REINSPECTION REPORT

HMP&YOI and Remand Centre Reading Reinspection

18 August 2005

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
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

REINSPECTION REPORT

HMP&YOI and Remand Centre Reading Reinspection

Contents

Summary

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP&YOI and Remand Centre Reading (the prison) is a category C local prison for sentenced and remand prisoners aged between 18 and 21 years. The prison was built in 1844 and is situated near Reading town centre. The occupational capacity is 297 and the prison is fully occupied.

2. The head of learning and skills at the prison has responsibility for all education and training. The education contract is held by a local education project management company that also delivers education in two other prisons. The education manager is supported by a deputy manager, nine full-time teaching staff, eight part-time staff and a small administration team. There are a total of 46 places available in education, operating over five days a week, and a further 62 places in work-related and vocational training activity.

3. Accredited qualifications are offered in information and communications technology (ICT), hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and media, and there are foundation programmes including literacy and numeracy and life and social skills. In addition, some learners working as cleaners are following relevant industrial qualifications related to their work tasks. A wide range of resettlement activities takes place at the prison.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

4. Fifteen learners are working towards qualifications in ICT at levels 1, 2 and 3. These include a basic computer literacy qualification, an examination-based qualification in information technology (IT), and a networking award. Since the previous inspection, the range of courses has been increased and a key skill (improving own learning and performance) has been introduced. All ICT learners attend for approximately 12 hours a week over four or five half-days. The computer workshop has 10 networked terminals and the learning resource centre nine terminals and specialist networking equipment. The special prisoner unit has four terminals which are not networked. Eighteen laptop computers are also available for use around the prison. There is a full-time ICT course co-ordinator and two part-time ICT tutors. Most learners develop skills in word processing, spreadsheets, charts and graphs, databases and business presentations. While some learners obtain one or more qualifications, others are only accredited with individual separate units or modules, because they are transferred to another prison or discharged before they are able to complete a full qualification.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

5. There are 12 learners on catering programmes, of whom six are working towards a level 1 Open College Network (OCN) cookery qualification and six towards a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 1 in food preparation and cooking. Learners on the NVQ programme work in the main kitchen of the prison and in the officers' mess. This training is supplemented by practical skills development in the practical skills kitchen on the prison's education wing. Learners on the OCN programme attend practical and portfolio-building sessions for four days a week. They take foundation certificates in food hygiene, health and safety and manual handling during their induction period. Training is managed through an NVQ co-ordinator and an NVQ team leader, who are employed by the subcontractor, and supported by two trainer/assessors employed by the prison service.

Foundation programmes

6. Eleven learners follow literacy and numeracy programmes at entry level and level 1. Twelve learners attend classes in the key skills of application of number and communication from levels 1 to 3. Their classes take place in two training rooms in the education learning centre over four half-days each week and last for two-and-a-half hours. Some learners work on key skills in vocational training departments. Learners in the special prisoner unit attend literacy, numeracy and key skills sessions on the wing. Programmes are provided from entry level up to level 3. The programmes are externally certificated. The subcontracted education department employs a manager for the foundation programmes, who is based in the learning centre at the prison. In addition, there are five full-time and one part-time contracted staff who report directly to the education manager.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	13
Number of learners interviewed	37
Number of staff interviewed	17

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

7. At the previous inspection in June 2004, training in construction and in visual and performing arts and media was satisfactory. However, training in ICT, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel and foundation programmes was unsatisfactory. Leadership and management, including equality of opportunity and quality assurance, were also unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory.

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	4

Construction		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Construction crafts		
- Other government-funded provision	10	3

Information & communications technology		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
- Other government-funded provision	25	4

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering		
- Other government-funded provision	12	4

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts		
- Other government-funded provision	10	3
Music		
- Other government-funded provision	4	3

Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy		
⁻ Other government-funded provision	11	3
Numeracy		
⁻ Other government-funded provision	11	4

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
⁻ Other government-funded provision	15	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering		
⁻ Other government-funded provision	12	3

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy and numeracy		
⁻ Other government-funded provision	23	3

KEY FINDINGS
Achievement and standards

8. **Catering and hospitality learners develop good employability skills.** They acquire useful practical skills and a good understanding of food preparation and cooking techniques that improve their competence and confidence in their work.

