

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **HMP Springhill Reinspection**

**08 February 2006**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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.*

## 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.
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep** )

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 Springhill Reinspection**

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Springhill (the prison) is an open prison for men situated near the town of Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. The prison is in a rural setting, with accommodation centred around a large house that was built as a family home in 1872. The prison was opened in 1953, and was the first open prison in the country. It caters for Category D offenders, focusing on resettlement. It has an occupational capacity of 336 and currently has 259 offenders. Most offenders are serving sentences of between four and 10 years, although the prison does have a small number of lifers who are nearing the end of their sentence. The prison is adjacent to HMP Grendon, which is a male Category B prison that operates a unique regime of therapeutic care. Many of the prison's administrative functions are operated jointly with HMP Grendon.

2. Education is subcontracted to Amersham and Wycombe College (the college) which offers full- and part-time courses, predominantly in literacy and numeracy, information and communications technology (ICT), key skills and social and life skills. Since the previous inspection the college is also now responsible for the teaching and learning in construction and physical education. The prison offers basic employment and teaches a range of skills on-site. Following the previous inspection much of this work is now accredited, although many courses are new and were not inspected. Currently, 15 learners are taking a range of courses in farming and gardening, and 10 learners who are working in the kitchen are completing national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at level 1 or 2 in food preparation and cooking.

3. The governor who has overall responsibility for both HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill leads the senior management team. The head of learning and skills, who was appointed following the previous inspection, is responsible for vocational training and employment, education and workshops. An education manager carries out the day-to-day management of the education department. There are a further four full-time staff in the education department. The other education staff are employed either part-time or on short-term contracts. Education is provided for 162 offenders, which is an increase on the previous inspection. The education manager meets the head of learning and skills every three months to review the education contract.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Information & communications technology

4. At the time of the inspection 26 learners were enrolled on courses leading to ICT qualifications in the prison's ICT academy. Courses range from level 1 to level 3. In addition, 12 learners are taking ICT courses in the education department one evening each week. These qualifications include the examination-based qualification in information technology (IT), an IT essentials course and industry-recognised qualifications in computer networking and cabling. Courses and modules are planned to take between

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six and eight weeks. Learners on the examination-based qualification in IT can start the course at any time. Learners on other qualifications join at set intervals throughout the year. Learners attend courses in the prison's ICT academy in the morning and afternoon from Monday to Thursday and two full-time members of staff provide the training. A part-time member of staff provides the ICT training in the education department.

### Foundation programmes

5. There are 76 learners on a range of foundation programmes. Thirty-eight learners are on literacy and numeracy programmes and three are on programmes in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Thirty-four learners are taking key skills qualifications including five at level 3. One learner attends literacy and numeracy classes at a local further education college. Literacy and numeracy classes are provided at entry level to level 2. The education department also provides courses in introduction to work, farms and gardens, job search, money management and trowel trades. Drop-in key skills workshops take place during the week. All classes take place during daytime sessions. The foundation courses are run by two co-ordinators, three full-time tutors and eight-part time tutors, with one full-time tutor's post vacant.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	27
Number of staff interviewed	15
Number of subcontractors interviewed	6

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. At the previous inspection in July 2003, ICT and foundation programmes were judged to be unsatisfactory, as were the prison's leadership and management and quality assurance arrangements. Equality of opportunity was satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of provision were satisfactory or better.

## GRADES

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

### *Grades awarded at reinspection*

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	3

Information & communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Using IT</i> - Other government-funded provision	38	2

  

Foundation programmes		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other contributory areas</i> - Other government-funded provision	76	2

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

7. Achievement rates on ICT programmes during the past year are good, although little historic data is available. **The pass rate on literacy and numeracy programmes is also good** and has improved to over 80 per cent during the past 12 months. **Retention rates on most programmes are also good.**

8. **Learners develop particularly good practical skills in ICT.** They have the opportunity to progress to high-level courses in network cabling and using ICT.

### Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Information & communications technology	0	3	0	0	3
Foundation programmes	0	3	2	1	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>

9. **Teaching and learning are good on ICT programmes** and are satisfactory on foundation programmes, with some good lessons observed. The work of the newly appointed offender teaching assistants in education has proved to be invaluable.

10. Learners are effectively inducted and thoroughly assessed when they enter the prison. Good arrangements are made for those with appropriate prior learning to progress to higher levels of learning. The prison plans to improve the provision further for higher-level courses.

