

HMP Rye Hill

Prison education standalone progress monitoring visit report

Name of lead inspector: Steve Oliver-Watts, Ofsted Inspector

Visit dates: 3 and 4 August 2021

Address: HMP Rye Hill
Onley Park
Rugby
CV23 8SZ

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 2 of Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Services' (HMPPS) recovery roadmap and had been at that stage for two 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

During the national COVID-19 restrictions, leaders and managers had to reduce the education, skills and work provision available to prisoners, but ensured that those enrolled on courses at that time were immediately issued with in-cell learning packs. These included subjects such as English, mathematics, personal development, and health and safety.

Leaders and managers then moved rapidly to develop effective remote learning provision. They purchased media production equipment so that teachers could produce learning materials for broadcast on in-cell television. Teachers received training and, consequently, developed new skills in creating and delivering blended learning. Prisoners now benefit from well-planned face-to-face teaching, supported by high-quality workbooks and video presentations. Managers ensure that study packs are of a good quality. To date, almost 500 exam successes have been recorded over the COVID-19 pandemic period.

As the restrictions began to be lifted by HMPPS, managers rightly decided that the available learning and work opportunities should be shared fairly to benefit all prisoners. They introduced a two-shift schedule to provide prisoners with activities on a part-time basis, and implemented a programme to safely build up the numbers participating. By mid-June, almost all prisoners accessed a part-time work activity. A further 20% were enrolled on education courses, which they attend in addition to

their work sessions. At the time of the visit, very few prisoners were unemployed.

After providing induction via in-cell packs during the restrictions, managers restarted face-to-face information advice and guidance (IAG) services in October 2020. IAG staff are appropriately qualified and provide good guidance to help prisoners understand the education, skills and work activity options open to them. As a result, prisoners are allocated quickly to activities, prioritising the attendance to English and mathematics classes where appropriate.

Although managers have developed plans for implementing IAG reviews, a lack of staff capacity means that these are not currently offered. Therefore, prisoners who are completing courses are not always well informed about their possible next steps.

Managers quickly restarted face-to-face education classes when permitted, in early April 2021. Prisoners enjoy these sessions and attendance rates are very high. Tutors use starting points effectively as learners return to class, in particular to identify missed learning. In mathematics and English, learners retake diagnostic tests to check on what they have missed, and, in vocational subjects, tutors use trackers to ascertain where gaps have occurred in learning during periods of lockdown. They use this well to plan subsequent learning activities.

In class, prisoners work diligently and contribute to whole-class activities well. They value the supportive feedback that tutors provide both in class and when learning on the accommodation unit. Tutors encourage prisoners to reflect on the learning they have undertaken.

In industrial workshops, managers have created many new positions, such as quality checkers and team leaders. These roles increase work satisfaction and incentivise some prisoners to progress to more responsible roles. For example, in one workshop, a prisoner who is responsible for quality checking work on electrical products made use of his prior knowledge of electrical safety regulations.

Managers have implemented new strategies to provide learning support during lockdowns. Mentors in the residential units have attained support qualifications so that they can better help prisoners with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia. Staff have developed their understanding of prisoners' mental well-being through mental health awareness training. Significant numbers of prisoners have benefitted from interventions such as 'Pets as Therapy', a modified education curriculum, and peer support for those in crisis.

Prisoners with additional learning needs receive good support during induction. For example, those with dyslexia receive coloured overlays or larger print text. Where additional needs are identified, learning support plans record these and highlight useful suggestions to tutors regarding strategies for supporting learners in class. However, staff do not identify prisoners' learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) thoroughly enough because they rely too much on prisoners self-disclosing their needs at induction. Staff do not carry out a detailed LDD screening with new

prisoners. Leaders have ambitious plans in place to improve the identification and support for prisoners with LDD, but it is too early to judge the impact of these plans.

Prisoners do not currently have access to the Virtual Campus, although managers have advanced plans in place to rectify this. The small number of prisoners enrolled on distance-learning courses have received practical support from teachers to enable them to continue learning during the lockdown periods.

Recommendations

- Managers should quickly implement an effective screening of all prisoners' learning support needs at induction and ensure that this leads to appropriate support measures being put in place in all cases.
- Managers should ensure that the IAG service provides all prisoners with ongoing support and regular reviews of their learning plans to ensure that prisoners are on track towards fulfilling their career aspirations.
- Managers should swiftly implement their plans to reopen the virtual campus facility as soon as possible.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021