9. **In foundation programmes there is good development of learners' communication and numeracy skills.** Learners display good improvement in their skills and this is evident both in discreet literacy and numeracy classes and in the support provided in vocational learning activities.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Information & communications technology	0	2	2	1	5
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	1	2	0	3
Foundation programmes	0	2	3	0	5
Total	**0**	**5**	**7**	**1**	**13**

10. **Good teaching and learning takes place in catering and hospitality.** Training sessions are prepared well and both practical and background knowledge classes are well organised and allow for good learning and skill development to take place.

11. **There is particularly good support to meet the needs of learners on foundation programmes.** All learners receive a detailed and thorough assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills, and where a need is identified, good-quality individual support is provided promptly.

12. **The ICT workshop is very well resourced.** It has been improved and now has air conditioning, better utilisation of space and new networked computers with up-to-date industry-standard software.

13. **In ICT there is a good range of accredited courses and progression opportunities.** Qualifications are provided from entry level through to level 3, and good progression opportunities sometimes lead onto further study outside the prison.

14. **Learners' progress is not monitored well enough on foundation programmes.** Reviews of learners' progress do not give enough detail about what the learner needs to do to achieve their qualification aim.

15. **There is inadequate planning and monitoring of individual learning in ICT.** The progress made by learners is not always recorded and there is insufficient use of targets to help learners measure their progress.

16. **In ICT there is insufficient attention to improving the quality of learners' experience.** Although lessons are generally satisfactory, there is insufficient emphasis on evaluating staff performance or using learners' feedback to improve the quality of learning.

17. **In foundation programmes there is insufficient internal verification of key skills assessment.** There is little sampling of the quality of learners' assessed work and no interim verification of the work that learners produce. There is insufficient feedback given to assessors to improve the assessment process.

Leadership and management

18. **Good strategies are used to promote education, training and employment opportunities for offenders.** The range of purposeful activities available in the prison is being further developed, and greater emphasis is being placed upon including education and accredited training in offenders' activity.

19. **Very good use is made of external partnerships to provide work experience.** Many initiatives with local and national companies create work-experience opportunities that prepare learners for release and re-engagement with the community.

20. Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively to staff and learners. Staff are trained in a range of equal opportunities issues, and the work with learners during their induction and throughout their courses reinforces their rights and responsibilities. Relationships between staff and learners are positive and respectful.

21. **There is insufficient use of data to monitor and improve the provision.** Data is rarely used to set targets or monitor programme performance in order to measure improvement or identify issues of concern.

22. There are significant delays in accrediting learners' work. Some learners completed their portfolios and assessments more than six months ago, but their work has not yet been accredited by the awarding bodies and it is unclear when this situation will be rectified.

Leadership and management

Strengths
- good strategies to promote education, training and employment opportunities
- very good use of external partnerships to provide work experience

Weaknesses
- significant delays in accrediting learners' work
- insufficient use of data to monitor and improve the provision

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good range of accredited courses and progression opportunities
- very well-resourced ICT workshop

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning and monitoring of individual learning
- insufficient attention to improving the quality of learners' experience

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good development of learners' employability skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- long delays in accrediting learners' skills

Foundation programmes

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good development of learners' communication and numeracy skills
- particularly good support to meet the needs of learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress
- inadequate internal verification of key skills assessment

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT   Grade 3

Strengths
- good strategies to promote education, training and employment opportunities
- very good use of external partnerships to provide work experience

Weaknesses
- significant delays in accrediting learners' work
- insufficient use of data to monitor and improve the provision

23. Leadership and management of education and training have improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. As identified at the previous inspection and in the self-assessment report, the prison has good strategies to promote education, training and employment opportunities to offenders, encouraging them to become involved in purposeful activity that develops their capabilities and confidence. More learners are accessing education, and the range of vocational training opportunities is being further developed. There is good work being carried out in the resettlement unit as part of reintegrating learners into society and helping them rejoin the community on release. Most of the purposeful activity has a resettlement focus, preparing learners for moving on from the prison into a useful life outside. Induction and progress reviews provide good opportunities for learners to consider employment options, application procedures and the skills they need to gain a job on release from prison.