11. **Resources are good for ICT and foundation programmes.** They are also good in other recently introduced vocational areas and include new gym facilities and

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equipment. Resources have been significantly improved since the previous inspection. Computers are modern and have up-to-date software. Good use is made of well-presented handouts and course books. **The range of courses in ICT is now good**, having improved since the previous inspection.

12. Good support is provided for learners on all programmes. Learners on distance learning courses and courses at local colleges have good access to facilities in the prison and outside. The newly built job club facility is a highly professional environment where offenders have good, secure access to the internet to search for employment.

13. Assessment and verification practices are satisfactory. Learners' competences and achievements are clearly recorded.

14. **ICT learners have insufficient opportunities in some cases to maintain their skills after completing their courses.** The prison has no facilities for learners who wish to develop or maintain their computer cabling and networking skills after their course.

### Leadership and management

15. Leadership and management have significantly improved since the previous inspection. **The prison's management of change is particularly good.** There are now good links between resettlement and education and training. The prison has extended its vocational training courses considerably, although many areas are new and some have small numbers of learners. **Curriculum leadership and management is now good in ICT.** A comprehensive ICT strategy now supports the prison's mission statement.

16. The head of education and skills is a member of the senior management team and has a key role and responsibility for activities. Training in key skills is well integrated within most areas of learning, and open learning on external courses continues to expand with good support from the prison's senior management team.

17. **The prison has good links with external organisations.** Employers are encouraged to take offenders on work trials and several large national employers have recently employed offenders upon release. Voluntary and other agencies give good support to offenders to help remove their barriers to employment. This support includes good help and guidance in areas such as housing and dealing with substance misuse.

18. **Arrangements for equality of opportunity are good.** There is a particularly good level of mutual respect between most staff and offenders. Staff and learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity and there is good celebration of cultures and beliefs.

19. Since the previous inspection, useful data is now collected on the composition, achievement and attendance of different groups. This data is generally well analysed and has started to be used to make management decisions. Meetings take place between staff and learners and these have led to the improvement of vocational training.



20. Quality assurance has improved since the previous inspection, when it was unsatisfactory. The prison now has a thorough self-assessment process and useful meetings are held between key staff on the quality improvement subgroup. Learners' and offenders' views are regularly sought and improvements have been made to the provision from this. **However, some quality assurance arrangements have not yet been fully extended to all new areas of learning.**

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Strengths**

- particularly good management of change
- highly effective links with external organisations
- good promotion of equality and diversity

#### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient quality assurance of some aspects of provision

### **Information & communications technology**

#### ***Using IT***

##### *Strengths*

- particularly good development of skills and knowledge
- good range of courses
- good teaching and learning
- good leadership and management

##### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient opportunity to maintain skills on completion of qualifications

## **Foundation programmes**

### ***Other contributory areas***

#### *Strengths*

- good pass rates in literacy and numeracy
- good retention rate on foundation programmes
- good resources to support literacy and numeracy skills

#### *Weaknesses*

- no key weaknesses identified

## DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

#### Strengths

- particularly good management of change
- highly effective links with external organisations
- good promotion of equality and diversity

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient quality assurance of some aspects of provision

21. Leadership and management are good. The prison's management of change is particularly good. Significant progress has been made since the previous inspection, where inspectors identified inadequate accreditation of training and poor progression opportunities. The prison has developed a clear strategy for learning and skills. A wide range of vocational areas now offer accredited training and there is a strong commitment to education and training across the prison. The prison has good leadership and clear strategic planning with a strong vision for the future development of learning and skills. The newly written mission statement for learning and skills is comprehensive and gives a clear message and focus which is clearly understood by most staff and offenders. Particularly good use is made of offenders who were encouraged to contribute to the mission statement and also contributed to the improvement of learning and skills across the prison. This includes the development of new facilities and courses in physical education, the good facilities and programme in construction and the improved database for the collection and analysis of retention and achievement data. The prison has invested well in new resources following the previous inspection. Provision for ICT courses has greatly improved with significant financial input from outside organisations as well as the prison. A wide range of programmes and progression opportunities are now available in this area. Teaching accommodation and learning resources in education have also been updated and there are good facilities for learning in horticulture and the prison kitchen. Training in key skills is integrated well in most vocational areas and the prison has clear plans to improve this further. Day-to-day leadership and management are good on most accredited courses.

