

REINSPECTION REPORT

HMP Liverpool Reinspection

23 March 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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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Liverpool (the prison) is a category B local prison that holds male adult offenders and serves the Merseyside courts. It regularly takes overcrowding drafts from other prisons located some distance away from Liverpool. The prison's certified normal accommodation is 1,186 and its operational capacity is 1,473. The number of offenders at the prison at the time of reinspection was 1,286. The proportion of the prison's population who are from minority ethnic groups is approximately 9 per cent. The responsibilities of the head of learning and skills include the education department, the library and some of the training workshops within the prison. Since the previous inspection, the prison has contracted its education provision to Mercia Partnership (UK) Ltd. This contract was awarded in August 2005.

2. The day-to-day management of the education department is the responsibility of the education manager, who is responsible for 17 full-time tutors, one guidance worker, five tutors on half-time contracts and 34 part-time tutors. Two administrators support the department.

3. The prison offers education every morning and afternoon apart from weekends. There is no evening provision. The education department offers over 350 places each day over five days. This has been increased from 146 places following the previous inspection. The main areas of learning are literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), information and communications technology (ICT), drama, art, key skills and preparation for work. One senior officer, six full-time staff and one part-time prison officer are responsible for physical education (PE) training. They carry out teaching, training and assessment activities.

4. The prison has nine workshops staffed by 10 officer instructors and 12 instructional officers, where it offers vocational courses in engineering, laundry and catering. Since the previous inspection, the prison has also begun to offer training in industrial cleaning. The number of learners on these programmes is small and these areas were not inspected as part of the reinspection. The prison has over 50 learners participating on open learning courses, which is an increase from the previous inspection. The local library authority has a service level agreement to provide library facilities to the prison. The library is managed by a librarian and two support grade officers. Following the previous inspection, a new learning resource centre has been built in the old prison chapel. In addition to traditional library services, this facility also houses new training rooms and ICT facilities.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

5. There are 82 learners currently taking foundation and intermediate courses in ICT. Fifty-six are in full-time education and 26 study part time. Of these, 38 learners are

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working on a foundation ICT programme and 44 are working towards an intermediate level 2 qualification. Full-time learners attend training sessions for three and a half hours each morning and three and a quarter hours each afternoon. Part-time learners only attend one of these sessions each day. There are 10 full-time and eight part-time tutors. Two tutors also work as part time co-ordinators for ICT. Learning takes place either in classrooms in the education department or in the newly opened and equipped learning resource centre.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

6. The PE department provides recreational opportunities for all offenders. There are currently 20 learners working towards a community sports leader award. Following the previous inspection, the department has run few courses in PE due to operational requirements and long-term staff sickness. It is accredited to offer training towards weight training, assistant fitness instructor, football coaching, first-aid at work and manual handling awards. However, staff have incorporated fitness training into a programme designed to assist learners who have an identified substance misuse problem. A senior officer manages the department, supported by six full-time PE officers and one part-time assistant PE officer. Four offenders are employed as full-time PE orderlies. Facilities include a gym, a sports hall, a grassed football pitch and a large artificial surfaced area.

Foundation programmes

7. The prison has 288 learners on foundation programmes. One hundred and twenty learners are on social and life skills courses accredited to level 1 and 2, where topics include healthy living, money management, performing arts and family learning. Thirty-three learners are taking options in ESOL and other learners are following courses in literacy and numeracy and key skills from entry level to level 2. The prison also runs courses in citizenship and work skills which are offered to offenders before they begin employment within the prison. Learners attend education part time. Literacy and numeracy provision has a full-time co-ordinator, and training is provided by 14 part-time staff.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	16
Number of learners interviewed	52
Number of staff interviewed	28
Number of subcontractors interviewed	2
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	2

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

8. At the previous inspection, foundation programmes were judged to be unsatisfactory, as were the prison's leadership and management and quality assurance arrangements. ICT and leisure, sport and recreation programmes were unsatisfactory. Equality of opportunity was satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process all areas of provision reinspected were judged to be satisfactory.

