

HMP Channings Wood

Inspection date

6 July 2007

Inspection number

302753

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Preparation for life and work

Description of the provider

1. HM Prison Channings Wood is a Category C training prison for convicted adult male offenders with an operational capacity of 667. At the time of the inspection there were 656 men in the prison of whom 10% were from black and minority ethnic groups and 5.2% were foreign national offenders. The prison has a unit for 160 vulnerable offenders. It also has 65 offenders in its therapeutic community. The length of stay varies from three months to life with an average stay of 155 days.
2. Education classes are offered in the education department and in training workshops throughout the prison. The prison offers 142 education and training places. In addition, around 100 offenders are currently undertaking part-time vocational training alongside their work. Subjects include skills for life, vocational training and social and life skills. Some distance learning is available. Classes run every weekday morning and afternoon and some recreational classes are offered at weekends. Most men attend education and training on a full-time basis. Classrooms adjacent to each production workshop are used for skills for life training and support. Offenders are released from work to attend small group or individual teaching sessions. All offenders work towards certificates in food hygiene, health and safety and manual handling during their induction to the prison. The prison's physical education (PE) department offers full- and part-time courses during the day and non-accredited recreational PE in the evenings.
3. Provision is divided into three separate units each provided by a different contractor. Tribal Hubs delivers unit one which includes initial screening, induction, individual learning planning and information, advice and guidance. Strobe College has a budget of 22,100 teaching hours and delivers unit two which includes foundation programmes education, information and communications technology (ICT) and vocational training. Action for Employment (A4E) has a contract for 6430 teaching hours and delivers unit three, social and life skills. The head of reducing re-offending has overall responsibility for learning and skills in the prison. In the absence of the prison's head of learning and skills, the education department is currently managed by the learning and skills co-ordinator. Each contractor employs its own team of full- and part-time tutors. Each team is managed by a team leader, reporting to a group manager from their own organisation, and to the learning and skills co-ordinator. The library is run by Devon Library Service. A full-time librarian is responsible for library provision at the prison, supported by a library assistant, a prison library officer and three orderlies.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision		Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve		Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards		Good: Grade 2
Employability training	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
Personal development and social integration	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision		Good: Grade 2
Employability training	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
Personal development and social integration	Contributory grade:	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management		Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3	

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. More specifically, the quality of provision in employability training and literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is good, as is provision in personal development and social integration. Leadership and management are good. The prison's approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

5. The prison has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements. The strategy for improving and developing learning and skills in the prison is well developed and clear to all staff. It is closely linked to the prison's reducing re-offending strategy. Although one key member of the learning and skills staff has been absent for approximately one year, and significant disruption has been caused by new arrangements for the provision of education and training, significant improvements have been made in the opportunities provided to offenders for learning and accredited training. Further opportunities for accredited training have been identified and plans are well advanced to implement them.
6. The self-assessment process is effective. It links well with the strategic aims for learning and skills. Learning and skills staff fully understand the significance of self-assessment and contribute effectively to the judgements made. Self-assessment is used well to evaluate and improve the provision. The most recent self-assessment report is the first one produced since 2005. It brings together a collection of prison and provider self-assessments. It does not contain a self-assessment of the overall leadership and management of the prison's learning and skills. However, the overall report is thorough and sufficiently critical and identifies most of the key strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. The prison has now introduced an effective standardised monthly reporting procedure to the quality improvement group to ensure continuous monitoring of the provision.

Key strengths

- Good attendance and achievement
- Very effective development and application of skills
- Good teaching and learning
- Wide range of programmes and activities to meet learners' needs
- Strong leadership of learning and skills clearly focused on reducing re-offending
- Effective operational management of learning and skills provision

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient education and training places to meet the needs of all offenders
- Poor internal verification procedures in vocational areas
- Insufficiently focused targets to develop individual learning
- Low numbers in some accredited training

Main findings

Employability training

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

7. Retention and achievement rates are high. For example, in hospitality and catering, 80% of learners have achieved their national vocational qualifications (NVQs), with the rest still in learning. The construction safety certificate has an achievement rate of over 87% and more than 94% of learners who follow the lift truck driving course achieve their qualification. The achievement rates on short courses such as basic food hygiene, manual handling and first aid at work, are all very high at over 90%. Achievement rates for physical education courses are also high at around 89%.
8. Many learners produce good standards of work. For example, one group of vulnerable offenders were confidently working on business plans to enable them to start self-employment on release. Other learners who are taking courses in industrial cleaning demonstrate high levels of knowledge and some have gained qualifications to enable them to be assessors in this area.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

