

HMP Woodhill

Inspection date

6 September 2007

Inspection number

302867

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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:

- Employability training
- Literacy, numeracy and ESOL
- Personal development and social integration

Description of the provider

1. HMP Woodhill is a high security core local prison, situated in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire. It opened in 1992 and was built without workshop provision. Over the last ten years it has increased from a population of 500 to 800. It has an operational capacity of 807, of whom up to 50 can be category A high security offenders. In addition it has a close supervision unit and a witness protection unit. In 2007 it was designated a national resource for category A female remand offenders, attending trials in courts nearby. Approximately 50% of offenders are category C. The prison receives approximately 130 new offenders a week. Currently there are no juveniles and 20% are young offenders. Approximately 11.5% of the offenders speak English as an additional language. Approximately a third of the population are remand offenders. Around 50% of the population stay is at the prison for less than two months and approximately 13% stay over eight months. At the time of inspection there were 807 male offenders.
2. In line with the learning and skills council's (LSC) offender learning and skills service (OLASS) contracting arrangements, Milton Keynes College (MKC) is responsible for providing an information, advice and guidance service and for education and some vocational training. Provision includes: literacy; numeracy; English for speakers of other languages (ESOL); key skills awards; information and communications technology (ICT); creative writing; social and life skills; art; music; drama; cookery; horticulture, and support for Open University study. Two other programmes designed to promote lifestyle changes are organised in conjunction with MKC. Most of the MKC provision is full time or substantial part time taking place each morning or afternoon, five days a week. MKC caters for up to 89 offenders at each half-day session. In addition, staff teach horticulture to the vulnerable offenders in their house unit and grounds, and visit the high security units and the prison healthcare centre.
3. Vocational/employability training takes place in the physical education (PE) department, prison main kitchen, waste management/recycling unit and young offenders' house unit grounds for horticulture. The chaplaincy and psychology teams offer 800 places a year on a wide range of approved courses to promote lifestyle changes and the accredited enhanced thinking skills course. Approximately 16% of offenders are involved with education or vocational training and 31% are employed. There are approximately 250 employment places of which about 120 are based in-house units, as cleaners, orderlies and serverly workers. Some offenders do similar work around the prison or work in the main kitchen or environmental areas. Approximately 532 offenders participate in some form of activity. The library is contracted to Milton Keynes council library services. A new post of head of offender development was created at the prison in June 2007 to include the management of the learning and skills provision.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision		Inadequate: Grade 4
Capacity to improve		Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards		Satisfactory: Grade 3
Employability training	Contributory grade:	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Contributory grade:	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Personal development and social integration	Contributory grade:	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision		Inadequate: Grade 4
Employability training	Contributory grade:	Inadequate: Grade 4
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Contributory grade:	Inadequate: Grade 4
Personal development and social integration	Contributory grade:	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management		Inadequate: Grade 4
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade:	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Inadequate: Grade 4

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is inadequate. Achievement and standards are satisfactory for employability training, literacy, numeracy and language support and personal development and social integration programmes. Overall the quality of provision is inadequate. However, personal development and social integration programmes are satisfactory. Leadership and management is inadequate. The prison's approach to equal opportunities and social inclusion is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The prison's overall capacity to improve is satisfactory. Learners who complete courses have high pass rates. There are clear business objectives for 2007-08, integrating learning and skills into reducing re-offending targets. Management of learning and skills changed in June 2007 and is now integrated with the role and responsibilities of a new post of head of offender development. The new governor appointed in 2006 and the much changed senior management team have a clear strategic direction and focus for developing vocational/employability training, particularly linked to labour shortages. The prison has re-focused its role on the needs of a local prison, within the constraints of its high security provision. The previous inspection was a full unannounced by HMIP in 2005 without specialist learning and skills inspectors. Following the low grades awarded, the prison prioritised for urgent and focused development the areas of safety, respect and resettlement over learning and has significantly improved these areas. However, the recent postponement until 2008 to start building new workshops for 180 offenders has delayed original plans to increase the number of places available in learning.
6. The recent self-assessment process is generally satisfactory. Self-assessment reports from the learning and skills areas across the prison correlate in general with inspection findings, although data were not used extensively to aid judgements. The PE self-assessment was particularly clear and evaluative with a related development plan. The self-assessments from the environmental services areas were clear and accurate. The leadership and management section is insufficiently evaluative. Following management changes the learning and skills managers are meeting formally to share good practice and increase cohesive working. Until a few months ago the learning and skills quality improvement group had not met for three years and some aspects of the quality assurance arrangements are incomplete.