22. The prison has highly effective links with external organisations. It has established a particularly good drop-in centre where offenders can search for future employment, learn about the requirements for jobs and improve their skills in letter writing, money management and interview techniques. This newly built facility has been developed with the help of offenders and is a highly professional environment. There is good secure internet access for job search. The prison has established good working relationships with many local employers and has clear plans to extend this further and to hold job fairs for the offenders. Good links have been made with several large national companies

through which some offenders have recently gained employment. Strong links have been created with voluntary and other external organisations such as the local branch of a national advice service, Jobcentre Plus and an organisation for British service veterans. Some offenders have gained useful full-time employment with voluntary agencies. Many organisations visit the prison regularly to help offenders with personal problems in areas such as finances, substance misuse and housing. This helps to ensure that offenders have the best opportunities for sustained employment on release. An informative newsletter is sent out every three months to all link organisations to notify them of offenders' progress and to promote the work of the prison. The prison has established strong working links with other prisons, providing good opportunities to share best practice. Local colleges provide good learning opportunities for offenders who are able to attend courses. Learners are enrolled on a wide range of courses including plumbing and sociology.

23. Internal communications are good. There are regular contract meetings where performance is discussed along with the quality of the provision. Meetings are well attended and positive actions are taken promptly to rectify issues. All staff receive a regular annual appraisal which leads to useful staff development.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

24. The prison's arrangements for equality of opportunity are good. The prison has clearly written equal opportunities, race relations and diversity policies which are regularly checked and updated. A clear strategic and operational plan is in place for equality and diversity. The prison deals effectively with issues relating to equality of opportunity, and incidents of bullying, harassment and racial abuse are taken seriously. Prompt and appropriate actions are taken to deal with complaints. Bad language and unacceptable behaviour are appropriately challenged.

25. Offenders are given clear information on equality of opportunity and learners are asked for comments at reviews. Useful data is collected on nationality and ethnicity and is effectively used to monitor rates of participation. However, there is insufficient analysis of equality data relating to retention and achievement on some accredited courses. The allocation of jobs is fairly discussed and the process is thorough and well reasoned. Waiting lists for education courses are well managed and good efforts are made to meet the needs of each learner.

26. The prison provides good opportunities for the celebration of faiths, with well-used chapels, prayer rooms and a Buddha Grove where Tibetan monks visit annually. There is good attendance by offenders at the annual rededication ceremony at the Buddha Grove where traditional Tibetan foods are served. A good variety of dietary needs are catered for with Halal food for Muslims and vegan or vegetarian options available. Good celebrations of different faiths and cultures are initiated by offenders. These include holding culinary events to celebrate black history week, and Turkish and Mexican evenings to which all staff and offenders are invited.

27. Since the previous inspection the prison has improved the provision for learners with

restricted mobility. This provision is now satisfactory, although some areas of the prison cannot be altered. Those offenders with severe mobility difficulties are sent to other prisons which can better accommodate their needs. Learners with dyslexia receive satisfactory support. The library and its opening hours have been improved since the previous inspection and learners have good access to a wide range of learning materials, as well as a well-planned programme for creative writing. However, the range of books to support some level 3 courses is limited. The gym facilities have been improved significantly since the previous inspection. The gym has been relocated to a larger refurbished building and there are approved plans to extend this further. A wide range of up-to-date gym equipment has been installed as a result of productive links made with a local company. The number of staff has been increased and qualifications have recently been introduced into this area.

28. Education and prison staff have regular training in equality and diversity and have attended external events dealing with discrimination. Staff have a clear understanding of diversity and equality of opportunity. Staff and offenders are kept well informed of equality and diversity issues by clearly displayed posters. The prison's key internal documents and publications display a good range of multicultural images. Equality and diversity are reinforced well at learners' induction and throughout their programmes. The high level of respect between offenders and most staff is particularly high, and offenders are allowed to move around the prison freely.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 3**

29. Quality assurance is satisfactory. The previous inspection found that the prison's arrangements for quality assurance were inadequate. The prison has worked hard to improve quality assurance. The quality improvement sub-group holds regular monthly meetings which are attended by all key members of staff. Meetings are clearly recorded and have led to the implementation of clear procedures and guidelines. Good practice is widely shared at a range of meetings. Good efforts have been made to improve the overall quality of the learning and skills provision at the prison. Following the previous inspection, the prison has introduced a good range of extra activities and courses to enrich offenders' experiences. These include yoga classes, a creative writing course and a public speakers' club.

