

Establishment	Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Altcourse
Type of establishment	Male adult and young offenders Category B local
Dates of inspection	18-22 January 2010
Establishment contact	Head of Learning and Skills Higher Lane, Fazakerley, Liverpool L9 7LH Tel: 0151 522 2119

This is a summary report of the inspection findings of the learning and skills provision at HMP Altcourse

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

<i>Common Inspection Framework (CIF)</i> aspects	Grade
Overall effectiveness	3
Capacity to improve	3
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	3

Overall effectiveness

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the prison's learning and skills provision is satisfactory. Learners' achievement of qualifications is good. Learners develop good employability and personal skills. Arrangements to safeguard learners are satisfactory; learners say that they feel safe. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, however, teaching strategies for education based on the accommodation wings need to be improved. Mentors are used well to support learning. The range of learning and skills activities is generally good and has improved since the last inspection. The opportunities for vulnerable prisoners to access a wider range of vocational programmes are insufficient to meet individual needs. The overall leadership and management of learning and skills are satisfactory although the planning of information advice and guidance lacks coherence. Arrangements for quality assurance are satisfactory. Insufficient use is made of data to inform the planning of the provision. The day-to-day management of education and training is very effective and the education provision meets learners' needs well. Education accommodation is not utilised sufficiently well to prevent over crowding. HMP Altcourse's promotion of equality and diversity is good.

Capacity to Improve

Grade: 3

The capacity to improve learning and skills is satisfactory. Achievement of qualifications for learners is good. Learners are developing good employability and personal skills. Attendance and punctuality are good and show improvement since the previous inspection; most offenders are engaged in learning and skills activities. Staff generally understand the self-assessment process well and contribute to the process. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, sufficiently evaluative and identifies many of the areas for improvement found at inspection. However, the resulting report does not include all the learning and skills activities taking place in the prison. Arrangements for the quality assurance of training are satisfactory. The analysis of data, an area for improvement at the previous inspection, remains insufficient to inform the planning of the provision. Since the previous inspection, the prison has significantly improved its links with a range of community groups, who work in the prison and help to broaden the learning experience for offenders. The use of individual learning plans are insufficiently focused on personalised target setting and recording learners' progress. Progress since the previous inspection is mostly satisfactory, although the prison has not yet remedied some areas for improvement.

Outcomes for learners

Grade: 2

Strengths

- high achievement in external qualifications
- good progress in learning and personal development

Areas for improvement

- no significant areas for improvement

Quality of provision

Grade: 2

Strengths

- good teaching training and coaching
- good range of provision to meet learners' needs
- very effective development and use of mentors to support learning
- good opportunities to improve literacy and numeracy in workshops

Areas for improvement

- narrow range of teaching strategies in prison wing-based education
- insufficiently personalised monitoring of learners' progress and learning targets

Key Strengths

- good actions to improve vocational training and work activities
- very effective strategies to engage offenders in purposeful activities
- good engagement with community groups to benefit learners
- good opportunities for staff development to improve the quality of teaching and learning

Key Areas for Improvement

- insufficiently developed communication links across all learning activities taking place in the prison
- insufficient information and guidance available for offenders within the prison
- insufficient analysis of data to inform planning
- over crowding in some learning and skills activities
- insufficient variety of work and vocational training for vulnerable prisoners

What HMP Altcourse needs to do to improve further?

- Develop an effective system to improve the collection and analysis of data from across the prison to inform the planning of learning and skills.
- Develop and improve the information advice and guidance service to ensure that all offenders are directed to the most appropriate activity to meet their needs promptly after their arrival.
- Further develop the variety of work opportunities and vocational training for vulnerable prisoners.
- Manage the accommodation of learning sessions to eradicate overcrowding in classes.
- Develop and improve the use of individual learning plans to include better monitoring of progress and more personalised target setting.