Key strengths

- High pass rates for learners who complete courses
- Clear strategic direction for learning and skills
- Good development of external links and networking

Key areas for improvement

- Promotion of learning and skills
- Participation in accredited learning and skills provision
- Length and design of courses to meet the needs of different cohorts of learners
- Use of data and information to help in decision-making
- Some aspects of quality assurance

Main findings

Employability training

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. Learners completing accredited PE programmes achieve high pass rates. In the last year, 24 learners achieved a 100% pass rate for basic weights and introduction to fitness courses. Those who completed the level 1 and level 2 gym instructors' award and the level 2 treatment and management of sports injuries programme achieved pass rates of 94%, 100% and 100% respectively. However, only around 50% of learners complete the level 1 gym instructors' and the level 2 treatment and management of sports injuries courses.
8. Learners on garden parties develop good skills. Under the supervision of experienced instructors learners carry out relevant and realistic horticultural tasks using a range of manual and motorised equipment. They are enthusiastic in their approach to learning and enjoy working on projects to improve the prison grounds. They are well motivated and work effectively making good progress during learning sessions. In the last year, of the 14 learners who started on the education department's gardening course, eight learners completed by their planned end date achieving a total of 30 accredited modules between them.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

9. Good support is given to vocational programmes by external environmental organisations. Young offenders develop their skills with the help of a local charity responsible for maintaining the planted areas in Milton Keynes. Learners are working well to develop an area in the gardens for propagating oak trees, ready for planting out on land throughout the local community. Waste management and recycling programmes are well supported through a national environmental organisation. Learners are assessed against industrial standards, best practice is developed and criteria established for learners to gain employment on release.
10. Learners working towards a catering NVQ level 1 in the prison main kitchen work in a poor environment for both operational and training purposes. During use the kitchen floors are wet and slippery and a potential hazard. The classroom in use for theory teaching and testing is not fit for purpose and is also used as a locker room. Noise from the kitchen is intrusive and it is difficult for learners to concentrate during sessions.
11. Tutors do not have a sufficient awareness of the results of learners' initial literacy and numeracy assessments. Learners do not have individual learning plans or written challenging and achievable short-term targets or longer-term goals. Although PE staff are unaware of learners' literacy and numeracy needs, learners found during their course to have additional learning needs are given individual help to support them in completing their programmes. Learners in PE receive only one formal review during their time on programme. Kitchen staff do not access the prison data system that holds information on learners' initial assessments. They carry out a further initial assessment on each learner before starting the catering NVQ.
12. The prison has insufficient accredited qualifications for vocational programmes. Learners currently receiving training on waste management and prison operated grounds work

programmes are not currently working towards the achievement of a nationally recognised qualification. The industrial cleaning workshop although well equipped is not yet operational. However, work has started in assessing and identifying learners for key skills development in vocational areas. Two members of the catering staff are working towards their assessor awards and the kitchen manager is training as an internal verifier. Very few learners are working towards a catering NVQ at level 1.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Pass rates of learners completing literacy and numeracy programmes are high. Over 90% of learners who reach the end of their programme achieve their qualification.
14. Learners' progress, and their standard of work, is appropriate for the level of programmes they follow. Learners in pre-entry literacy classes spell simple words correctly. At level 1 and 2 learners respond perceptively to challenging texts. Numeracy learners complete worksheets of mathematical problems correctly. Although entry level ESOL learners develop a good understanding of the English alphabet, many have weak spoken English skills.
15. Completion rates are low. On some programmes few learners complete with many transferring out of, or being released from, the prison. Overall, under 50% of those attending literacy, numeracy and language classes in 2006-07 completed their programme.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