9. Most teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and carefully structured in line with individual learners' needs. Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic. Classes are well focused. Working relationships between teachers and learners is excellent and good use is made of humour in lessons to motivate and engage learners. The range of vocational programmes is good. Courses are aimed at improving an offender's likelihood of gaining employment on release. Good use is made of local and national labour market information and other sources to review and amend the curriculum.
10. During their induction to the prison all offenders take short courses in health and safety, basic food hygiene and manual handling. Many learners gain the construction safety certificate which is essential to obtain employment on building sites. For those wishing to start their own businesses the prison offers a course which includes elements such as how to run a successful business, essential ICT skills and marketing. Accredited training in forklift truck driving and painting and decorating is also available. Offenders who work as orderlies across the prison work towards a national vocational qualification at level two in customer care. Those who are employed in workshops such as the laundry, the wood mill, wood processing and tailoring can work towards a generic NVQ qualification at level two in performing manufacturing operations. However, few learners are taking this qualification, ranging from around 30% in the tailoring workshop to 10% in the wood mill. No learners are working towards this qualification in the laundry.
11. Support for learners is satisfactory. They receive appropriate information about the courses before starting. Additional literacy and numeracy needs are identified during induction and flexible support is provided in the training workshops. Teachers are supportive to learners in lessons. For example, in one lesson the teacher dealt very patiently and sensitively with a learner with particular personal difficulties to motivate him to continue with the course.

12. Targets on many individual learning plans are not sufficiently detailed and many do not have planned completion dates. Many targets focus only on completion of a qualification and do not recognise the individual needs of learners. Targets such as improve skills, for example, do not help learners achieve a particular learning goal. Few plans identify the need for a learner to improve his personal and work related skills such as building self-confidence or working as part of a team. The prison and its subcontractors have identified the need to improve target-setting and the format of the individual learning plan is currently being reviewed.
13. Arrangements for the internal verification of vocational courses are poor. Internal verification is carried out by one of the subcontracted providers and is currently based solely on the completed portfolio. The process sometimes takes up to two months to complete and some learners will have left the prison by this time. No sampling plan for internal verification is in place. The internal verifier does not observe assessments to ensure that they are being carried out appropriately and there are no standardisation meetings to verify standards.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

14. Overall achievements and standards are good. Achievement and retention for literacy and numeracy programmes are good at 85% and 94% respectively in the current year. Of those learners who completed their programmes, 93% achieved a qualification. No qualifications have been achieved in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and accreditation arrangements with the awarding boards to enable this have not been finalised. However, ESOL learners greatly improve their speaking and listening skills and gain an understanding of national customs and social etiquette.
15. Retention on key skills programmes is low and this has reduced success rates. For example, from September 2006 to June 2007 of 31 starters, seven learners left early and a further nine were transferred before completing their programme. During the past 12 months only 13 of 83 learners starting the programme achieved their full qualification. A further 30 learners achieved a part qualification. Learners display good standards of work in their key skills portfolios. They research their work well and make good use of computing skills for word processing and presentation of data in their portfolios.
16. Learners enjoy being in classes and are well motivated to improve their skills and to achieve. Many learners gain in self-confidence and derive satisfaction through achieving.
17. Attendance is satisfactory and routinely monitored. However, attendance in some outreach sessions is often prevented by regime constraints such as attending healthcare or the pressure of work in some workshops.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

18. Teaching and learning are good. Learning sessions are managed well and tutors provide good support, guidance and encouragement to individual learners during lessons. Tutors prepare learning sessions well. Detailed schemes of work and lesson plans are used effectively to guide learners' progress towards course completion. Most groups are

comprised of learners with a range of skills, experience and aspirations and, in the better sessions, tutors prepare appropriate activities to meet their needs. Some good planning of lessons incorporates learning within the context of topics of particular relevance to learners. For example, in a numeracy session, good learning took place as learners were set tasks relating to a do-it-yourself project. Learners enjoyed the challenge and gained new skills to calculate areas and costs. In the better lessons staff work well to ensure learning and understanding takes place.

