

INSPECTION REPORT

HMP Maidstone

2 February 2007



**ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE**

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.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for achievement and standards and the quality of provision and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

Outstanding provision should typically have leadership and management and at least two of the three strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision judged to be a grade 1. All strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision will be graded 1 or 2.

Good provision should have leadership and management and at least two of the three strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision judged to be a grade 2 or better. All strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision will be grade 3 or better.

Satisfactory provision should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and at least two of the strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades for the strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision, with no more than one graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where two or more of strands within achievement and standards and the quality of provision and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the four grades are:

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

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CONTENTS

Inspection report

Description of the provider	1
Overall effectiveness	1
Key challenges for HMP Maidstone	2
Grades	2
About the inspection	3
What learners like about HMP Maidstone	5
What learners feel HMP Maidstone could improve	5

Detailed inspection findings

Achievement and standards and the quality of provision	6
Teaching, training and learning	6
Range of provision	7
Guidance and support	8
Leadership and management	9
Annex 1: range of provision available to learners	12

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP Maidstone (the prison) is situated on the northern edge of Maidstone in Kent. The prison dates back to 1819. Previously a male category B training establishment, Maidstone re-rolled in October 2003 to a male category C secure learning centre.
2. The prison holds 589 adult male offenders. Of these, the main wing population is 415, and the vulnerable offender population is 174. Approximately 33 per cent of the offenders are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
3. Action For Employment Limited (A4e) has provided education programmes since July 2006. Most of the rest of the programmes are provided by the prison. The education manager is responsible for the delivery of the education contract, and reports to the head of learning and skills, who has overall responsibility for the provision and development of learning throughout the estate. The prison is split into two specific areas of provision, Main and Thanet.
4. The education provision is predominantly part time and is designed to give offenders the opportunity to attend work and education. Most of the education provision takes place in the main education building and the vulnerable prisoners unit. The remaining 15 per cent of classes are workshop based and employ small workgroups and individual tutorials. Learners are paid for attendance at £1.50 for each session. Eighty per cent of the prison's population participate in education and training. The prison population is relatively stable. Over the six months to December 2006, more than 66 per cent of offenders stayed for more than six months, and fewer than 10 per cent stayed for less than a month. None of the offenders is on remand, on licence serving all or part of their sentence in the community, or released on temporary licence.
5. The prison offers vocational training in construction, cleaning, physical education (PE), information and communications technology (ICT), catering, laundry, job preparation, and being a classroom assistant. Offenders are employed in three contract workshops, a print shop, the laundry, waste management, gardens, and tailoring. The education provision includes literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), key skills training, and art.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 3

6. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** More specifically, achievement and standards and the quality of provision, including employability and vocational training, and literacy, numeracy and language support, are satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The prison's approach to equality of opportunity is good.
7. **The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** Procedures for self-assessment are well established. All areas of education, training and work carry out self-assessment in line with the directives in the prison's quality manual. The prison is improving its arrangements to include a wider range of views from learners and partner organisations. Findings from surveys of learners are beginning to have an effect on the judgements in the report. Self-assessment is at the core of the prison's quality improvement framework and is completed as part of the annual quality cycle. Performance is monitored throughout the year. Managers and

staff evaluate performance against the key questions of the Common Inspection Framework. The head of learning and skills leads the self-assessment process which is monitored through the quality improvement group. Overall, the judgements in the self-assessment report match those of inspectors. They agreed with many of its findings. The link between the self-assessment report and its accompanying development plan is clear. The actions identified within the plan have been implemented and improvements have been made.