GRADES

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		3
Quality assurance		4

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
- Other government-funded provision	56	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation		
- Other government-funded provision	50	3

Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy and numeracy		
- Other government-funded provision	90	4
Other contributory areas		
- Other government-funded provision	55	None

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
<i>Using IT</i> - Other government-funded provision	82	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Other government-funded provision	20	3

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> - Other government-funded provision	288	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

9. Following the previous inspection, learners are now able to benefit from the installation of up-to-date computers and software. **Learners new to ICT make good progress and develop useful keyboarding skills.** Computers are used well on foundation programmes.

10. Retention and achievement rates on all programmes are generally satisfactory, although data is still not collected well on all courses and other data is new.

11. **Development of learners' fitness and practical skills is good.** This was a strength identified at the previous inspection and has been maintained. Learners who attend PE courses linked to detoxification programmes are able to develop good self-esteem and gain in confidence.

12. Standards of attainment on foundation programmes are generally satisfactory and most learners make satisfactory progress. However, in a small number of classes there is insufficient development of skills.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Information & communications technology	0	2	1	0	3
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	0	0	2
Foundation programmes	0	2	5	2	9
Total	0	6	6	2	14

13. **Teaching and learning are good on ICT courses and in sports.** This is a strength that has been maintained since the previous inspection. Teaching is well planned and learners are keen and well motivated to learn new skills and develop existing skills and knowledge. **However, insufficient attention is paid to learners' individual needs in some foundation lessons.**

14. **Tutors provide good support and guidance to learners in ICT and on foundation programmes.** Support and guidance are satisfactory in PE, where initial assessment is not routinely given to learners to identify clearly the appropriate support needed.

15. **Resources are now good on foundation programmes.** This area was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. Resources are satisfactory in ICT, where there has been good investment to improve the equipment and software. In PE, resources are satisfactory. The prison has invested well recently in new sports equipment, although, as identified at the previous inspection, some resources are poorly maintained.

16. Initial assessment has been improved and all learners who take courses in the education department are initially assessed. Induction is satisfactory in all areas.

17. Learning plans have been improved and in most cases are clearly recorded. **However, insufficient use is made of short-term targets on foundation courses. There is insufficient planning of individualised learning in ICT,** where most plans show no individualised learning and little clear target-setting.

18. Assessments and verification are generally satisfactory. They are clearly planned and recorded and meet awarding bodies' requirements. However, **there is no unit accreditation for learners on ICT courses.**

Leadership and management

19. Operational management of the areas of learning is satisfactory. Overall leadership and management are also satisfactory. This area has been improved since the previous inspection, with the prison now demonstrating a clear strategic focus and commitment to learning and skills.

20. **The prison has managed change well.** A new governor and several new senior appointments have given the prison a clear vision for the future of learning and skills.

21. **The prison has developed particularly effective partnerships with external agencies that clearly benefit the learners.** One of the most innovative developments is the planned location of a site in central Liverpool to support learners on release. This site will give advice and guidance and offer offenders the opportunity to continue with their education and training. This plan is imminent and has been developed with the help of several external partners.

22. **The range of courses is inadequate in ICT and in PE.** This was a weakness identified during the previous inspection. There are few courses above level 1 to which learners can progress, although the prison has improved the number of learners doing distance learning courses.

23. **A wide range of training and skills development takes place in workshops in the prison but very little of this is accredited.** The prison recognises in the self-assessment report that it needs to develop programmes in these areas.

24. Quality assurance is satisfactory. This has been improved following the previous inspection. The prison now has clear procedures in place for monitoring the quality of provision, although much of this is new and has not yet had an effect across the provision.