16. Much teaching and learning is satisfactory or better. In all classes engagement in learning is good. Learners, who often have little successful experience of classroom study, work consistently and productively for sustained periods. Working relationships between learners and tutors are good and tutors manage effectively the behaviour of younger learners.
17. Tutors provide good support and coaching for individual learners during classes. They are skilled at identifying learners' needs, responding rapidly to immediate demands while allowing sufficient time for sustained working with individuals when required. Planning for individual and group needs in classes is effective. Tutors routinely plan and prepare materials and activities to cater for learners with differing levels of skill and ability and adapt their teaching strategies accordingly. All learners have individual learning plans containing goals for them to work towards. Long-term goals are generally simple and appropriate, but short-term goals are often too narrowly focused on items from the adult skills for life core curriculum.
18. Accommodation for some classes in the education building is poor. Although recent improvements have been made some rooms are too noisy and are not large enough for learners to practice oral language in groups or pairs. The availability and use of ICT is poor. Most classrooms in the education building contain only one computer for learners. Insufficient suitable software is available for learners to improve their life skills.

19. The range of provision is narrow. Most language, literacy and numeracy programmes take between eight and 12 weeks to complete. This is too long for the length of stay of 50% of offenders at Woodhill. Provision is inflexible and it is difficult to combine work with study. There are no classes in the evenings or at weekends. Arrangements to provide literacy, numeracy and language support for learners in workshops or following vocational training are inadequate. Apart from the provision made for vulnerable learners, outreach into the residential blocks is poor. Although the prison plans to offer programmes that integrate skills for life learning with study of a subject only one such course is currently running.
20. ESOL provision is not sufficiently developed. Arrangements to identify learners with ESOL needs at induction to the prison are inadequate. No initial screening is carried out. Initial assessment tests of literacy and numeracy that most offenders complete do not adequately identify ESOL needs or levels. Referrals to ESOL classes rely on informal identification of need, but rarely highlight those offenders who are fluent in oral English but require ESOL study at higher levels. Staffing capacity for ESOL is very limited. Only one tutor has expertise and relevant qualifications in this area. The current offer of mixed level ESOL classes recruiting learners at all levels from entry level 1 to level 2 significantly inhibits development and practice of oral language skills.

Personal development and social integration

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

21. A high proportion of learners who complete their programme achieve a qualification. However, the number of learners who complete some courses is low, particularly on longer courses. For example, just 25% and 28% respectively of those who started music and art courses in the last 12 months finished them. However, for both subjects all of those who completed the course achieved a qualification. Social and life skills and catering learners performed better with 63% and 59% respectively of those starting a course in the last 12 months achieving a qualification.
22. On non-accredited behavioural programmes aimed at making lifestyle changes a high proportion of learners complete these courses. Courses include drug and alcohol awareness, a course on gun crime and one on safe driving. Attendance at these courses is generally good and most learners complete the requirements of the course.
23. Learners benefit from the opportunity to achieve key skills units while studying on a range of other courses. The requirements of the key skills units are related to the subject being studied. Since July 2007, 97 key skills units achieved by learners.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

24. Development of learners' social and personal skills is good. Many learners clearly demonstrate improved confidence and self-awareness on courses. For example, they talk confidently and openly about themselves and their concerns in front of others in drama and in drugs and alcohol awareness groups. Many have developed the confidence to contribute constructively to discussions and show they are learning to effectively listen and to understand and manage their own behaviours.