8. **The prison has demonstrated it is in a good position to make improvements.**

The prison has done a lot during the past year to develop and introduce procedures for quality improvement. The procedures are appropriate and place strong emphasis on performance measures which are allied to the learners' experience. Strategic development is planned well and the leadership of education and training is good. The quality improvement group has raised the profile of education and training in the prison, and has implemented effective arrangements for self-assessment. Managers have extended accredited vocational learning into many training and work areas and supplemented this with an increase in the amount of learning support offered outside the education department. Learners have steadily increased their achievement of qualifications over the past year. Many of the quality improvement measures are recent and have not had any positive effect on learners as yet.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR NAME OF PROVIDER:

- increase the provision of education, training and work
- establish more quality improvement processes
- improve the identification of learners' needs in sentence planning
- improve the quality of teaching and learning
- improve the planning of individual learning

GRADES

grade1= outstanding, grade 2= good, grade 3= satisfactory, grade 4= inadequate

Achievement and standards and the quality of provision	3
Contributory grades:	
Employability and vocational training	3
Literacy, numeracy and language support	3

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	12
Number of learners interviewed	23
Number of staff interviewed	43
Number of subcontractors interviewed	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	2
Number of visits to the provider	1

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Achievement and standards and the quality of provision

Employability and vocational training

Strengths

- very good achievement in construction workshops
- good development of vocational and personal skills in workshops
- good resources to support vocational training

Weaknesses

- insufficient accreditation of some vocational training
- some poor scheduling of activities

Literacy, language and numeracy

Strengths

- very good pass rates on key skills and entry level literacy and numeracy programmes
- very good support arrangements for learners with dyslexia
- effective introduction of literacy and numeracy in workshops

Weaknesses

- weak lesson planning and goal setting to meet learners' needs
- insufficiently defined discrete curriculum provision.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- strong leadership of education and training
- good procedures framework for supporting quality improvement
- effective use of distance learning to widen participation in education and training
- effective arrangements to identify and support learners with disabilities

Weaknesses

- insufficient provision for education, training and work
- incomplete implementation of quality improvement arrangements

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HMP MAIDSTONE:

- their tutors and the helpful education and training staff
- literacy support in the training workshop – ‘it keeps you on track’
- the experience ‘I enjoy myself coming to education’
- the progress they make – ‘I’ve done pretty well since I’ve been here’
- ‘I’ve never done anything like this before – I’ve learnt a lot’
- the good resources in vocational areas

WHAT LEARNERS THINK HMP MAIDSTONE COULD IMPROVE:

- the time delay before induction to education – induction should take place sooner after arrival
- information about how long waiting lists are for vocational training – this is not provided at the moment
- restrictions on taking project work back to cells – learners would like to continue project work in their leisure time
- the negative attitude of some of the uniformed staff
- ESOL provision - ‘the course does not meet my needs - I have stopped going’

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS AND THE QUALITY OF PROVISION Grade 3

Achievement and standards

Employability and vocational training

9. Standards of achievement in the construction workshops are very good. All learners who have followed the recently introduced level 1 brickwork programmes have achieved their planned level 1 accreditation successfully. In painting and decorating programmes, most learners are successful. Learners' achievements on most other programmes are good, including those which recognise generic employment skills, accredited provision in PE, a cleaning programme and a classroom assistants' course. However, achievements of the catering qualification are poor, and learners make slow progress in the print shop. Only very small numbers of learners follow these programmes. Not enough of the vocational training in the laundry is accredited.

10. Learners with no previous experience progress well on construction courses, and develop good skills and produce good-quality work. Project work is of a very good standard and above that required by level 1 qualifications. Learners complete daily diaries which demonstrate well their achievements of personal and social skills. Most learners in the prison's ICT academy (PICTA) workshop make good progress and intend to work in ICT on release.

11. Learners are motivated well. Peer learning is used effectively on some courses and activities. However, punctuality in some sessions is poor. Some learners arrive up to 20 minutes late.

Literacy, numeracy and language support

12. Success rates on key skills and entry level literacy and numeracy programmes are very good. In the period April to December 2006, more than 90 per cent of learners were successful on entry level programmes, and for key skills accreditation, more than 80 per cent were successful. Successes in literacy and numeracy tests at level 1 and 2 were satisfactory, at 60 per cent overall.

13. Where learners carry out project work in key skills and entry level literacy classes, attainment is often good. Learners who receive literacy and numeracy support in workshops complete the written tasks which forms part of their vocational accreditation confidently and accurately.