24. There is very good use of external partnerships to provide work experience for learners. Again, this strength was evident at the previous inspection and has been maintained. A wide variety of initiatives has taken place with national and local employers and a number of other supporting agencies. Good use has been made of the employers' forum to promote the work carried out at the prison and develop employers' awareness of potentially willing and capable additions to their workforce. Developments with small businesses and a major gas company, together with work with local authorities, help to provide work experience for learners on licence to work outside the prison. Learners progress through different stages within the prison before being identified for such opportunities. Prison managers see work experience as a very positive way of preventing the learners from reoffending and helping them identify possible careers.

25. The education and training provision is now effectively managed, and good progress has been made to deal with the inconsistencies in management that were highlighted at the previous inspection. There is an increasing range of educational and training activity available and staff performance, appraisal and development are now becoming better established and more effectively supported. Communications within education and

training are satisfactory and ensure all staff are informed of developments and organisational issues. Staff teams generally work well, sharing practice and information to bring about effective organisation and curriculum management.

26. The arrangements for supporting learners' literacy and numeracy needs are satisfactory. Learners receive an initial assessment of their basic skills when they first arrive at the prison, and in most cases, appropriate help is provided by qualified and able staff.

27. The management of resources is satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in their subjects. Learning environments are generally satisfactory with a good range of equipment to support teaching and learning.

28. There is insufficient use of data to monitor and improve the education and training provision. This was a weakness at the previous inspection and remains so. Data is not routinely collected and, when it is, little analysis takes place to monitor course performance or identify areas of concern. During the reinspection it was difficult for inspectors to make accurate judgements about retention and achievement rates as there was too little reliable data.

29. There are currently significant delays in accrediting learners' work. Some learners who completed their portfolios and assessments almost eight months ago have still not received certification for their work. The volume of learners' work that needs to be accredited by the awarding body continues to grow and there appears to have been little progress with this problem. For some learners, the delay in receiving their certificates is demoralising, particularly when they need to produce certificates of competence to obtain employment.

Equality of opportunity   Contributory grade 3

30. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory and has strengthened since the previous inspection. 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 offenders generally display a sound understanding of them. Reinforcement of equal opportunities to offenders is an ongoing process that builds upon the information and training given during induction sessions. Education and training at the prison takes the issue of bullying seriously and there is a range of strategies and procedures to ensure that offenders are not subjected to intimidation. Complaints are considered, and appropriate responses are usually made within a reasonable amount of time. Staff have a satisfactory awareness of equal opportunities and diversity issues. Most have had specific training to develop and reinforce their knowledge and awareness.

31. Learners attending education and training are treated with respect and dignity. They speak favourably about the help and support they receive from staff, and the staff show an active interest in their progress. Staff provide effective help and guidance to help learners overcome barriers to learning. Learning and training facilities provide a safe and

suitable environment for learners to focus on their work. Learners generally display respect for each other, creating a positive environment for effective personal development to take place. Staff are working to prepare learners for release into the community and to foster a more positive and respectful approach to re-engaging with mainstream society. There is insufficient use of data on the participation and achievement rates of learners with different backgrounds and profiles.

Quality assurance   Contributory grade 3

32. Quality assurance has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. There is a documented quality improvement system with procedures that cover both the contract requirements and the quality of education and training. The subcontractor also has its own standardised procedures for its work with prisons. The quality standards are accessible to staff. Quality procedures for prison-led training are generally effective in ensuring a consistent approach to the provision and supervision of work and vocational training. The development of these procedures is ongoing and the quality manual and related paperwork are reviewed and updated regularly.

