

HMP & YOI Low Newton

Summary report for the provision of learning and skills

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Type of establishment: Female adult and young offender institution
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Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

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Inspectors judge the quality of the provision against the *Common Inspection Framework 2009* and contribute to the inspection frameworks of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.

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Information about the prison

Low Newton is situated approximately four miles north east of Durham city. It is a female prison serving the courts in a catchment area from the Scottish borders to north Yorkshire and Cumbria. The prison has seven accommodation wings, a care and separation unit and healthcare department. Its operational capacity is 336 prisoners. At the time of the inspection there were 265 prisoners, of which 239 were over 21 years of age and the remainder young adults aged 18-21 years.

Approximately 85% of the prison population are convicted with sentences ranging from a few days to life imprisonment. The average length of stay is approximately 12 weeks. Currently nine women are foreign nationals, eight of whom speak a language other than English as their first language. Five prisoners are over 60 years of age but none are retired from work. In addition, 14 prisoners have restricted mobility and six an identified learning difficulty.

The Manchester College provides the formal education provision and vocational training through the Skills Funding Agency Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS). Using OLASS funding, A4e provides careers information and advice. New Bridge offers ICT courses through Learndirect. Resettlement support is provided by Jobcentre Plus, Pertemps, Open Gate, Cyrenians and the Reaches Project.

Summary report of the inspection findings of the learning and skills provision at HMP Low Newton

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<i>Common Inspection Framework (CIF) aspects</i>	Grade
Overall effectiveness	2
Capacity to improve	2
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2

Overall effectiveness

Grade 2

Achievement rates are high. Many learners make good progress through the levels available and to other courses. They enjoy participating in their programme and are keen to progress. Achievement of unit credits and skill development are good on the majority of vocational programmes. Most learners develop good skills and demonstrate a high standard of written work. However, not all work allows prisoners to enhance their employability skills or qualifications.

Teaching and learning are consistently well managed and planned. Tutors make highly effective use of a good range of teaching strategies, including ILT where available, to interest and motivate learners. Behaviour in sessions is good with tutors very skilfully and sensitively managing any poor conduct in a non-confrontational way. Attendance in sessions is satisfactory but regime interruptions severely delay progress for some learners and disrupt class sessions. Since the previous inspection the quality of individual learning plans has improved and now includes targets for vocational, personal and employability skills. Most targets are very clear, specific and understood by learners. Tutors provide good in-class support, supplemented, by highly effective learning mentors. Information, advice and guidance are good and appropriately available throughout a learner's time at the prison. Induction arrangements are satisfactory.

Leadership and management are good with particularly effective operational management of the education provision. The prison makes good use of internal partnership working to meet prisoners' needs. Learners' feedback is valued and very effectively used to make improvements. Staff give safeguarding a high priority and learners feel safe. Equality of opportunity is well promoted with a good range of activities used by tutors to extend learners' appreciation of diversity. The self-assessment process is adequate. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory but do not address all learning and skills areas. The prison makes insufficient use of data for evaluation purposes.

Capacity to improve

Grade 2

HMP Low Newton has made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. The outcomes of curriculum review have been well used by the prison to ensure that learning and skills provision effectively supports resettlement. Relevant accredited courses have been introduced and progression routes extended. Strategies to improve the use of individual learning plans have been very effective. HMP Low Newton now both has and makes use of an effective Skills for Life strategy. Following review, learner induction arrangements are now more effective. An appropriate strategy for the development of learning and skills is in place. It includes a clear vision and expectations of high standards that staff recognise and strive to achieve. However, the quality of some learning and skills provision is yet to be subject to appropriate assurance and improvement arrangements. In addition, not all data are effectively used to evaluate the impact of established and newly implemented initiatives for improvement. Poor session attendance rates have not been successfully addressed. Achievement on most courses is good, with many learners progressing quickly and demonstrating good skills development. However, a minority of prisoners in work do not have sufficient opportunity to develop useful employability skills or receive accreditation to support resettlement. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and is adequately used by the prison to secure improvements. However, some aspects of the associated action plan do not fully utilise quantitative targets to aid an evaluation of success. A small minority of the provision is not subject to a detailed self-assessment process. The prison uses stakeholder feedback well to improve the learning experience. It carefully manages its resources and has appropriately invested in improvements to accommodation and learning resources. Staffing levels are generally appropriate with effective cover arrangements for staff absence in most areas.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

Strengths

- high achievement rates on most courses in education, training and physical education
- good vocational skill development
- good standards of learners' work.

Areas for improvement

- frequent interruptions to learning sessions due to regime activities that slow individual progress.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

Strengths

- well planned and managed learning sessions and programmes
- good accommodation and resources
- particularly good use of individual learning plans to set measurable improvement targets for vocational, personal and employability skills
- much good support.

Areas for improvement

- insufficient opportunities for progression, particularly for prisoners with longer sentences.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

Strengths

- particularly effective management of the education provision to secure improvements
- good use of internal partnership working to develop the provision
- good safeguarding arrangements that secure and promote learners' safety
- well promoted equality of opportunity that effectively removes barriers to success
- good use of learner feedback to improve the provision.

Areas for improvement

- incomplete implementation of quality assurance and improvement arrangements
- insufficient use of data to evaluate fully the quality of all provision.

What does HMP Low Newton need to do to improve further?

- Improve learners' progress and work ethic by significantly reducing interruptions to learning sessions due to regime activities.
- Further enhance prisoners' employability on release through the introduction of sufficient and relevant progression opportunities.
- Improve the relevance and effectiveness of planning and monitoring by extending quality assurance and improvement arrangements to include all aspects of the provision.
- Better evaluate the quality of all learning and skills through the effective analysis and use of data to inform actions for improvement.

Record of Main Findings (RMF) – Young adult and adult prisons			
Prison Name:	HMP Low Newton	Inspection No	384729

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall
Approximate number of learners in training and work and education with or without qualification outcomes at the time of inspection	205
Overall effectiveness	2
Capacity to improve	2
A. Outcomes for learners	2
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	2
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3
A3. How safe do learners feel?	2
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	na
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	na
B. Quality of provision	2
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2
B3. How well do partnerships with employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2
C. Leadership and management	2
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	na
C3. How effectively does the prison promote the safeguarding of learners?	2
C4. How effectively does the prison actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2
C5. How effectively does the prison engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the prison use its available resources to secure value for money?	2

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