Teaching, training and learning

Employability and vocational training

14. Resources to support vocational training are good. All workshop areas throughout the prison have an additional, dedicated training room which is used regularly and well for background knowledge sessions and literacy and numeracy support. They are furnished appropriately, and have adequate desk space and video playback facilities. Workshops are suitable for the number of learners who use them, although the bricklaying workshop is small. Tools and materials are of a good standard.

Housekeeping in construction workshops is good. The PICTA workshop is large and well organised. It is equipped well with industry-standard hardware and software. The facilities for weight training and outdoor PE are satisfactory, but the indoor gymnasium is in poor condition.

15. Standards of practical teaching and coaching in the vocational workshops are mostly good. Most of the activities involve demonstration and individual guidance. Working relationships between training staff and learners are good, and the workshops are well supervised. Assessment of learners' work and monitoring of their progress is satisfactory. Each workplace has clear, wall-mounted displays which show learners' progress.

Literacy, numeracy and language support

16. Support arrangements for learners with dyslexia are very good. All learners receive a simple, but effective, screening to identify any dyslexic tendencies, as a routine part of the education induction. Approximately 60 per cent of learners require and receive support of some kind for dyslexia. In many cases, relatively straightforward adjustments are required which tutors make in learning sessions. Those learners with greater needs receive additional, specialist individual review sessions. A significant minority of learners are referred to individual coaching or small group sessions with a teacher trained in dyslexia. The planning of support is good. A highly qualified member of staff has a full-time role co-ordinating and providing support throughout the prison. All education staff receive dyslexia awareness training. Support is particularly widespread for literacy, numeracy and language learners. Approximately four out of five learners on these programmes receive some form of support. Staff also make useful adjustments in learning sessions to help the small proportion of learners with other conditions such as dyspraxia and dyscalculia.

17. Standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the better sessions, tutors use question-and-answer techniques effectively to develop and check learners' understanding. In most sessions, learners work on whole-class activities with enthusiasm, and when working alone they receive helpful individual analysis of their work. However, goal-setting and lesson-planning to meet learners' individual needs are weak. The goals in individual learning plans are too general and list only outcomes such as the literacy or numeracy test the learner is working towards, or the need to improve spelling. Plans rarely contain more detailed short-term goals, or goals that reflect the outcomes of diagnostic assessment sufficiently. Tutors and learners record carefully the learning that takes place in each session, but do not specify what learning should take place subsequently. Teaching and learning in many sessions is not planned well enough to challenge the more advanced learners, or to provide sufficient support to those who are having difficulties. In these sessions, learners work on the same tasks and activities for much or all of the time. Teaching resources are satisfactory.

Range of provision

Employability and vocational training

18. The range of programmes available in construction is satisfactory, and has an appropriate emphasis on providing accreditation at level 1. A large proportion of those learners employed in workshops work towards accreditation which recognises their acquisition of generic work skills. Learners participate in a wide variety of PE courses, including a gymnasium instructor's course, and sports leaders and weight lifting qualifications, as well as carpet bowls, table tennis and other club activities.

19. There is insufficient accreditation of some vocational training. Very few learners in the laundry work towards accredited qualifications. Although the award scheme specifies that credits are available for successes in individual units, the prison only enters for accreditation the few learners who they consider to be capable of achieving the full qualification. The accredited qualification offered in the printing shop is unsuitable, and only two learners are working towards it. Learners do not have enough opportunities for accredited training in the kitchen. The prison has identified these weaknesses and plans to increase its range of accredited vocational training.

20. The prison has made significant progress in improving activity schedules. However, some of them remain poorly synchronised. At times, the requirement to attend an offending behaviour programme interrupts learners' vocational training abruptly.

Literacy, numeracy and language support

21. In recent months, the prison has introduced literacy and numeracy training effectively to all workshops. In some areas of learning such as brickwork and painting, this training is integrated closely with vocational training. Good opportunities exist for learners to gain additional key skills qualifications at the same time as they attain their vocational accreditation goals. In other workshops, learners improve their literacy and numeracy skills while at work.

22. The education department provides a full range of national curriculum levels in literacy and numeracy, from pre-entry to level 2. A limited provision is available in the vulnerable prisoners unit, and there is some additional individual tuition in the segregation unit.