33. There are now established procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and training given by education staff. Staff performance is regularly monitored, discussed and recorded. If a training need is identified, then appropriate development opportunities are considered. The education manager or deputy observes staff performance in the classroom. In other areas of prison activity, such as physical education or construction, staff are now observed by the head of learning and skills, and their performance is monitored more closely.

34. The self-assessment process is generally effective with most staff making some contribution through their curriculum review activity. The most recent report presented a realistic and relatively accurate assessment of the quality of provision in education and training. It contained evidenced judgements and highlighted a number of the strengths and weaknesses that were identified during the reinspection. The post-inspection action plan has been useful both in identifying areas for improvement and in monitoring the progress made in improving the quality of provision.

35. Assessment practice is satisfactory. It is planned, and monitors learners' progress towards achieving their qualifications. There are effective administration procedures for internal verification. All education and vocational training areas have appropriately qualified and competent staff who co-ordinate internal verification activity and liaise with awarding bodies. There is a documented system for keeping track of learners' completion of units, and appropriate procedures for the sampling of learners' work. Questionnaires and evaluation forms are used to help assess the experience of learners, although it is unclear as to how this information is used to improve the quality of provision.

36. There is still little use of learner data except to satisfy auditing requirements. Performance data and targets are rarely used to measure progress or devise strategies for improvement.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT ⁻ Other government-funded provision	15	3

Using IT

Strengths

- good range of accredited courses and progression opportunities
- very well-resourced ICT workshop

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning and monitoring of individual learning
- insufficient attention to improving the quality of learners' experience

Achievement and standards

37. Most learners make satisfactory progress and produce work of a satisfactory standard. Since January 2005, 66 per cent of learners who prepared for the basic computer literacy qualification achieved either the complete qualification or several units from it. Fifty-two per cent of learners achieved the full examination-based qualification in IT or several modules. Twenty-nine per cent of learners have achieved a two-module networking qualification, with another 43 per cent still working towards it. Many learners are proud of their achievements which they say contribute to increased self-confidence and improved self-esteem, in addition to enhancing their chances of gaining employment when they are released. Prior learning is still not properly accredited. When learners say they have achieved ICT qualifications, tutors do not ask to see the certificates or check their competence, instead they require them to work through the course again before progressing to a higher-level award.

Quality of education and training

38. Learners now have access to a good range of accredited courses and progression opportunities. This is identified in the self-assessment report. The range of courses has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Most learners begin by acquiring skills in word processing, spreadsheets, databases, graphs and charts, and business presentations. They gain accreditation for these skills by preparing for a basic computer literacy qualification before progressing through a series of further awards including a computer networking qualification. Good arrangements have been made with two other

local providers for learners who wish to study further units of the networking qualification when they are released or transferred to the resettlement unit. One learner in the resettlement unit has successfully completed all the prison's ICT courses and is continuing with his networking studies in September through a local provider. At the time of the previous inspection, learners with low levels of literacy and numeracy were being enrolled on to a basic computer course. Before being allowed to take an ICT course, learners must now demonstrate a satisfactory level of literacy and numeracy. However, ICT is seldom used to extend learners' literacy and numeracy skills.

39. The ICT workshop is well resourced and the accommodation is good. The self-assessment report also identifies this strength. Since the previous inspection, air conditioning has been installed and the room temperature can now be controlled. Although some action has been taken to increase the amount of workspace, the computer processing units are on the workbenches where they restrict the space available. The 10 computers in the workshop are networked and run up-to-date, industry-standard software. Posters on the walls display useful information about computers and computer applications. While the learning resource centre is satisfactorily equipped with specialist networking equipment, four of the computers are old and of limited use to learners. The room has no external windows and insufficient fresh air. The ratio of tutors to learners is very good, with one tutor for three, four or five learners in the classes observed.

40. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most learners receive good individual tuition and acquire satisfactory ICT skills. Tutors are very familiar with the awards towards which learners are working, and they are readily available to give advice and guidance when needed. Assessment of learners' work for the basic computer literacy qualification is carried out in accordance with awarding body criteria. Automated testing for the examination-based qualification in IT and the networking award is administered satisfactorily.

41. There is inadequate planning and monitoring of individual learning. Inadequate use of individual learning plans was a weakness at the previous inspection and remains so. Learners are not set clear targets to fulfil during learning sessions. Long-term learning aims and agreed objectives are not specific enough, and there is no indication of the time it will take learners to complete them. Individual learning plans are not kept up to date. Although individual learning plans contain brief information on learners' learning styles and learning difficulties, there is no indication how this information is used when learning is planned and delivered. Individual learning plans are poorly formatted, with insufficient space for making the required entries. There is inadequate linking of the key skills of improving own learning and performance to the computing awards. Learners are poorly informed about key skills and do not understand how they relate to their computing course. Learners' progress is not properly monitored and recorded and it is unclear what they have achieved and what they must still do to complete modules or units. There are tracking sheets on the ICT workshop wall, but they are not kept up to date with all the units and modules that learners have successfully completed.

Leadership and management

42. Communication within the staff team and management of the programmes is generally satisfactory. All staff are appraised and take part in appropriate training and development activities. The self-assessment report identified most of the same strengths and weaknesses as the reinspection. Since the previous inspection, the range of ICT courses has been expanded and learners now have access to a good range of provision. Data on learners' retention, progression and achievement rates is insufficiently used to set targets for improvement. The quality of learners' experience is not monitored in enough detail. Tutors do not evaluate their training sessions to improve the quality of learners' experience in the classroom. Learners complete a questionnaire when they come to the end of their course or before they are transferred to another prison or released, but the questionnaires are not systematically analysed or used to improve the quality of the provision. Training sessions are observed and feedback on teaching performance is given to staff. However, there is sometimes insufficient emphasis placed upon ensuring that learners work to their full potential during the training activity.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering - Other government-funded provision	12	3

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good development of learners' employability skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- long delays in accrediting learners' skills

Achievement and standards

43. Learners develop good practical skills and background knowledge of cookery on both the OCN and NVQ programmes, supporting their employment prospects and giving them valuable tools for independent living. The basic skills of cutting, chopping and shredding of vegetables, and preparation of fish, meat and poultry are practised well. These skills are often extended, for example, into preparing and poaching a stuffed and rolled breast of chicken. Learning these skills helps to build learners' confidence. They are able to describe what they are learning and the potential for further development. Learners develop a basic understanding of nutrition and aspects of healthy eating which help to support independent living. Their skills and understanding are expanded by producing dishes from a variety of countries and cultures. At the end of the practical skills sessions, learners can consume the dishes they have produced, but there is no table or seating area available for them.

44. Working in the establishment's main kitchen provides learners with the experience of large-scale catering and allows them to achieve the mandatory units of the NVQ. In the officers' mess they have an opportunity to produce food to customers' order, for example stir-fried dishes. This also brings them into close contact with the customer, effectively supporting their customer service skills and allowing them to achieve the optional units of the NVQ. Learners demonstrate good team working in the practical areas and the need for co-operation in the catering operations. They achieve foundation certificates in food hygiene, health and safety and manual handling during the induction period, all of which support their employment prospects. The key skill of problem solving is also available to learners on catering programmes and a number of learners take up and achieve this option.

45. Between January and August 2005, 43 learners started on the level 1 OCN

programme, and 31 the level 2. Eight learners started the level 1 NVQ. A significant number of learners are unable to complete their programme of learning because they are transferred to other establishments or released. The retention rates are 58 per cent on the OCN level 1 qualification, 93 per cent on the OCN level 2 qualification, and 75 per cent on the level 1 NVQ. Most learners who complete their period of training are successful in achieving the qualification.