30. Procedures for assessment and internal verification are adequate. Clear sampling plans are completed and thorough verbal and written feedback is given to learners, whose progress is monitored well. Feedback from learners and staff is adequately analysed and used to improve the provision. Learners' views are sought at several stages of their course or programme. Actions taken have included improvements in resources and changes to programmes.

31. The self-assessment process is thorough and has been followed by clear action-planning and the improvement of the provision. All staff and offenders had the opportunity to contribute to the process. The report is sufficiently judgemental and identifies most of the key strengths and weaknesses found through inspection. Self-assessment is an established part of the prison's quality assurance procedure.

32. Some aspects of provision receive insufficient quality assurance, although the prison has plans to improve this aspect of the provision. Clear procedures are in place in the education department to monitor annually the teaching and learning and tutors are given detailed verbal and written feedback. Some observation grades given by the prison are too generous and have not always led to staff being set appropriate targets for improvement where necessary. Although some support is given to new or unqualified tutors in education and in vocational training areas, no clear procedures are in place to ensure the support is recorded or appropriate. Some observations of vocational training have been carried out but these are not always clearly detailed. The prison plans to carry further observations of training in all areas where accredited training is offered.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Using IT</b> - Other government-funded provision	38	2

#### **Using IT**

##### *Strengths*

- particularly good development of skills and knowledge
- good range of courses
- good teaching and learning
- good leadership and management

##### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient opportunity to maintain skills on completion of qualifications

### Achievement and standards

33. Qualification achievement rates and retention rates are good. Since the prison's ICT academy opened in July 2005, 126 learners have enrolled for qualifications and 74 learners have left having completed one or more qualifications in this area. Pass rates on the examination-based qualification in IT and basic computer literacy courses are also high, with over 80 per cent of those entering courses passing. All learners make good progress and are highly motivated to complete and enjoy their study. The standard of learners' practical work is particularly good. Regular 'online' testing and the completion of mock examinations is encouraged throughout their course. With the recent introduction of new qualifications in 2006, an increasing number of learners are progressing to higher-level qualifications. Attendance, timekeeping and learners' behaviour in class are good.

### Quality of education and training

34. Following the previous inspection, the prison has significantly improved the range of courses available in ICT. Learners can gain qualifications from levels 1 to 3 in a variety of computer software and hardware subjects. As well as software applications such as spreadsheets and databases and how to build their own computer, successful learners can achieve qualifications which will help them find employment in data network cabling

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and installation, assembling and configuring computers and working with multi-tasking network operating systems. The range of courses available meets industry needs in skill areas where there are national shortages of qualified staff. Although there is a waiting list for most courses this is well managed. Staff are aware of the earliest release date for new learners and are flexible when developing the learners' individual learning plans to ensure they gain the maximum relevant qualifications before release.

35. Teaching and learning in ICT are good, which was a strength identified at the previous inspection. Learners receive good individual coaching in using software and installing and maintaining hardware. They make good progress to meet challenging targets for the completion of chapters and modules which make up the full qualification. Tutors employ a good range of teaching techniques which stimulate learners' interest in theory and practical work. Effective use is made of digital technology and professionally produced presentations. Tutors demonstrate and explain the use of tools and technical equipment well, placing a good emphasis on health and safety.

36. Initial assessment is well planned and clearly determines each learner's previous level of competence in IT. Good advice and guidance is given at the initial interview and this helps the learner to determine which courses will best support their aspirations upon release.

37. Most learners use online learning to learn theory, although some good-quality paper resources are available. All module, chapter and final examination results are clearly recorded and used as the basis for reviews. Learners' progress is well recorded and formally reviewed every four weeks. Good use is made of an 'exam pod' comprising a small, quiet room set aside exclusively for the use of learners taking mock or end-of-module examinations. Resources are good, having improved since the previous inspection. Computers and software are of industry standard, as are the highly technical resources required for learners to achieve the required level of practical skills in cabling and networking. However, there are insufficient computers to accommodate all learners who want to attend evening classes in education. A range of up-to-date magazines is available to assist learners with research and to keep them informed of the latest technology developments. Tutors take a keen personal interest in learners' progress and provide help and information to learners to find employment in an IT environment if they aspire to do so.

38. Some learners have insufficient opportunities to maintain their skills on completion of courses. Although learners gain a high level of technical competence when completing qualifications in cabling and networking, their aspirations are raised through success. There are no facilities for those who wish to develop or maintain their skills during their remaining time at the prison. Learners working with computer software are able to use the ICT drop-in facility to practise their skills on completion of courses.