23. The provision of discrete literacy, numeracy and language classes is not defined well enough. The content of literacy and numeracy courses at level 1 and 2 assumes that learners have skills in each at the same levels. The provision does not reflect the differences in skills levels that learners may have in the two subject areas. The criteria for deciding whether learners should join key skills or literacy and numeracy classes at a particular level are not clear enough, or understood well enough by the staff who recommend classes to learners. The accreditation goals for the ESOL provision are inappropriate. Learners do not work towards goals which recognise development of listening and speaking skills.

Guidance and support

24. Celebration of achievement is appropriate. Learners on education programmes leading to accreditation receive their certificates in presentation wallets, together with items such as dictionaries and pens. Learners on non-accredited provision receive similar rewards to acknowledge their progress and effort. They take pride in these achievements. Their achievements on vocational programmes are celebrated widely, and copies of certificates and examples of learners' work are displayed on noticeboards. Awards ceremonies in PE are well attended and popular, sometimes featuring visiting speakers.

25. Learners receive satisfactory information, advice and guidance at induction. This includes an appropriately written booklet which outlines the education and training options available. All arrivals at the prison take part in the education induction and are offered an initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy abilities. Learners routinely receive their results during the induction session. Where the results indicate skills below level 2, the staff responsible for induction encourage learners to join the relevant

education provision. However, the links between induction and allocation are not developed sufficiently. For example, staff responsible for induction do not have sufficiently clear information about how long waiting lists are for particular activities. Links between sentence planning and education and training are weak. The prison has identified a need to improve these links and has well-developed plans to achieve this. More general information, advice and guidance, particularly for progression into learning or employment, is available from a trained adviser who visits the prison under the **nextstep** provision every fortnight. The prison also has a resettlement unit.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

26. The leadership of education and training is strong. Senior managers have a clear strategic vision for the improvement and development of education and training in the prison. The head of learning and skills has been particularly successful in pursuing the prison's objective of providing a secure environment which delivers high-quality education and training as part of effective sentence management. Senior managers have conveyed this objective well to all staff. The quality improvement group has raised the profile of education and training very effectively among staff, promoting closer liaison between the different areas of the prison. These areas now work together well to provide learning and work for offenders, in line with the prison's education and training business plan.

27. Senior managers have put significant effort into changing the culture of the prison, consistent with its move from category B status to its current place as a category C prison with an emphasis on training. Existing staff have taken on new roles which include teaching and training in the vocational workshops. The profile of education and training has been raised considerably during the past year.

28. The procedures framework for supporting quality improvement is good. The prison's three-year strategic development plan provides a clear strategic direction and impetus towards quality improvement. The provider has a good-quality improvement framework for supporting education and training. Quality improvement manuals exist for all education and training areas in the prison. The manuals provide effective guidance for staff when implementing quality improvement arrangements. A newly introduced annual quality schedule provides a clear indication of completion dates for specific activities. Procedures exist to evaluate performance through the routine collection of data from all areas of education and training. Managers and others monitor development plans and revise them regularly. Staff responsibilities, performance indicators and times for completion are identified clearly. Procedures for document control are thorough. They include good cross-referencing and dating of all policies and procedures documents.

29. The prison has developed satisfactory links with outside organisations and partnership working with support agencies. Good links exist with the local chamber of commerce to develop construction industry training. The prison has consulted local wildlife groups when developing strategies for waste management and bird box construction. A local bee-keeping club is helping to set up a hive in the prison grounds.

30. Most staff have qualifications which are appropriate to their roles. Most of the education, learning and training staff are graduates and/or hold teaching qualifications. They have appropriate experience of working in the prison context. Procedures for staff appraisals have improved and are now satisfactory. Programmes for staff development are well planned, and staff are supported well in completing in-service training. Most staff have been involved in appropriate professional development during the past year.

Lines of communication between staff in the education department are satisfactory, and staff meetings are regular and minuted. Liaison between the education department and other areas in the prison is satisfactory. The education manager and the head of learning and skills meet frequently, and meetings between the education manager and the A4e regional manager are regular and effective. The education manager attends monthly meetings of education managers from the nine prisons in Kent where A4e holds contracts, to discuss common issues and to share ideas and practices.