Quality of education and training

46. There is good teaching and learning in catering and hospitality and this was identified at the previous inspection report. The lesson plans, which were previously inadequate for NVQ programmes, have improved, and now all clearly state the expected learning outcomes. Tutors discuss these at the start of the training session to ensure learners understand what is expected of them. Learners on both programmes receive well-organised practical and background knowledge portfolio sessions. Learning plans are developed with each individual, and these clearly identify the outcomes for their courses.

47. There are good professional relationships between the tutors and learners. Tutors have a good understanding of individual learners' needs and abilities. Tutors make good use of questions that challenge learners to make decisions about the dishes they are cooking. In one session, the tutor carefully developed learners' sense of taste by using seasoning that several had not experienced before. This helped them to appreciate how taste and flavour are developed. All learners recognised the skills and knowledge they were acquiring and how these might support them in the future. Learners gain a great deal of enjoyment from, and are enthusiastic about, the practical cookery lessons. There is good peer support among learners during sessions and those with greater experience help the others. The learning materials used, such as recipes, are clear and well presented and have improved since the previous inspection. However, many use imperial measures when learners have a greater understanding of metric measurement. The practical skills kitchen in the education wing is adequately equipped, and the amount of small equipment has improved since the previous inspection. However, the central divide between work stations on either side of the room does not allow the tutor a clear view of all activities taking place at any one time, and the ventilation is inadequate to remove the heat generated by stoves and ovens. Large equipment in practical areas is adequate, although some items are becoming old and outdated. In some cases the protective clothing being worn is inadequate. For instance, learners do not always wear hats when preparing food, and some dress in open jackets that provide insufficient protection.

48. Induction for NVQ and OCN programmes is satisfactory. Assessment strategies have been developed and meet awarding body criteria. Learners are aware of the assessment process and are able to identify the progress they are making. Their progress is recorded in their portfolios but is not always recorded centrally in the unit. Tutors have achieved assessor awards since the previous inspection, and they now carry out internal verification. A local college previously performed this function.

49. There is a satisfactory range of programmes being provided to meet the needs of the learners. The OCN level 2 programme has been introduced since the previous inspection and provides a progression route to the level 1 NVQ in food preparation and cooking. Some learners may go on to take a course at the local college leading to an NVQ at level 2 in food preparation and cookery. One learner who recently achieved this was also offered employment with a national contract catering company. The short courses available also help give learners additional experience and opportunities.

50. Support for learners is satisfactory. Initial assessment identifies any learning support needs which are then met by education staff. There is good support from vocational tutors with catering training and also good support for literacy and numeracy in practical cookery classes. One learner with reading difficulties was observed receiving support when working with a recipe. Tutors also helped learners to weigh and measure ingredients, and vocational staff and education support staff helped with portfolio-building.

Leadership and management

51. Staff have an annual appraisal and take part in staff development activities including classroom management, managing diversity and the identification of learning objectives. Since the previous inspection, classroom observations have been introduced to monitor the quality of training. Tutors receive detailed feedback on their performance and how it could be improved. Communications within the staff team are satisfactory and training programmes are generally well organised.

52. There are long delays in accrediting learners' work. Learners who have completed the OCN and NVQ programmes have not received certification from the awarding bodies. Some of these learners started their programmes in January and completed in March 2005. Those interviewed felt demoralised by the delay.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy and numeracy		
- Other government-funded provision	23	3

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good development of learners' communication and numeracy skills
- particularly good support to meet the needs of learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress
- inadequate internal verification of key skills assessment

Achievement and standards

53. Learners develop good communication and numeracy skills, improving their abilities through structured classroom activities, and gaining in confidence. Learners understand how their new skills will help them in employment and in their lives in general. Tutors encourage learners and many progress rapidly, from entry levels to level 1. During their six-week programme, many learners complete their communication key skill at level 1 or 2. The work is stimulating and is developed around learners' interests and current topics. Key skills are integrated well with vocational training programmes. A project on planning a kitchen provides an excellent opportunity for learners to apply their numeracy skills to measuring and calculating costs. Learners' work demonstrates a good level of attainment and clear development. Learners value their achievements and are motivated to work productively. All programmes are externally certificated. Although learners make good progress, current administrative arrangements at the awarding bodies have led to delays in obtaining test papers and, for some learners, in the certification of key skills achievements. It was not possible to make a judgement on achievement rates, as no data was available at the time of inspection on achievement rates in literacy and numeracy tests over a period of time.