## Leadership and management

39. The management's response to the previous inspection has been particularly good. A comprehensive ICT strategy now supports the prison's mission statement. Aims and objectives are clearly defined and targets are realistic and constantly monitored. Data is analysed well, although many of the courses have only recently been introduced and there is little historical data available. Equality and diversity are reinforced well with learners. The investment in new equipment, premises and staff training to meet the demands of the new qualifications has been achieved quickly. Managers have effectively harnessed the skills and enthusiasm of some learners and now employ them as orderlies. The orderlies have developed databases and administrative systems to support ICT training, as well as providing practical help and acting as role models for new learners. The prison's ICT academy has good access for learners with restricted mobility.

## Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Other contributory areas</b> - Other government-funded provision	76	2

### **Other contributory areas**

#### *Strengths*

- good pass rates in literacy and numeracy
- good retention rate on foundation programmes
- good resources to support literacy and numeracy skills

#### *Weaknesses*

- no key weaknesses identified

## Achievement and standards

40. In 2005-06 the pass rate for learners on literacy and numeracy programmes is good and has substantially exceeded the targets set for the prison for entry level, level 1, and key skills qualification achievement. Most learners who enter qualifications at entry level and level 1 pass. In the past year, 126 out of 150 learners passed entry level literacy and 162 passed qualifications at level 1 literacy. Similarly high numbers pass entry level to level 2 qualifications in numeracy. The achievement rate for the current year across the range of literacy, numeracy and key skills courses has increased by over 20 per cent since 2003-04. Learners make good progress in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills, with most learners progressing from entry level 3 to level 2 during their time in the prison. Some learners are achieving good success in learning to read.

41. Retention rates on all foundation programmes are good, with very few of the learners who stay at the prison leaving the course before they complete. Punctuality and attendance at classes are good. In addition to the regular classes, learners make good use of drop-in sessions. These sessions offer support to those learners taking distance learning courses and those needing additional support and guidance. During an introduction to work course, learners spoke with clarity and perception about their own experiences of work and showed respect when listening to the views of others.

## Quality of education and training

42. Teaching and learning on foundation programmes are satisfactory, and individual tuition with ESOL learners is well planned. Planning on the week-long 'introduction to work' course, part of the induction programme, is also good. Although some course and lesson planning contains reference to differentiation, insufficient account is taken of the wide variety of individual needs and interests of the learners. Learning objectives are not always clearly set and explained at the beginning of each session. Although the different learning styles of learners are fully acknowledged, the information is not used to guide the design and delivery of foundation programmes.

43. The integration of key skills training into most occupational areas is satisfactory. Key skills assessments are well recorded. Target-setting at key skills level 3 is particularly good, and recording and reviewing of progress is thorough. Offenders who are trained as teaching assistants offer sensitive and effective support to learners on key skills and other courses. Learners talk very positively about the benefits of the support they receive.

44. Good resources are available to support the range of foundation programmes offered. Teaching rooms have good, up-to-date computers and a good range of software is provided to support literacy and numeracy. Whiteboards are used well and effective use is made of data projectors, laptop computers and large plasma screens in some classrooms. The use of hand-held personal digital assistants together with regular keyboards has provided effective personal computing for learners. Paper-based resources are attractively produced and learners keep neat portfolios.

45. Learners receive an adequate two-week induction programme which includes a computer-based literacy and numeracy assessment and diagnostic assessment. The results of these assessments form the basis of a learner's individual learning plan. Targets for the learning programmes are clear and appropriate, although targets relating to personal and social skills are rarely included. Learners' progress is reviewed on a regular basis. At the end of each session, tutors and learners contribute to an evaluation of the learning achieved. Learners' work is marked on time and includes supportive comments. Learners with additional learning needs are successfully identified through the initial assessment procedure. Support for learners with dyslexia is provided in discrete sessions by an experienced member of staff.

## Leadership and management

46. Clear direction from senior managers has encouraged the creation of new courses and the introduction of new technology. Staff listen carefully to what learners think about the provision and have taken appropriate steps in working with learners to develop a range of relevant courses. Senior managers have been responsive to the

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needs of learners. The self-assessment report is sufficiently rigorous and accurate in analysing how well the department had performed over the previous year, although the strengths and weaknesses do not accurately match the analysis in the report.