

REINSPECTION REPORT

HMP Blantyre House Reinspection

27 April 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

HMP BLANTYRE HOUSE REINSPECTION

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.

REINSPECTION REPORT

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Blantyre House is a semi-open prison in a rural location in Kent, which houses category C and D offenders. It was originally built as a country house, but was taken over by the prison commission as a detention centre for young offenders in 1954. It is now a resettlement prison for offenders who have at least four years of their sentences left. The prison's regime is designed to prepare offenders for their eventual release. Offenders may make an application to be transferred to HMP Blantyre House, but are required to meet certain criteria.
2. The prison has an operational capacity of 122, of whom 40 per cent are category D offenders, 30 per cent are category C, and a further 30 per cent are serving life sentences. At the time of the inspection, there were 121 offenders. Category C offenders carry out a range of part-time work such as kitchen work, maintaining the prison's gardens or cleaning. There are 20 work placements within the prison. Vocational training is available in a number of these areas. Offenders progress from category C to category D. Most category D offenders are initially involved in supervised work in the community. They then move to unpaid work, mostly with voluntary and community organisations. Finally, they move into paid employment in jobs such as bus driving. Offenders can also attend courses at local colleges or with private training providers in areas such as plumbing, lift truck driving, large goods vehicle driving, scaffolding or electrical installation. Some offenders are on undergraduate courses.
3. Education and training is managed by the head of learning and skills, who reports to the prison governor. A new head of learning and skills was appointed in June 2005. The contract for education services is for 2,300 training hours each year. It is currently held by Kent Adult Education Service (the service), which also provides education in four other prisons. A new contractor will be responsible for the education provision from August 2006. The education department is currently managed by the contracts manager of the service, with the support of one part-time administrative assistant and three part-time tutors. There are 160 training places in education. Literacy and numeracy support is available. Offenders can also carry out training in information and communications technology (ICT) or construction trades.
4. The prison has a library for offenders. This service is provided through a contract with Kent library service and is open from 0800 to 2000 all week. It is staffed for two days each week.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Construction

5. There are eight learners on the dry lining and plastering course. The course has recently been introduced and this is the second group of learners on the programme.

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The plastering course and the subsequent painting and decorating course takes five weeks. Learners work towards an Open College Network (OCN) award and a level 1 qualification in health and safety.

6. The workshop is open for four days each week and is staffed by one full-time tutor, who is supported by three classroom assistants. Painting and decorating is also offered in the same workshop and usually follows the plastering course. In addition to those learners studying in the prison, seven learners attend further education colleges for technical certificates in plumbing, carpentry, electrical installation and painting and decorating. Six learners are on the gas network operatives programme which is provided in partnership with a national gas supplier. The inspection focused only on those learners training in the prison.

Information & communications technology

7. The ICT provision offers a range of accredited courses at level 1 and 2, mainly in the use of office applications software. There are two accredited courses for beginners and three courses in the use of computers in graphic design and web design. Eight places are available on two mornings and two afternoons each week. Learners attend two or three of these sessions. The ICT facilities are available for learners to use between 8:00 am to 8:00 pm all week. During the week of the inspection, 18 learners were taking ICT courses. Of these, 12 were taking level 1 and 2 courses. There are no learners on the beginners' course. The remainder of the learners were taking the digital imaging course. Category D offenders also attend local colleges for courses above level 2. There are two ICT classrooms, each with eight computers. One is used for classes and the other is used solely for self-study. All ICT lessons are taught as a workshop with each learner working at his own pace. Two members of staff teach ICT classes. The department has a small library of books and CD-ROMs, covering ICT and other areas such as the driving test, garden design and books for learners to teach themselves computerised book-keeping.

Foundation programmes

8. At the time of the inspection, 29 learners were enrolled on one or more of the foundation programmes. Sixteen learners were enrolled on the literacy programme, 14 on numeracy and 12 on a mandatory pathway programme called 'Steps to the Gate', that is linked to sentence planning. Additional accredited courses are budgeting and money management, and preparation for work. There is currently no evening or weekend provision. Learners can join courses at any point during the year, although there are waiting lists for some courses. Learners usually attend between one and three learning sessions each week. Learners work towards a number of qualifications that are test, assignment or portfolio-based, at entry level through to level 2. Learners can progress to key skills communication at level 3.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	13
Number of learners interviewed	19
Number of staff interviewed	7
Number of subcontractors interviewed	10