25. Equality of opportunity has been maintained as satisfactory. Equality and diversity are adequately promoted and much work has been done to improve the levels of respect between staff and learners in the prison. **Some learners have inadequate access to learning and skills.** Vulnerable offenders cannot attend PE courses or courses offered in the vocational areas, apart from the laundry.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good management of change
- particularly effective partnerships to enhance learning and skills

Weaknesses

- insufficient accreditation of vocational training
- inadequate access to learning and skills for some learners

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good progress made by beginners
- good teaching and learning of practical skills
- good support and guidance

Weaknesses

- limited range of courses
- insufficient planning of individualised learning
- no unit accreditation

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good development of learners' fitness and practical skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- poorly maintained resources in some areas
- inadequate range of accredited courses

Foundation programmes

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good programme development
- good resources to facilitate learning
- good information, advice and guidance

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of short-term targets
- insufficient attention to the needs of individual learners in some learning sessions

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- good management of change
- particularly effective partnerships to enhance learning and skills

Weaknesses

- insufficient accreditation of vocational training
- inadequate access to learning and skills for some learners

26. Learning and skills provision at the prison has undergone significant changes since the previous inspection, which have been managed well. A new contractor for education was appointed in August 2005 and is working hard with the head of learning and skills to improve the provision. A new governor was appointed in October 2005 who, with several newly appointed senior managers, has developed a clear strategic direction for learning and skills that is recognised and shared by staff and external partners. There is now a clear direction to providing a regime where resettlement and dealing with offending behaviour is a central focus. The head of learning and skills and the education contractor provide a responsive and well-planned approach to improving education and training to meet the needs of the prison and learners. They have developed and introduced clear procedures and key processes to improve education and training, although some of this work has only recently been introduced. The prison is now making good progress towards achieving its strategic objectives and has increased significantly the number of learners now accessing education. There has also been a good increase in the number of learners participating in open learning courses since the previous inspection.

27. The prison has developed particularly effective partnerships with external agencies that clearly benefit the learners. This strength was identified at the previous inspection and has been successfully maintained and further developed. One of the most innovative links is the planned location of a site in central Liverpool to support learners on release, giving advice and guidance and offering offenders the opportunity to continue with their education and training. This project has necessitated strong working links with a wide range of agencies. It is now in the advanced stages of development and has received good support from the local Learning and Skills Council. Particularly productive partnerships have been established with Connexions and Jobcentre Plus to provide support and guidance for offenders who are close to the end of their sentence. The prison has also been successful at developing strong links with partners that support arts projects within the prison, giving learners the opportunity to become involved with musical productions and recording their own material, some of which has been broadcast on the local radio.

28. The prison has an appropriate appraisal system to monitor the performance of its staff involved in learning and skills. Appraisals are effective at identifying and meeting staff development needs. Staff training is clearly linked to the overall strategic objectives for learning and skills. Recent staff development has included the training of several prison staff to achieve assessors' awards.

29. Resources are satisfactory. Teaching accommodation is suitably equipped and much has recently been refurbished. Workshops are of a good standard and reflect a commercial environment. New computers have been introduced into most classrooms since the previous inspection, although they have not all yet been networked.

30. The education department has started to collect a wide range of information on its learners' progress. The management information system is new and this data is not always routinely used in making management decisions. The system adequately records the achievement of the prison's key performance targets.

31. Initial assessment of offenders has been improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. The accommodation where induction and assessment takes place has been improved and a purpose-built assessment centre is nearing completion. Numeracy and literacy support can be accessed on an individual basis on the wings. Support is not given to the small number of learners in the workshops, but the prison has clear plans to introduce this.

32. The prison has insufficient accredited vocational training. The prison has nine workshops, most of which provide offenders with good training in a wide range of craft activities and skills. Since the previous inspection, some additional accredited training has been introduced into the laundry and industrial cleaning workshop, although only small numbers of learners are working towards qualifications in these areas. Plans are in place to introduce accredited qualifications in the sewing workshops.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

33. Equality of opportunity remains satisfactory following the previous inspection. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place relating to equality and race relations. These are updated regularly and are prominently displayed throughout the prison. Complaints boxes have been introduced onto each wing, since the previous inspection, to make it easier for offenders to make a complaint if they have one. Learners, staff and offenders are well aware of the complaints procedures and have good faith in the procedures. All complaints are taken seriously and are dealt with promptly. They are thoroughly investigated and clearly recorded.