31. The prison does not make enough provision for education, training and work. Currently, places are available for approximately 80 per cent of the prison's population. The remainder, approximately 110 offenders each day, remain unemployed in their cells. Although the number of learner hours in the education contract has increased during the past year from 7,000 to 10,000, the capacity of the education provision is too low. Only 25 per cent of the prison population follow accredited vocational training courses. Managers have identified shortfalls in the accreditation of vocational training, and have devised carefully researched plans to increase the number of qualifications available. Over the past year, the prison has successfully reintroduced training in some areas of work and has extended the outreach work of the education department. The prison's overall strategy for meeting literacy and numeracy needs is satisfactory.

32. Quality improvement arrangements have not been fully implemented. Many of the quality improvement measures are new and the prison has not realised their potential benefits. For example, although there are revised procedures and guidance for observing teachers and instructors, the prison still operates different observation frameworks for education classes and workshops. The records of observations in education do not identify key strengths and weaknesses sufficiently. Judgements do not always support the grade given by the observer adequately. Data systems to enable monitoring of performance against set targets for outcomes have been extended to cover all areas of education, training and work. In education, for example, data collection is thorough concerning awards and for the number of learners in literacy, numeracy and language provision throughout the prison. However the prison does not use this data enough to identify trends in achievement or performance at course or subject level, or to set targets for improvement.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

33. Screening arrangements for identifying and supporting offenders with disabilities are particularly effective. A full-time disability liaison officer manages the process effectively. The prison provides advice and support to a significant number of offenders who have not previously recorded a disability. Throughout the prison, 100 offenders have a declared disability. They receive frequent visits to monitor and review their support needs. In response to needs identified at screening and afterwards, the prison has installed induction loops for offenders with hearing impairments and is piloting specialist computer software to support the communication skills of those with low literacy skills, or where English is an additional language for learners. All offenders receive a simple but effective screening for dyslexia, and if necessary dyspraxia and dyscalculia, as part of their induction. The prison promotes its support services effectively for those with disabilities. The prison has met the Employment Services' criteria for supporting people with disabilities and displays the 'Positive about Disabled People' logo on its documents and notices.

34. Managers make effective use of distance learning to widen participation in education and training. Learners study a wide range of topics from heating and ventilation engineering to sociology. None of these is otherwise available in the prison. Of the 56

learners registered on courses, 20 follow university programmes. Prison staff support the learners well, guiding them in making applications for courses, finding funding for study, arranging telephone tutorials and copying course assignment materials.

35. Equal opportunities measures are managed appropriately. Education and training staff have sufficient awareness and understanding of equality and diversity issues. Learning environments are generally free from discrimination and harassment. Staff training arrangements are good. For example, 12 education staff completed in-house training in diversity awareness in November 2006.

ANNEX 1

RANGE OF PROVISION AVAILABLE TO LEARNERS

Learning and skills activity	Levels	Provider	Number of learners	Additional notes
Construction - bricklaying	1	HMP Maidstone	10	
Cleaning – BICS	1	HMP Maidstone	5	
PE - BWLA	1	HMP Maidstone	9	
PE – CLSA	1	HMP Maidstone	14	
PICTA	1	HMP Maidstone	22	
Catering	1	HMP Maidstone	2	
Job preparation	1/2	Inside Out Trust	10	
9295 classroom assistant course	2	Mid Kent College	7	
Painting and decorating	Foundation	A4e	10	
SATRA laundry	2	HMP Maidstone	2	
ICT	1/2	A4e	27	
Art	Level 1, 2, 3	A4e	35	
Milestones literacy and numeracy	Pre-entry	A4e	6	
Literacy and numeracy	Entry 1, 2, 3	A4e	17	
Literacy and numeracy and key skills	Level 1 and 2	A4e	22	
Literacy and numeracy outreach	Level 1 and 2	A4e	47	
Learner support	n/a	A4e	20	
ESOL	Level 1	A4e	10	

Note: some offenders are attending more than one learning programme