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

9. At the previous inspection, leadership and management were unsatisfactory, quality assurance was very weak, but equality of opportunity was good. The provision in construction and ICT was unsatisfactory, and the provision in foundation programmes was very weak. At the end of the reinspection process all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

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	2
Quality assurance	5

Construction		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Construction crafts		
- Other government-funded provision	16	4

Information & communications technology		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
- Other government-funded provision	22	4

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Foundation programmes		5
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy and numeracy		
- Other government-funded provision		48 5

Grades awarded at reinspection

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality assurance		3

Construction		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Construction crafts		
- Other government-funded provision		8 2

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
- Other government-funded provision		18 3

Foundation programmes		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy and numeracy		
- Other government-funded provision		29 2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

10. **Standards of learners' work in construction are very good and learners develop good practical skills.** Levels of achievement in this area are also very good. **In foundation programmes, learners develop good personal and social skills.** They consider that their confidence has increased and are proud of their achievements. **Until December 2005, retention and achievement levels were poor in ICT and foundation programmes.** In both

of these areas there is now evidence of improvements in the retention of learners.

Quality of education and training

11. **Standards of teaching are good in all areas of learning.** The previous inspection identified that teaching was poor in both ICT and foundation programmes. Tutors in construction have good experience of working in the construction industry, which is reflected in the teaching. In ICT and foundation programmes, tutors have developed an excellent rapport with learners, which improves the learners' motivation, and they clearly enjoy their learning sessions. In ICT sessions, tutors continually check how learners are progressing and intervene where appropriate. Classroom and behaviour management are particular strengths of the foundation lessons with a calm but purposeful atmosphere in learning sessions.

12. **The practical resources in construction are particularly good,** which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Equipment is of industry standard. The bays that learners use for dry lining and plastering are subsequently used to teach them painting and decorating skills.

13. **The resettlement programme is particularly good.** It is well structured and flexible enough to meet the needs of the offenders who are due for release. Access to the library and ICT facilities is particularly good. The qualifications offered for the construction courses are not well recognised by the construction industry. In ICT the range of courses is too restricted, with no qualifications for those learners who have completed courses at level 1 and 2 at other prisons, and no courses of a more technical nature.

14. **Tutors do not share information sufficiently** to help in the planning of individual learning. Some short-term targets are not detailed enough.

15. **Support for learners is good.** Construction learners have access to literacy and numeracy support within their construction courses. All tutors are prepared to take time to speak to learners about other courses that are available, or other broader issues such as what learners might do on their release from prison.

Leadership and management

16. **The prison has particularly good strategies** to develop education and training. The prison governor has a clear plan of how the prison should be developed, which places education and training at the centre of the offender's experience. The head of learning and skills has developed a broad vision of how education and training should contribute to the broader strategic aims of the prison. However, it is not sufficiently clear how the detailed development plan and the overall strategic plan are linked.

17. At the previous inspection, communications between the prison and the service were ineffective. The two organisations now have a good working relationship.

18. **The use of data was a weakness at the previous inspection. Although this area has improved significantly, it is still not satisfactory.** Retention and achievement rates have been collected only very recently and it is not possible to judge how effectively this data will be used by the prison.

19. **The promotion of equality of opportunity within the prison is good.** It is evident that there is mutual respect between staff and offenders. The 'Steps to the Gate' programme is well received by learners, who learn how to cope with the reality of having access to alcohol and drugs when outside the prison. Complaints are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner and all offenders know how to make a formal complaint. The analysis of equality of opportunity data has improved since the previous inspection. Trends and variations in enrolments for courses are identified and, where appropriate, actions are taken.

20. **The prison has taken particularly effective actions to resolve the weaknesses identified by the previous inspection.** In particular, teaching is now good in all areas. At the previous inspection it was poor in two of the three areas inspected. The prison has taken decisive action to resolve the poor performance of some members of staff. The quality of the service's provision is now effectively monitored. The head of learning and skills routinely receives details of lesson observations carried out by the service, and observes some lessons personally to ensure that the service's judgements are accurate. Observation of vocational training is at an early stage and has only taken place in horticulture. However, plans are well developed for observations of the other vocational training areas. Assessment and verification practices are satisfactory.