34. The education department takes care to inform all offenders of their rights and responsibilities and gives clear information on equality to all learners at induction. Induction includes discussion on how the prison interprets the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Information on equality of opportunity and diversity is provided for learners at their induction in a well-presented

booklet. A wide range of posters and positive images are displayed throughout the education department to raise awareness of bullying and harassment and to promote equality and diversity. High numbers of learners and offenders visited the events that were arranged by the prison to promote black history week. Learners spoke positively of this and had good awareness of cultural diversity.

35. The prison collects a wide range of data on the ethnicity and age of offenders and reviews this thoroughly to check for trends in attendance and participation in education. It has only recently started to collect data to monitor achievements and retention on courses.

36. All education staff are issued with a comprehensive handbook that outlines key points on how equality and opportunity should be applied within the learning environment. Staff are given frequent training on equality and diversity by the prison and Mercia Partnership (UK) Ltd. Most staff have received recent training by the prison, which learners were also invited to attend.

37. An adequate range of adapted equipment is available to support learners with disabilities. This includes height-adjustable desks, large computer screens and adapted keyboards. Hearing induction loops are available and a person who speaks sign language is provided when required for those with hearing difficulties. Little planned support is available for learners with dyslexia, although this has been recognised by the provider and there are plans to improve this provision. The newly built learning resource centre holds a satisfactory range of learning materials in a wide range of foreign languages. Books are available in large print including graphics and easy-to-read texts. A good range of cassettes is also available, although there are few periodicals.

38. Some learners have inadequate access to learning and skills. Vulnerable offenders cannot access vocational areas where courses are offered, apart from the laundry. They are also restricted from accessing courses in PE. This was identified as an area for concern during the previous inspection. Access to the learning resource centre is poor for most learners. Although learners taking education or vocational courses can access learning materials on their wings through a trolley system twice a week, they often do not know what materials they need to order. Lessons are often disrupted by the late arrival of learners and learners frequently leave classes early.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

39. Quality assurance of the education and training at the prison has improved following the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Quality assurance arrangements for all education and training activities in the prison are now in place. A new quality assurance manual has been developed and recently introduced. The quality assurance policy is comprehensive and covers all key aspects of the learners' experience, although it has not yet been extended to the vocational workshops where accredited training takes place. The policy is clearly linked to a quality calendar which ensures that all of the procedures are carried out systematically in the education department throughout the year. The self-assessment process is thorough and forms the basis for continuous improvement.

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Education staff clearly understand the importance of key processes such as the observations of learning and learners' feedback. Staff have been encouraged to become self-critical in their work and now regularly review their teaching sessions and learning programmes.

40. Observation of lessons takes place frequently, with tutors being observed four times a year in the education department. However, observation of prison instructors has not yet taken place. Feedback to tutors is comprehensive and is used at appraisals to provide evidence of the individual training and development needs of tutors. The observation process has only been recently introduced and has not been in place long enough for its effects to be clearly measured.

41. The prison quality improvement group meets regularly and has a clear focus on improving the provision. The group is regularly attended by most of the senior management team, which includes the head of learning and skills. The governor and senior managers have a strong commitment to learning and skills. The new education contractor also has a clear focus on the improvement of learning and skills across the prison and works closely with prison managers to achieve this.

42. The self-assessment process is a consultative process to which all members of staff clearly contributed. The process makes good use of feedback from learners, which has been thoroughly evaluated. The self-assessment report is sufficiently critical and successfully identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses found during reinspection, although some strengths that it considers as strengths are in fact no more than normal practice.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Other government-funded provision	82	3

Using IT

Strengths

- good progress made by beginners
- good teaching and learning of practical skills
- good support and guidance

Weaknesses

- limited range of courses
- insufficient planning of individualised learning
- no unit accreditation

Achievement and standards

43. Learners who are new to computer technology make good progress. Many have never used a computer before and they quickly learn how to master new techniques and keyboard skills. Several beginners are so motivated that they are planning a career in computers when they leave the prison. Learners progress through their units and are able to incorporate graphs and charts in their work. The previous inspection identified standards of work as good. The general standard of learners' information technology (IT) exercises on this inspection is satisfactory and meets the awarding body's requirements, although some of the learners' work on display contains spelling mistakes.