19. Tutors monitor thoroughly learners' progress towards completing course elements, providing a clear record of progress for all relevant parties. Individual learning plans, however, do not contain sufficiently detailed and individualised targets to guide learning. Many learning goals are too vague to be of use in recognising and recording performance and achievement. Progress is evaluated against completion of course elements rather than personalised goals and targets. In some sessions, insufficient planning was made to support individual learning and recorded learning outcomes were the same for all learners.
20. Generally resources to support learning are adequate to meet needs. Accommodation is good, including classrooms adjacent to workshops. Learning materials and books are of good quality and appropriate to needs. However, the use of information learning technology in lessons is not routine although classrooms, including those adjacent to workshops, are equipped with computers. Learning materials in the library provide a satisfactory range of books, audio tapes and CDs to support learners with low literacy and numeracy skills and foreign national offenders.
21. Arrangements for induction and initial assessment of skills and diagnostic testing of new offenders are satisfactory. Screening arrangements for identifying and providing ESOL support, for example, are well managed and effective. However, some learners are not provided with sufficient information on learning opportunities and realistic progression routes, such as employment opportunities on release. Recommendations for learning are linked to sentence plans, but there is no recording of this link on individual learning plans.
22. The range of programmes for literacy, numeracy and ESOL meet learners' needs. Courses are provided at all levels and adequate support is provided for those at pre-entry level. Managers have introduced strategies to widen participation in learning. Classes to support literacy and numeracy skills and key skills are running successfully in many of the prison's work and activities areas. Literacy and numeracy classes, however, are not available for offenders in the segregation unit, where they may remain for a week or more. Weekend drop-in sessions are provided in classrooms adjacent to the residential wings from October to April. Voluntary attendance at these sessions has, however, been low and resources have been redirected into increasing the number of support sessions during the week in the workshops. A scheme where peer mentors help learners improve their reading and writing skills has been recently established. To date five mentors have been trained, but few learners have been enrolled on to the scheme.

Personal development and social integration

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

23. Achievement is good. In 2006-07, approximately 96% of learners successfully completed a course for fathers in prison. The achievement rate on the creative writing course is

100%. Two learners have achieved a level 4 qualification with distinction in ESOL. Nearly all learners achieve some components of their awards and those who fail to complete generally do so because of transfer or early release. Retention and punctuality are good. Portfolios and other written work are of a high standard and the quality of debate and discussion in classrooms is good. Learners develop their abilities in self-expression and group working. Learners on the progression award show a high level of analytical awareness and some of the project work is outstanding. Learners on the parenting skills course learned how to work, play and engage with their children and maintain parenting relationships while inside prison. Resettlement courses provide practical information about career prospects and enable learners to develop jobsearch and curriculum vitae writing skills.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

24. Teaching and learning are very good. The standard of all lessons was judged to be satisfactory or better and there are well organised schemes of work and lesson plans. Lessons are well planned with a mixture of activities which engage and motivate all learners. Learning resources are satisfactory and staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Although a prison magazine is produced, there is not enough appropriate computer hardware available for those learners involved. Work is underway to secure funding to rectify this. Teachers and learners demonstrate mutual respect and the lessons are well managed. Teachers promote good discussion.
25. The overall curriculum meets learners' needs. A variety of courses are provided to develop learners' personal skills. Learners develop self-confidence and increase their self-esteem. The courses include family relationships and developing parenting skills alongside research skills and resettlement. Music and yoga courses are available at the weekend although insufficient staff are available to cover absence for these courses. Some good opportunities exist for progression within and across courses. Provision is available from entry level to level three depending on which course is offered. Staff carry out good differentiation of activities to ensure less able learners are supported. Management of the provision is responsive to learners' needs and there are examples of changes which have been implemented at the request of the learner. There is a clear focus within the physical education provision on developing personal and social skills. The gateway course identifies offenders with mental health problems and encourages them to join in physical education related activities which include working with a group of young people with learning difficulties from outside the prison.
26. Support for learners in the classroom is good with adequate provision of literacy and numeracy support. Initial assessment for inclusion on the courses offered is thorough and all potential learners are interviewed for the courses to ensure their suitability and understanding of the content of the course.
27. The use of individual learning plans varies across these programmes. Some new plans have been developed which, in most cases, enable learners to reflect on what they have gained personally from the lessons. However, some of these describe activities rather than reviewing learning. This has been identified as a problem and is being managed appropriately. Targets are insufficiently detailed or individualised. They often simply identify completion of a course or a unit within a course as the desired outcome. Progress is well recorded. Most learners receive critical supportive feedback on their learning. They

have a clear idea of their achievement to date and what remains to be completed. Celebration of learners' achievements is presented graphically in displays on the walls of the education department and there are many examples of learners' work on display.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