21. The prison makes appropriate use of learners' views. These are gathered through questionnaires, course evaluation forms, and the prison's education committee.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- particularly good strategies for the development of education and training
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- particularly effective actions to resolve identified weaknesses

Weaknesses

- poor use of data

Construction

Construction crafts

Strengths

- good development of practical skills
- good standards of teaching
- particularly good practical resources

Weaknesses

- inappropriate range of qualifications

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good standards of teaching and learning
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- low achievement rates
- restricted range of provision

Foundation programmes

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good development of personal and social skills
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good support for learners
- particularly good resettlement programme

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory achievement and retention rates
- insufficient sharing of information to plan learning

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- particularly good strategies for the development of education and training
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- particularly effective actions to resolve identified weaknesses

Weaknesses

- poor use of data

22. The prison has good and effective strategies to develop education and training. The prison governor has a clear plan of how the prison should be developed. The prison's strategic plan gives a high priority to the development of education and training and seeks to establish an element of learning in as many aspects of the offenders' daily experiences as possible. The governor has well-developed plans to extend the role of the head of learning and skills to help to achieve this objective. The links between resettlement and education and training are key to many of these developments. This relationship is excellent and there is clear evidence of this situation improving learners' employment opportunities. For example, the prison now works closely with a national company in the gas supply industry to give learners the opportunity to train and work as gas fitters. The range of provision is determined using information from the resettlement team, local labour market needs and the views of offenders.

23. The prison has made a significant investment in the development of construction training. Other providers are used for training and employment in lift truck, mechanical digger, and lorry driving. Local colleges of further education provide additional training for category D offenders. Non-accredited leisure learning is also considered important, to give learners some additional interests. Learners are often helped to enrol on evening classes in preparation for when they are released. The head of learning and skills has developed a broad plan of how education and training will contribute to the prison's overall strategy. This plan is clear in terms of key objectives, with particular emphasis on individual offenders' needs. The prison has a development plan for education and training and a list of the programmes that are currently being offered, with a clearly defined purpose for each. However, it is not sufficiently clear how the detailed development plan and the overall strategic plan are linked.

24. In the previous inspection, communications between the prison and the service were ineffective. Since then, communications have improved significantly and there is now a good working relationship between the two organisations. The contract manager of the service has worked effectively with the prison to improve the quality of provision. Communications relating to education and training within the prison are satisfactory and

supported by an appropriate range of meetings, which are minuted satisfactorily.

25. The range of vocational training within the prison has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Accredited vocational training is now offered in horticulture, dry lining, plastering and painting and decorating. A short first-aid course is also offered. Offenders can take a basic food hygiene course which is a requirement for those offenders working in the kitchens, but the accreditation is not recognised outside the prison service. The prison has well-advanced plans to offer other qualifications in line with its overall strategy.

26. Although the use of data has improved significantly since the previous inspection, it is still not satisfactory. This weakness was identified at the previous inspection and is recognised in the prison's self-assessment report. The prison has begun to collect and analyse retention and achievement data, but this is a very recent initiative and it is not possible to judge how effective it is. It has not been possible for the prison to set retention and achievement targets.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

27. Equality of opportunity is promoted well throughout the prison and there is a culture of mutual respect in the prison. Learners understand their rights and responsibilities and support their peers well. Each offender is assigned a buddy on arrival at the prison. Buddies guide and support learners through their first weeks in the prison where they have a structured induction which includes meeting the governor, senior officers, education staff and health service representatives. The induction continues into the 'Steps to the Gate' programme where learners develop and refine skills which are useful during town visits and release on temporary licence to attend further training or work. Learners value the support which helps them to cope with obstacles such as the availability of alcohol and drugs when outside the prison.

28. All offenders are aware of how to make a complaint and most complaints are resolved at a local level, either by the tutor or the head of learning and skills. Complaints that are not resolved at this stage go to the governor, who follows a clear procedure to investigate and feed back to offenders within a well-defined time period. In the month before the inspection, only one complaint had been received by the governor and this had been satisfactorily resolved within the prison's target response time.

29. Data collection has been improved since the previous inspection. Data is analysed to show trends and variations in course enrolments within and outside the prison. Analysis has revealed trends in the popularity of courses. For example, white learners are under-represented on courses at further education colleges, and black learners are under-represented at one of the private providers. Some investigation has been carried out to identify the reasons for the differences in participation. However, there is currently no analysis of achievements or retention by ethnic background or age.