25. Learners have good opportunities to develop and demonstrate their skills through supporting others. A peer mentor group helps facilitate on approved behavioural courses, having successfully completed the courses themselves. One group of learners has made a significant contribution in developing and delivering a drug and alcohol awareness course for school children and young people in the community. Another group of learners work as mentors on a reading course supporting other offenders.
26. Accredited courses are provided in the education department for art, music, drama, cookery, money management and social and life skills. The prison also runs a range of behavioural courses in the therapy unit and on wings. Learners are able to attend a restorative justice programme in the chapel and can attend singing practice one evening each week.
27. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the better sessions tutors develop and manage well lively debate among learners. Some learning sessions are particularly effective with good interaction and pace to maintain learners' attention. This is particularly so in cookery. However, some teaching lacks pace and during discussions learners' contributions are not managed well.
28. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced. Classrooms are adequate and appropriately equipped. The training kitchen is spacious and well equipped. However, it does not have an appropriate theory teaching area. Classrooms on the wings and away from the education department do not have sufficient visual displays to aid learning but this does not overly distract from teaching and learning. Drama is run in a hall that is often used as a walk through for other offenders and staff.
29. Overall planning for and recording of learners' development is insufficient. The planning of individual learning within courses is satisfactory, although some learning plans do not have sufficient information about what learners' have achieved. Information, advice and guidance services have only just been introduced. Learners do not have an overall plan to identify their personal and social development needs and how the courses they attend will contribute to this. Some learners attending courses in the education department benefit from a monthly progress review and some effectively link development needs with the courses attended. There is insufficient recording of many of these new skills, however, especially on non-education department courses.
30. The education department has recognised that too many learners do not complete courses and has recently made changes to the cookery curriculum. Courses have been reduced to a week's duration and have dedicated classrooms, but it is too early to assess the full impact of these changes.

Leadership and management

Inadequate: Grade 4

31. The strategic direction and focus for new learning and skills developments is clear. Business objectives for 2007-08 are clear, integrating learning and skills into reducing re-offending targets. The management of learning and skills changed in June 2007 and is now integrated with the role and responsibilities of a new post of head of offender

development. The new governor appointed in 2006 and a much changed senior management team has a clear strategic direction and focus for developing vocational/employability training, particularly linked to labour shortages. The prison has refocused its role on the needs of a local prison, within the constraints of its high security status. Following the particularly low grades awarded by HMIP at the previous inspection, the prison prioritised the areas of safety, respect and resettlement over learning for urgent and focused development and has significantly improved these areas. However, the recent postponement until 2008 to start building new workshops for 180 offenders has delayed original plans for increasing numbers of activity places.

32. Development of external links and networking is good. Prison managers work well to contact external partners to enhance the range and quality of the learning and skills provision. Recent developments in the area of environmental services involved good support from two large external organisations. Milton Keynes Parks department is involved with the development of horticulture skills for young offenders. The new waste management and recycling work is gradually being expanded with support from a national waste management company. Both areas have plans to develop jobs on release-on-temporary-licence (ROTL) and on-release with the aim of reducing re-offending. St Giles Trust charity is now contracted to offer information, advice and guidance training to offenders with a view to them supporting their peers and jobs through ROTL and on-release. Networking with local schools and training providers is good. The Re-focus group and the Prince's Trust involve offenders in their visits to the prison with the aim of reducing offending by young people.
33. Promotion of learning and skills to offenders is ineffective. Education staff have held various promotional activities over the past year to little effect. There are no offender and staff learning and skills representatives, although an information room on each house unit has recently opened. Information, advice and guidance services to help offenders decide which activities best suit their plans have only recently started after intensive research and preparation by MKC. Over the past six months there have been approximately 130 new inductions each week. Learning and skills induction processes are ineffective, the provision is inflexible and the reinforcement of participation is poorly co-ordinated. Despite the results of offenders' literacy and numeracy initial assessments being put onto the prison-wide computer system, these are not systematically used by staff and not all offenders take the tests. Allocations processes for education, vocational training, work and other activity places are poorly co-ordinated. However, improvements in performance monitoring and reporting by allocations officers have identified greater numbers of offenders going to activities from house units.
34. Participation in learning and skills is insufficient. Insufficient places are available in learning and skills and many of these are not filled. There are no waiting lists for education or vocational training places and work reserve lists are very short. There are 89 education and 40 vocational training places at each half-day session, which is 16% of the total population of 807. Attendance is mostly full time or substantial part time and this restricts the number of offenders who can participate. The provision is inflexible and difficult to combine with work or other activities. There is no evening or weekend education provision. There are approximately 250 places in prison work for the total population. Most work, about 120 places, is on the house units in cleaning, food serveries, painting and orderlies without accreditation for skills learnt. There are about 80 similar

jobs around the prison. The library is only open on week days in the daytime and it is under used. There is insufficient book stock and very few alternative reading materials.