28. The leadership of learning and skills is strong with a clear focus on reducing re-offending. Strategic planning of learning and skills is good. Managers set a clear direction and staff have a clear understanding of how the planning aims to increase the range of accredited learning and training opportunities in the prison. Plans are quickly and effectively implemented. Strategies for developing skills for life support are incorporated into the prison's learning and skills business plan and the reducing re-offending strategy. However, no specific guidance is provided to clearly identify these strategies, development plans and targets and timescales are not clearly defined.
29. Learning and skills are well integrated with the prison regime. Resources are deployed effectively. For example, any potentially unused hours due to staff leave are quickly identified and used to benefit offenders by offering short, flexible courses when a workshop has to be temporarily closed. Plans are clearly linked to offenders' employment needs. Good use is made of local and national labour market information to guide the choice of training offered. There has been a good development of opportunities for accredited learning and training though in some areas, numbers taking up opportunities for accreditation are low.
30. The operational management of the learning and skills provision is very effective. Planning and day-to-day management are good. Roles and responsibilities are clear and understood by all. Communication is good. Formal meetings are regular and well structured. These meetings are used well to review and improve provision. Informal communication is good. Staff are supported well by managers. They are regularly consulted and suggestions made by staff and offenders are acted upon where appropriate. Working relationships between individual providers of education and training and the prison are particularly good and productive. Managers are flexible and responsive in their approach to requests for particular courses from learners. Teaching staff are very well qualified and are well supported in continuous professional development.
31. The curriculum is regularly and effectively evaluated and reviewed to ensure it meets offenders' needs. The regular and well attended quality improvement group meetings are used effectively to monitor and self-assess performance and to drive continuous improvement. While individual quality improvement arrangements differ slightly according to the provider, they are well established and effective. They include procedures to gather learner feedback, to observe and assess the quality of teaching and learning and to formally evaluate course provision. The prison has improved its systems to gather and use management information. While these are relatively new, they are being effectively used to monitor performance and improve provision. The prison has appropriate access to up to date data on participation in learning and skills, retention and achievement and can identify data by different groups such as vulnerable offenders.

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32. Management of information, advice and guidance (IAG) is satisfactory. Its focus is to meet offenders' needs within the prison and in preparation for release. Offenders receive a good service from advisers during their induction to the prison. Assessment, where required, is completed quickly and is followed up by an interview appointment. A resettlement needs analysis completed on induction provides a useful guide to offenders' abilities, work experience and preferred employment options. Reviews take place every three months until such time as an offender nears his release date when reviews are more closely linked with resettlement needs. There are effective links with key stakeholders such as Jobcentre Plus, Prison Service Plus, employment workers, and the Action for Employment resettlement tutor. Some prison staff do not fully understand the role of the IAG team. Insufficient information is shared to promote the interests of offenders effectively. Some of the offender records contain little relevant information to inform decision-making about, for example, offenders' choices of courses or levels of ability.
33. There are insufficient education and training places to meet the needs of all offenders in the prison. Regime monitoring information from the prison indicates that around 90-100 offenders are not routinely engaged in purposeful activity. However, any unemployment is not generally long term and the data often reflects inactivity due to completion of one type of course and movement on to the next. Very good use is made of resources. They are very well deployed to maximise their use. Plans are well advanced to increase work and training places through, for example a multi purpose workshops, portable appliance testing, recycling and warehousing courses.
34. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The prison has appropriate policies and complaints procedures for offenders which cover learning and skills. Data is satisfactorily monitored by age, disability and ethnicity. The prison has staff responsible for diversity, race equality and disability and there are offender representatives on appropriate working groups. Impact assessments are carried out to make judgements about access to learning, skills and work.
35. Working relationships between staff and offenders are generally effective. The prison has a fair pay structure that does not act as a disincentive to attending education and training. Access to those education and training activities which are offered in the prison is fair but the lack of places in learning and skills leads to over long waiting lists in some areas.
36. The prison holds a very diverse group of offenders including a large group of vulnerable offenders on sex offender treatment programmes, some of whom are older men, those on therapeutic programmes and mainstream offenders with a range of sentence lengths and needs. Access to a range of appropriate learning and skills programmes is satisfactory. No offender is prevented from attending a course unless this is due to risk.

What learners like:

- Good teaching staff – ‘brilliant teachers’
- Education and training – ‘learning something which will help me’
- Support they receive from staff
- Learning opportunities – ‘I like learning because it gets my mind working’
- ‘The prison gives you lots of choices for learning’
- Personal development – ‘I’ve learnt how to think about things in a different way’
- Growth in self-confidence through learning – ‘I feel better about myself’
- The library

What learners think could improve:

- Number of places in learning and training – ‘there is not enough to do’
- Number of work places – ‘it’s difficult to get work’
- Co-ordination of resettlement arrangements – ‘there is not enough help towards resettlement’
- Ordering service for magazines in the library – ‘the magazines I order take a long time to arrive’