30. The policies and procedures of the existing education contractor are understood well by staff, and equality of opportunity training is satisfactory. Staff employed by the

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service attend diversity training which is delivered by the prison service, and the contractor carries out further training, although few members of the education team have attended recently.

31. The prison has a small number of learners, none of whom have mobility, hearing or sight problems. Support measures are supplied as and when needed. Books with large text and specialist software are available to support learners with such impairments and several books are available on audio tape or CDs. The library also has several books in languages other than English. Large tracker balls are available for ICT learners who have difficulty using the normal mouse.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

32. The prison has taken particularly effective action to deal with the weaknesses identified through its self-assessment process and at the previous inspection. Most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been successfully resolved. In particular, the quality of teaching, which was described as poor in the previous inspection, is now good in all areas of learning. The prison has taken decisive action to resolve the poor performance of members of staff. Since the previous inspection, members of staff who were identified as performing below standard have received a very good level of support from the prison. All learners speak very positively about the improvement in the provision since that time and there is some evidence that retention and attendance have improved. Communications were identified as being ineffective at the previous inspection. They are now satisfactory. The head of learning and skills meets regularly with the service to discuss the provision. Most of these meetings are informal, but some are formal and minuted. The head of learning and skills also meets regularly with education staff to inform them of the developments in education and training.

33. Observations of teaching to monitor and improve its quality are satisfactory. The process is thorough but not fully implemented. Most tutors are observed once each year, although since the previous inspection, observations have been more frequent in order to resolve some of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The documents used are appropriately detailed and tutors are advised what actions to take to improve their teaching. These actions are monitored to ensure that they are completed within an appropriate timescale. Observations are also carried out by an external consultant to ensure that the grades given are accurate. Copies of the observation forms are now routinely passed to the head of learning and skills to enable her to make a judgement about the quality of the provision provided by the service. She observes lessons personally to ensure the accuracy of the grades given by the service. Sessional staff are not observed regularly, although the head of learning and skills plans to observe them as a part of her regular observation programme.

34. All courses offered by the service are reviewed annually. This process is satisfactory, although there is not enough emphasis on what aspects of the course went well and what aspects could be improved.

35. The prison has a clear quality assurance framework and calendar. It includes an appropriate quality policy statement and a clear statement of its aims. The calendar lists all areas of the provision which will be checked by the head of learning and skills and the dates when this will happen. The service has produced a staff handbook for staff working in prisons and all staff have access to a range of additional documents which describe how to deal with important aspects of the learners' experiences.

36. The prison makes appropriate use of information provided by learners. Learners' views about education and training within the prison are collected in a number of ways. All learners are requested to complete an evaluation form at the end of each course. These responses are analysed informally and, where necessary, actions are taken to resolve any issues arising. All learners are also given a questionnaire to enable them to comment more broadly about education and training. These questionnaires are analysed and there is clear evidence of improvements as a result of this analysis. The prison has an education committee consisting of learners from a wide range of courses. This committee is chaired by the head of learning and skills and gives learners an opportunity to give direct feedback regarding the education and training provision. Again, there is clear evidence of resulting improvements.

37. The self-assessment process is appropriately consultative. The resulting report is critical and recognises many of the weakness identified by inspectors. Grades given by inspectors are either the same as those in the self-assessment report or a grade higher. Most staff are aware of the self-assessment report, although a small number do not understand some of the details.

38. During their first six months of employment, new tutors are only observed for developmental purposes. No grade is recorded which would enable ongoing monitoring of the quality of the learners' experience. Observation of vocational training is still at an early stage. There has been some observation of horticulture training and plans are well developed to observe other vocational training such as the basic food hygiene and first-aid appointed person courses. However, these observations have not taken place yet.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Construction

Construction		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Construction crafts		
- Other government-funded provision	8	2

Construction crafts

Strengths

- good development of practical skills
- good standards of teaching
- particularly good practical resources

Weaknesses

- inappropriate range of qualifications

Achievement and standards

39. Learners develop good practical skills and their standards of work are very good. During the inspection several learners had their first introduction to plastering. They completed their work to a very high standard, and received good feedback from the tutor and the assistants. Learners were clearly proud of their first attempts at plastering and were keen to practise further and progress to learn other techniques.