44. The previous inspection identified that it was not possible to make judgements on the prison's data. The situation has slightly improved, although some data is new and is difficult to make clear judgements on. There is still little data available in the two main qualification areas to indicate rates of achievement and retention. In the past seven months, 372 out of 590 learners left or were transferred. Of the 218 remaining, 158 have achieved a qualification and 82 are still on programme.

Quality of education and training

45. There is good teaching and learning of practical skills. Learning in structured teaching sessions is planned well to meet learners' individual needs. There is much peer assessment and mentoring which is encouraged by tutors. A good range of teaching strategies is used, including clear computer presentations coupled with useful discussion groups and paired work. In one lesson, learners were allowed to experiment on their own but within a structured teaching environment. In this session the tutor was able to check learners' understanding by watching their progress on the computer screens. Learners are actively engaged and appreciate the teaching sessions. In individual coaching session, tutors provide clear explanations and learners are allowed to practise new skills in a supportive environment. Their work is regularly checked and any mistakes are rectified immediately. Tutors use technical language which is clearly explained. Computer resources are satisfactory and have been improved since the previous inspection, where they were identified as a key weakness.

46. Tutors provide good support and guidance to learners. Support has improved since the previous inspection and learners have access to a good range of support from external agencies including Connexions and Jobcentre Plus. Tutors show a keen interest in learners' progress and offer sensitive support to help them overcome barriers to learning. Assignment work is supported with individual exercises to improve learners' skills. Good use is made of prison orderlies in supporting learners in the classroom, providing effective team working.

47. Assessment and monitoring of learners' work is satisfactory. Assessments are planned well. Assessors carefully check learners' work before submitting it to awarding bodies. Tutors keep clear notes of learners' progress and use them at the start of each session.

48. The provision offers only a limited range of courses at basic and intermediate levels. This was a weakness identified at the previous inspection. New activities such as desktop publishing and website design are being encouraged and some learners are using new software packages. However, when and how this occurs depends on which class learners attend and sometimes whether or not they have completed their basic or intermediate course. Where learners are allowed to experiment with new software, they produce creative and interesting leaflets and good-quality artwork. This work is not accredited, however.

49. There is insufficient planning of individualised learning. The curriculum is planned around the basic and intermediate courses and learners are required to work through the units, usually in a set order. Learners who prefer to work with numbers are given word-processing exercises at the start of their programme, despite their abilities and preference. The offender development plans do not show individualised learning. Most list the approximate time it will take to achieve the complete qualification without any reference to the particular learner.

50. There is no unit accreditation. Learners who work hard and may be well on the way

through their qualification do not gain accreditation unless they have completed all the units needed by the awarding body. Many learners leave courses early with no certification.

Leadership and management

51. Computer hardware and software in classrooms are of industry standard and have been much improved since the previous inspection. Printers and scanners are adequate and learners have good access to other learning materials. Tutors are well qualified and have good knowledge of computer programmes. Although learners attending ICT classes in education are allowed breaks, those attending classes in the learning resource centre are expected to sit at their workstations for long periods of time with no formal breaks. There are no reminders of the need to take regular breaks or to look away from the screen at regular intervals. Posters to remind learners about correct posture are displayed but are difficult to read.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Other government-funded provision	20	3

Leisure, sport and recreation*Strengths*

- good development of learners' fitness and practical skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- poorly maintained resources in some areas
- inadequate range of accredited courses

