeracy and foundation programmes. Proposals for extending the skills and expertise of staff to enable them to deliver foundation programmes more effectively have not been considered and planned adequately. There is no systematic approach to evaluating and extending learning resources. There is a lack of vision for integrating literacy, numeracy and ICT training into other areas of the prison's educational provision. Day-release, evening and weekend provision for literacy and numeracy training is not provided, despite the high need for such training, as the self-assessment report notes. Prisoners who are employed within the prison's industries have too few opportunities to extend and develop their literacy and numeracy competences to become more effective communicators.