40. All eight learners who began on the first course successfully completed and achieved the OCN qualification. All learners who began the subsequent course remain in training and are making good progress. The first painting and decorating course also had a 100 per cent success rate.

Quality of education and training

41. Standards of teaching are good. The tutor and the assistants have good industry experience and share their skills and knowledge well. Demonstrations are effective, and emphasise health and safety and particularly the need to keep tools and equipment clean and well maintained. Demonstrators observe good practices and constantly remind learners of the need to work in a professional and systematic manner.

42. Practical resources are good and have improved considerably since the previous inspection. A significant investment has been made in purchasing industry standard equipment. Consumable goods are also in plentiful supply. Learners helped in the

conversion of the workshop, building cubicles and storage areas. The painting and decorating programme follows the plastering course, using the same workshop. This is an effective use of resources.

43. Literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. The results of the literacy and numeracy skills screening tests are passed to the construction tutor, and education workers visit classes to provide support. The recording of learners' progress is also satisfactory, although separate learning plans are completed for each aspect of training, which makes it difficult to appreciate learners' overall progress in all aspects of their training programme.

44. Assessment and verification are also satisfactory. Portfolios contain photographs and learners write descriptions of completed tasks. However, moderation of the OCN courses is carried out by the head of learning and skills, who does not hold the appropriate verifier ward.

45. The qualifications offered in construction are inappropriate for learners wishing to gain employment in the construction industry. The course offered is a locally devised programme and is not one that is always recognised by the construction industry. Learners can also obtain a health and safety qualification, but again this is not the qualification that is recognised as the minimum standard needed for the construction industry. Learners must acquire a further qualification to obtain the construction skills certification card which is increasingly becoming a requirement to work in the construction industry.

Leadership and management

46. The prison has shown good commitment to the development of construction courses. The construction section has a clear strategy for the direction of its programmes which now focus on resettlement and the employability of learners. The new programme is more vocationally focused with a view to raising the employability skills of learners.

47. Staffing levels are satisfactory. There is a culture of mutual respect between staff and learners in the construction programme. Learners are aware of how to complain and say that they feel that they have an influence on the way that the provision is being developed. Support for literacy and numeracy is well planned, with adequate time in the vocational programme for learners to work with education staff. There has also been an improvement in the planning of education and training in the prison and there are now few interruptions to courses. Feedback is gathered at the end of each course and this is considered with regard to making improvements. The self-assessment process generally identified the same strengths and weaknesses of the provision as inspectors, although teaching staff did not understand the weaknesses that related to data.

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Using IT</i> - Other government-funded provision	18	3

Using IT

Strengths

- good standards of teaching and learning
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- low achievement rates
- restricted range of provision

Achievement and standards

48. The standard of learners’ work is satisfactory. Learners work with enthusiasm and enjoy the work that they do. Most of them use the software with confidence. Learners are willing to explore the capabilities of the software without help from others. Most of them are aware of the ways in which ICT can help them when they are released. One learner was keen to start a business in painting and decorating and recognised the value of spreadsheets and word processing. Another learner wanted to return to his previous work running a motor vehicle repair business. He could understand how he could use a spreadsheet to improve his customer estimates and his accounts.

49. Achievement rates for ICT programmes are low. Of the learners who began the level 1 qualification between April and December 2005, only 56 per cent were successful. Of those who completed the course, only 76 per cent were successful. Six learners began the level 2 course during the same period, but none have achieved the qualification and none of them are now in training. However, there is some evidence to suggest that a number of learners who were unsuccessful were waiting to join the dry lining course or were attending only one ICT lesson each week. For these learners the objective of achieving a full certificate was unrealistic. There is some evidence of an improvement in retention and attendance levels in recent months. Of the 18 learners who have begun the course since January 2006, none have left the course. It is too early to consider levels of achievement for this group of learners.

Quality of education and training

50. Standards of teaching and learning in ICT lessons are good. Tutors have an excellent rapport with their learners. The learners clearly enjoy their lessons and make good progress. Learning sessions are delivered in a workshop format with all learners working at their own pace. Tutors continually check how learners are progressing and intervene where appropriate to give learners additional advice and information. Tutors specifically place learners who are at the same stage in their learning together so that they are able to help each other. Classes are lively, with a lot of useful interaction between learners.