35. Insufficient use is made of a wide range of data and information collected on learning and skills and related areas. Learning and skills staff across the prison are not effectively informed about their learners' literacy and numeracy abilities following initial assessments. Insufficient analysis takes place of reasons for learners not completing courses to identify actions that could be taken to improve the efficient use of places. Applications for learning and skills and work places are low and have not been sufficiently investigated. Allocations to courses are not analysed by house unit or category of offender. Data has not been sufficiently used to inform judgements in the self-assessment reports.
36. Some aspects of the quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. Learning and skills areas outside the OLASS contract provision do not use teaching and learning observations to share good practice, inform staff development needs and appraisals. Learner and staff feedback is not used extensively across all areas to inform improvements. Course review processes are not consistent and insufficient use is made of data. The prison does not have an overall quality assurance policy for its learning and skills activities. The quality improvement group was recently reformed after three years of absence. It has terms of reference and attendance at meetings is good. The self-assessment process is focused on each learning and skills area presenting a self-assessment report. Subjects such as catering and horticulture, which are offered in separate areas, are not cohesively evaluated. The draft leadership and management overview is informative, but insufficiently evaluative for focused action-planning.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

37. Safeguarding is a high priority. Safety and respect have been high priority topics since the 2005 HMIP inspection and there are significant improvements in both areas, directly benefiting learners. The recently installed internal security fencing provides new safe environments for vulnerable offenders and young offenders learn horticultural skills and work in the grounds surrounding their house blocks. The new partnerships with external environment organisations enable learners to make a positive contribution to the local community. In addition to supporting many different faiths, chaplaincy staff run a restorative justice programme for learners. The poor environment in the main prison kitchen is an area of concern for both health and safety reasons and is not a good learning facility.
38. Good attention is given to the needs of vulnerable and elderly learners. Two newly introduced offender forums for those with a disability and the vulnerable and elderly provide good opportunities to raise issues that affect them in their access to a range of services in the prison including education and training. A disability committee recently introduced for managers and staff provide opportunities to discuss and develop action plans to deal with the issues raised at the forums. The recent modification of in-cell equipment and the acquisition of mobile ramps are clearly a benefit to offenders. However, the implementation of some of these improvements is slow.
39. The prison's approach to equality and diversity is satisfactory. The prison has a satisfactory race and equality statement for staff, visitors and offenders, an equality and

diversity policy for staff and a well written and presented disability policy. Carefully selected and recently appointed offender communication orderlies provide a range of information and guidance to vulnerable offenders that include the availability of learning and skills activities.

40. All offenders have access to PE sessions. Offenders unable to attend the daily sessions due to work commitments have good access to evening and weekend sessions. The well planned PE timetable also provides opportunities for vulnerable offenders, medical referrals and remedial offenders to benefit from these sessions. Access to education department courses and programmes is satisfactory. However, inadequate equipment, insufficient time to use computers and DVD equipment, and the poor access arrangements of visiting tutors slows the progress of learners following Open University courses.

What learners like:

- Gaining a new understanding
- 'If you say something the teacher takes notice'
- The working relationships with tutors
- 'Waste management was really useful in teaching me about recycling'
- 'The class is helping me to understand words I didn't know before and to pronounce them properly'

What learners think could improve:

- 'Not much variety of vocational training'
- 'The ICT equipment isn't powerful enough to do my Open University course'
- 'I want to do full-time art but can't'