

HMP/YOI Hindley

Prison education standalone progress monitoring visit report

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Progress monitoring visit

Ofsted context and focus of visit

On 17 March 2020, all Ofsted routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of our phased return to routine inspections of education, skills and work activities in prisons and Young Offender Institutions (YOIs), Ofsted is carrying out progress monitoring visits. The visit was conducted by Ofsted alone without HMI Prisons. The visit was conducted on site. At the time of the visit, the establishment was at stage 3 of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Services' (HMPPS) recovery roadmap and had been at that stage for 11 weeks.

Progress monitoring visits aim to inform prisoners, employers and government on how establishments are meeting the education and skills needs of all prisoners during this period and how leaders are planning to reinstate a full education, skills and work curriculum. The focus of these visits is on the theme set out below. A progress judgement is made against the theme. That progress judgement will be one of the following: insufficient, reasonable or significant progress.

What progress are leaders making towards ensuring that staff teach a full curriculum and provide support to meet prisoners' needs, including the provision of remote learning?

Reasonable progress

At the start of the national restrictions in March 2020, leaders ceased all face-to-face learning and training in accordance with the requirements of HMPPS. Education staff were not allowed in the prison. Initially, leaders provided distraction packs for prisoners to complete in their cells. From September 2020, when the education provider returned to the prison, education and prison leaders worked collaboratively to ensure that prisoners received high-quality in-cell learning packs that mirrored their pre-COVID-19 curriculum.

Learning packs provide prisoners with opportunities to recap and consolidate previous learning. Packs become progressively more challenging to develop prisoners' higher-level knowledge. However, due to social-distancing restrictions, leaders have not delivered information and communication technology (ICT) in the curriculum, including the use of the Virtual Campus. Prisoners are frustrated that they cannot access ICT resources to enhance their learning.

Leaders and managers have a thorough understanding of the strengths, weaknesses and challenges of the new education, skills and work (ESW) curriculum. They monitor in-cell learning effectively. For example, they know that in-cell learning packs meet prisoners' needs because of the high completion rate and standard of prisoners' work. Leaders identify quickly when prisoners make slow progress. They put appropriate support in place to help prisoners who struggle to catch up on missed learning. However, too few prisoners are able to sit external examinations to

accredit the knowledge and/or skills they develop through in-cell learning. A few of the prison workshops do not offer qualifications to accredit the industry skills that prisoners learn.

Leaders and managers use external agencies effectively to enhance the curriculum. For example, the partnership with a literary writing company has resulted in the external publication of prisoners' creative stories. Staff send copies of these books to prisoners' families so that they can celebrate their successes.

Leaders have prioritised the small number of face-to-face learning opportunities in education for those prisoners who need to progress to the next stage of their learning or who have additional learning needs. The few prisoners who attend these sessions can explain the knowledge and skills that they have gained and how these will help them with future learning and/or employment. However, the numbers of prisoners in face-to-face activities are currently too low, partly due to the prison's stringent risk assessment process. Leaders recognise the constraints they face and have put forward plans to widen participation, such as mixing 'bubble' groups in functional skills lessons. However, leaders have yet to implement these initiatives.

Prisoners value the effective support that education, training and industry staff provide. Initially, prisoners received support through in-cell telephony. Staff now regularly visit the residential units.

Prisoners have a detailed plan that reflects their additional learning needs, as identified at induction. Staff review and amend these plans appropriately following course completion. Prisoners with support plans make better progress in education and training than those without. Staff do not use the outcomes of additional needs assessments to support prisoners who are involved in work on the residential units.

Leaders have developed a clear recovery plan to reopen the full ESW curriculum. This includes working with employers to support prisoners into suitable employment upon release. Leaders have continued to ensure that staff receive appropriate training to support in-cell learning and the return to the ESW offer.

Prisoners can access a wide variety of resources that support their in-cell learning, such as dictionaries and calculators. Packs contain the resources they need to complete learning to a high standard. Those with additional learning needs receive specific resources. For example, prisoners with dyslexia receive coloured paper.

Staff assess prisoners' work on a timely basis. Their feedback to prisoners is helpful and highlights clearly what the prisoner has done well and how they can improve their work. Prisoners revisit their learning to correct any mistakes. Prisoners write questions for their tutors in the packs if they need further support. Tutors provide detailed responses that further develop prisoners' understanding.

Following their timely induction, prisoners agree skills action plans that are based on an accurate assessment of their starting points. When prisoners have completed an education or training programme, they receive another information, advice and

guidance interview to determine their next steps. Prisoners find this beneficial in order to consider further their future options. However, prisoners who do not attend education or training sessions do not receive sufficient ongoing information about education and training opportunities. Prisoners are unaware of who the education orderlies are on the units.

Recommendations

- Leaders must ensure that they increase significantly the number of prisoners who attend face-to-face education and training opportunities.
- Leaders must ensure that prisoners have access to ICT resources to help them develop digital skills and enhance their learning.
- Leaders must ensure that prisoners sit relevant external examinations on a timely basis to accredit the knowledge and/or skills they develop through in-cell learning or prison workshops.
- Leaders must ensure that prisoners can access information on the residential units regarding the available education and training opportunities, as well as adequate support for their additional learning needs.

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