51. Support for learners is good and tutors are prepared to take extra time to help learners. They discuss what subsequent courses learners might choose to take, or more general matters related to prison life. Learners feel comfortable in asking tutors for extra help. All learners receive detailed information about the courses before they begin. An information leaflet is available for all courses that are offered, which describes how they relate to each other. The prison assesses the previous information technology (IT) skills of all learners to ensure that they are taking the course most suited to their skills and knowledge. Their longer-term employment aims are also taken into account as agreed during their induction. Tutors give a range of information to help learners decide if they wish to continue with ICT after their release. Tutors also give a good range of information about possible courses and will arrange for more detailed information regarding technical courses. The prison will also arrange interviews at the college of further education where necessary.

52. All learners have a learning plan and diary. Both documents are completed appropriately, although some of the target-setting in the individual learning plan is not detailed enough. The learner's diary is completed by the tutor and the learner. The learner records what he has learnt during the lesson, rather than what he has done.

53. At the previous inspection, learners had good access to ICT facilities. This remains the case. The ICT room is open between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm all week for learners. A range of self-study materials is available.

54. The range of programmes offered is too restricted, although it has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Offenders at HMP Blantyre House have all spent some time in other prisons and many have already taken the level 1 and level 2 qualifications. There is no level 3 qualification for them to take and there are no courses of a more technical nature, such as computer repair or introductory programming. There are no evening classes for those category D offenders who are working during the day.

Leadership and management

55. The operational management of the ICT provision is satisfactory. The ICT co-ordinator liaises with other area co-ordinators to discuss common issues. However, the longer-term strategy for the development of ICT in the prison is not entirely clear. Data regarding retention and achievement rates has become available very recently, but there is currently no plan for how to use this data. Tutors have been observed regularly using

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the service's system. This system is thorough and there is clear evidence of it leading to improvements in the quality of the teaching. The rapport between tutors and learners is excellent, with a culture of mutual respect. Learners comment on how they enjoy the learning sessions and feel that they are treated well by their tutors. However, the prison does not, at present, monitor achievement levels by, for example, ethnic background or age.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> - Other government-funded provision	29	2

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good development of personal and social skills
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good support for learners
- particularly good resettlement programme

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory achievement and retention rates
- insufficient sharing of information to plan learning

Achievement and standards

56. Learners' development of personal and social skills is particularly good. Some learners work as peer supporters and attend learning sessions to give demonstrations and advice on techniques. As well as supporting other learners, the peer supporters increase their own self-esteem and confidence and are willing to share details of their personal development. Some learners have been trained to act as mentors on the 'Toe by Toe' reading scheme and feel proud of having enabled another learner to learn to read. Several learners have expressed an interest in pursuing a career in teaching or a support profession. Several learners have appeared on an induction video and are also to be the subject of a mural depicting their skills. Learners comment on the distance they have travelled and how they now feel pride in their achievements and are able to progress. Several learners have led classroom sessions, drawing upon personal experiences, such as drug or alcohol misuse. Although initially nervous, they have delivered additional sessions, on one occasion to a meeting outside the prison.

57. Learners have opportunities to engage in role-play to explore their fears and concerns and are enthusiastic in discussing the ways in which such a process improves their confidence and self-esteem. Learners speak positively about these sessions and value the constructive criticism that they have received from tutors and their peers. All learners are encouraged to engage in debates and discussions during learning sessions, and most of them do so, in a spirited but respectful manner. All learners are encouraged to gain a driving licence, as another factor in removing obstacles to sustainable employment, such as unreliable public transport. Learners' attendance and punctuality

during the inspection were good and learners enjoy their work.

58. Achievement and retention rates are unsatisfactory. Achievement and retention rates during the period April 2005 to September 2005 were low and particularly low at entry level. Achievement rates vary from 25 per cent to 46 per cent and retention rates vary between 50 per cent and 73 per cent. However, there is evidence of a significant improvement in the retention of learners since that time and only one has left the programme to date. Almost all of them are still in training, but it is too soon to comment on current achievement rates. Twelve portfolios have been submitted for verification very recently, but the outcomes are unknown. Several learners have progressed to college placements.

Quality of education and training

59. Standards of teaching and learning are good. Of the learning sessions observed by inspectors, 75 per cent were graded good and the remainder were satisfactory. Tutors have an excellent rapport with learners. Classroom and behaviour management is good and there is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in all sessions. A variety of teaching and reinforcement strategies are used to motivate the learners, such as question and answer sessions, quizzes, role-play and mock interviews. Most learners are highly motivated and express enthusiasm for their classes. Some learners describe how this has replaced their earlier reluctance, reticence and, in some cases, aggressive refusal to be involved with education.