Achievement and standards

52. There is good development of learners' fitness and practical skills. This was a strength identified at the previous inspection and has been maintained. A well-integrated programme of PE ably helps many learners who have substance dependency problems. Learners attend PE as part of their detoxification programme and this ensures that they improve their fitness as well as their knowledge and understanding of what they need to do to develop a healthier lifestyle. Staff have also developed a similar programme of sports activities for offenders on an enhanced thinking skills course to help them improve confidence. The department has developed a useful programme of team sport activities which includes badminton, soft tennis, volleyball, aerobics and handball. Ten spin cycles have recently been purchased so that the department can offer spinning as an additional sport. Learners have good opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation activities including football, running and cycling. Staff encourage the use of these activities to improve general fitness. Learners are keen to use the mountain bikes provided to cycle around the sports track and improve their fitness.

53. Since the previous inspection many sport-related courses have been stopped due to operational difficulties and continued staff shortages. The department has only recently gained additional staff and it plans to offer more courses. On one community sport leader award programme run during the past year, 18 out of the 20 learners who started have achieved the qualification. Seven learners have achieved a first aid at work qualification and 10 have successfully completed a manual handling course.

Quality of education and training

54. Teaching and learning are good. This is a strength maintained since the previous inspection. Staff are well qualified and keep up to date with the industry. Most staff have senior coaching awards and some are qualified referees in football and handball. One member of staff is currently taking a teacher training programme and it is planned that others will follow. Lessons are planned well with clear reference to health and safety, including appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities. Staff are enthusiastic and teach in a lively manner, explaining technical terms well and using language that learners can easily understand. Good use of practical demonstrations enhanced learners' understanding of some difficult concepts of physiology. Professionally produced handouts are used effectively to encourage learners to participate in theory lessons. Learners work well in groups and individually and find the lessons interesting. Until recently, learners had good opportunities to participate in sports events against teams from outside the prison, although this has now been stopped due to security issues. This was identified as a strength in the previous inspection.

55. Assessment practices and recording of learners' achievements remain satisfactory. Coursework is thoroughly marked and contains useful comments for learners. Initial assessment is still not routinely carried out, and where these assessments are completed, results are not always communicated with PE staff. This issue was identified during the previous inspection. Suitable literacy and numeracy support is available for learners in the education department if a need is identified.

56. Induction to the PE department remains satisfactory. It includes adequate coverage of rules and regulations, equipment usage and health and safety. PE staff give satisfactory support to learners who have learning difficulties.

57. Some improvement has been made to the area of weakness identified at the previous inspection relating to inadequate and poorly maintained resources. New, good-quality equipment has recently been purchased and installed in the gym to improve the facility for cardiovascular exercise. The gym is well equipped and now contains a good mix of well-maintained free weights, and cardiovascular and resistance equipment, although the gym is still poorly ventilated. The sports hall is a large, modern area which is generally well maintained. However, the heating has not worked there since September 2005 and the hall can be cold and uncomfortable with condensation forming on the floor when learners exercise. This makes the floor slippery and dangerous. Temporary heating has been provided but is insufficient to raise the temperature. The showers have not been improved since the previous inspection. They are still old and dilapidated with cracked tiles, exposed brickwork and peeling paint and they provide little privacy for learners. The large outdoor artificial football pitch area has not been repaired since the previous inspection.

58. The range of accredited courses is inadequate. This is similar to the weakness identified during the previous inspection. Many courses have not been run since the previous inspection. The range of courses that the department is able to offer is

restricted to level 1 and there are insufficient opportunities for learners who wish to progress further. Staff are keen to offer a wider range of courses but little action has been taken to ensure they gain appropriate accreditation and training.