Quality of education and training

54. Learners benefit from particularly good support. The additional learning support co-ordinator interviews all learners when they apply to the learning centre. Learners take an initial assessment test to determine their basic skills level. The outcome of the assessment is used to decide how much support they need and which are the most appropriate programmes for them. Learners are encouraged to enrol on foundation

programmes if they are at entry level. The co-ordinator uses a standard range of assessments to analyse further individual needs and to draw up a particularly detailed individual learning plan. Learners receive prompt support for their additional learning needs, in individual sessions or through support in classes. Tutors are committed to helping learners achieve their potential and are often supported by able learners who work as mentors. Some of the learners have a history of poor achievement and many have unpleasant experiences of learning. Learners are positive about the support they receive and the effect of this upon their attainment.

55. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most of the observed lessons were satisfactory or better. In the better lessons, tutors use teaching and learning resources that relate to the learners' interests, and activities that meet the needs of learners with differing abilities. Tutors do not always sufficiently communicate the aims of the lesson, and how the learning can be applied. In the weaker sessions, tutors use a narrow range of teaching methods and resources, activities consist of written tasks using prepared worksheets, there is insufficient interaction, and some learners lose interest. Although laptop computers are used in some sessions, there is generally too little use of ICT to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills. The training rooms are adequate. They contain colourful displays, as well as useful information relating to the programmes. Learners work productively in the relaxed atmosphere. For taught sessions, the seating and layout of the rooms allow the learners to participate fully. However, in one training room, the ventilation was noisy and it was difficult for learners to hear the tutor.

56. Learners on foundation programmes can access a number of courses leading to externally accredited certificates in adult literacy and numeracy, from entry level to level 2. They can also study options in entry level art, ICT and catering, and key skills courses in application of number and communications at levels 1 to 3. Those with very poor reading skills are on an intensive fast-track programme, funded by a charitable trust, that quickly develops their proficiency. Learners take their manuals with them when they are released or transferred from the prison.

57. Learners' progress is not monitored properly. Their short-term aims are not sufficiently specific or measurable. Tutors do not always identify and record the development that needs to take place. Tutors usually review learners' progress every three weeks. Most review documents do not record the specific skills learnt and do not give detailed feedback on progress. For example, some learners are set a learning objective of achieving a level 1 qualification. However, the steps towards this are not given in sufficient detail to enable learners and staff to measure the progress made.

58. Internal verification of key skills assessment is inadequate. This was also identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. There is no effective plan for the sampling of assessments. Some internal verification of completed portfolios has taken place recently. However, there are no checks on partly completed portfolios to see whether learners are on target to achieve their qualifications. There is insufficient detail in the feedback to assessors. Some learners have completed work that would accredit them with a key skills qualification. However, assessors have not monitored and internally moderated this evidence, and accreditation has been delayed.

Leadership and management

59. The foundation team works well together and internal communications are good. Tutors have a range of experience, which is well matched to the needs of the learners. However, only one member of the foundation staff has a basic skills qualification and none is working towards the level 4 certificate for teaching adult literacy and numeracy. Staff benefit from a six-monthly appraisal system and are supported in accessing appropriate training sessions and courses. Tutors are frequently observed in the classroom and given feedback. However, there is no evaluation of the effect this has had on the learners. Data is not collected in a way that is useful for evaluation, and is not used to identify improvement or decline in performance. Learners are asked for written evaluations at the end of a course, but the data collected is not analysed sufficiently to make improvements to the training programmes. There has been a delay in external verification and the subsequent certification of learners' work.