60. Lessons are well planned and well structured. They are appropriately differentiated in terms of activity and resource to take account of a range of literacy and numeracy levels within each group. Schemes of work are detailed, with appropriate emphasis on resettlement. Lessons begin promptly and a register is taken. Latecomers always offer their apologies to the tutor and class and enter their name in an 'interruptions' book. A clear outline of each session is always given by the tutor, and details are posted on a whiteboard or flipchart to remind learners of the structure and objectives of the session, and to assist latecomers. At the end of each session tutors quickly review the learning covered and give learners the opportunity to give feedback to the tutor and their peers. However, the group sizes are large, particularly in literacy and numeracy support, where a range of individual learning needs require attention. It has recently been decided to provide an additional session for entry level learners, to reduce the size of other groups.

61. The support provided for learners is good. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect between learners and tutors. Learners feel that their classroom contributions are valued. Tutors regularly stay late after learning sessions to discuss learning outcomes or learners' other concerns. Tutors offer advice on progression routes, which are unfamiliar to learners. Further information and support and guidance is available to learners wishing to make applications to colleges of further and higher education. A jobclub also provides very good support for jobsearch, curriculum vitae preparation, letter writing and making telephone calls. Help is also given to learners in checking maps and bus and train timetables to ensure that they have a clear understanding of route planning to avoid

being late. Support is offered from tutors and peer mentors. Peer mentors are trained to deliver the 'Toe by Toe' reading scheme on the residential wings. A reading circle has been started very recently and tutors have also prepared book reviews, to be placed in the library, as a means of encouraging learners to read a greater variety of literature.

62. Literacy and numeracy support is provided in discrete sessions using a variety of resources and tools, some of which have been loaned by tutors and/or their family or friends. Learners interviewed say that they receive extremely high levels of support and guidance from their tutors. Upon completion of their course, learners receive a letter of congratulations.

63. The resettlement programme is good. It is well structured, relevant and takes into account the individual resettlement and education needs of learners. The programme is used flexibly to allow relevant input from learners. Guest speakers are also occasionally invited. The programme places particular emphasis on the immediate relevance of its content and allows learners to focus clearly on their plans for the future and what they need to do to implement them. The programme is linked to other sessions such as those in IT, literacy and numeracy and jobsearch. Learners speak very positively about the course and consider it highly relevant and useful to them in the period leading up to their release.

64. Access to all classes and the library and IT suite is satisfactory. All learners have the opportunity to use these services, even if they are out of the prison during the day.

65. Resources are satisfactory. Classrooms are clean, well lit and well ordered. There is a range of appropriate learning resources, displays and equipment, which includes computers in the classroom and the IT suite. All tutors have a range of teaching experience and are appropriately qualified.

66. Tutors do not share sufficiently the information used to plan individual learning. All learners undergo an initial and diagnostic assessment to establish their numeracy and literacy levels, in order to plan individual learning programmes. Each subject has its own form of individual learning plan which is kept in the learners' files and routinely referred to by tutors and learners. However, there is not enough sharing of short- and long-term targets or learning goals between subject tutors. Individual learning plans are used predominantly as recording documents, rather than tools for learners to plan, review and change targets according to their individual circumstances. Targets are discussed and set between tutors and learners, but often the targets are not changed for several months. Although tutors are well aware and supportive of learners' changing circumstances, this information is not recorded appropriately. Learners have some generic targets, such as 'improve punctuation' or 'improve writing', but these are not detailed enough and do not give learners enough guidance about how to make improvements. Most learners are aware of their short- and long-term targets, but some learners are unclear of the distance they have travelled and have difficulty in planning their progress.

Leadership and management

67. The curriculum area is well led and managed. Significant changes have been made recently to the curriculum. Foundation programme co-ordinators are aware of their roles and responsibilities and are committed to continuous improvement. Communications are good, with regular staff meetings and daily informal contact between tutors and the education management. The well-being of learners is promoted through the provision of high-quality training and support. Learners are respected and they understand the complaints procedure. Learners' feedback is collected and evaluated and some changes have been made to the programme. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. Most of the staff have been involved in the self-assessment process and have undergone teaching observations.