Leadership and management

59. Staff shortages, long-term sickness and other operational issues have restricted the development of learning and skills in this area. Some of these issues have now been resolved. There are now regular monthly staff meetings that are clearly recorded, and in addition to this the senior officer holds regular briefings each morning where issues can be dealt with quickly. Staff appraisals are satisfactory and staff training and knowledge updating is good. It is planned for two staff to be trained in key skills delivery and other staff have been out to other prisons to see what courses they may develop. All staff contributed to the self-assessment and, where appropriate, learners' views were taken account of. The self-assessment report is perfunctory, although it has highlighted most of the key issues identified through reinspection. The action plan from the previous inspection has not been updated and some of the issues identified during that inspection are still prevalent. Observations of teaching and learning sessions do not take place. This was identified as an area of concern at the previous inspection.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> - Other government-funded provision	288	3

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good programme development
- good resources to facilitate learning
- good information, advice and guidance

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of short-term targets
- insufficient attention to the needs of individual learners in some learning sessions

Achievement and standards

60. Meaningful data has only been collected from August 2005 since Mercia Partnership (UK) Ltd took over the education contract. Since then 124 learners have gained a work skills qualification, 43 have achieved a key skills qualification, and 137 learners have achieved a literacy or numeracy skills qualification. Most learners who start a course pass it successfully. Standards of attainment are generally satisfactory and most learners make satisfactory progress, although in a small number of classes there is insufficient development of skills. Learners demonstrate good basic skills in using IT.

Quality of education and training

61. Programmes have been well developed to meet the needs of the learners. This has been further improved since the previous inspection. Mercia Partnership (UK) Ltd has developed literacy, numeracy and key skills programmes through topics such as health and fitness and family learning to stimulate and motivate learners. These programmes are well structured into modules and provide a good framework for learning. Learners work towards the achievement of key skills, literacy and numeracy and (Open College Network)-accredited qualifications from entry level to level 2. A wide range of social and life skills programmes are available to learners that are relevant to their personal development needs. The citizenship programme helps to increase learners' understanding of society and the work skills course helps learners to prepare for work or self-employment. A good number of learners are accessing distance learning courses in subjects that are relevant and interesting to them. Many go onto distance-learning university courses. Vulnerable offenders have access to literacy, numeracy and art

classes in separate classrooms.

62. Resources to help facilitate learning are good. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, where resources were considered a weakness. Learning packs have been well produced and good-quality handouts are used effectively in most classes. Tutors have helped to develop a wide range of learning materials to supplement the good-quality materials that Mercia Partnership (UK) Ltd has purchased. Good use is being made of literacy and numeracy skills learning materials which are well adapted for use. Tutors use neatly presented and clearly reproduced handouts to improve learning. Classrooms and furniture are attractive with good visual displays to promote learning.

63. Learners receive good information, advice and guidance from Connexions staff. Learners benefit from pre-course initial and diagnostic assessment and individual guidance interviews to place them on appropriate courses. Learners have access to further guidance interviews on completing their agreed programmes and again towards the end of their sentence. The induction programme is well structured, with experienced guidance staff providing an interesting programme.

64. Insufficient use is made of short-term targets. Since the previous inspection the prison has introduced personal development plans, well produced in a spiral-bound booklet that also contains copies of learners' reviews. Short-term targets are clearly identified at reviews. However, insufficient use is made of short-term targets to plan learning and too few links exist between learners' personal development plan and the lesson plans.

65. Insufficient attention is given to the individual needs of learners in some classes. In some learning sessions, tutors do not take sufficient account of each learner's needs. Some tutors do not provide sufficient variety of learning activities to maintain learners' interest. In one observed learning session, the organisation of learning was poor. Learners spent much of their time chatting with each other with insufficient structure, support or management of their time.

Leadership and management

66. Since the previous inspection the new education contractor has successfully improved the resources for learners attending foundation programmes. Learners now have good access to computers in learning sessions to help develop their skills.

67. Following the previous inspection, data is now collected and used more effectively to help identify trends and to support management decisions. Checks and monitoring of attendance are now more thorough and, although learners often arrive late for classes, attendance has improved. There are plans to improve further the collection and analysis of data.

68. Mercia Partnership (UK) Ltd has a clear focus on quality improvement and a strong commitment to improve the provision. As part of the quality assurance arrangements

the company has recently introduced observations of teaching and learning. The results of this are yet to take full effect on the provision.