

HMP Drake Hall

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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 programmes:
 - Employability training
 - Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
 - Personal development and social integration

Description of the provider

1. HMP Drake Hall (the prison) is a semi-open prison for women. At the time of the inspection the prison held 292 prisoners of whom, five per cent are young offenders, 30% are foreign nationals and approximately 57% are White British or Irish. Some 26% of offenders have literacy skills at entry level and 39% are at Level 1. Prisoners' numeracy skills needs are weaker, with over 60% having skills at entry Level 3 and below.
2. Most prisoners are released from this prison. The number of short-stay prisoners has increased recently, with about 23% staying less than one month and 79% leaving within six months. The prison has a number of new buildings, which include the kitchens and library.
3. The head of learning and skills is responsible for the learning and skills provision, physical education (PE), vocational training, health promotion and library services. Learners have access to the learning and skills provision in the adult learning centre (ALC), and through distance learning, vocational training in the workshops, through work activities, and when released on a temporary licence to attend college, university, community projects or employment activities. A learning and skills manager oversees the ALC, which is contracted to City College Manchester (the college). The ALC has 70 available places, in the morning and afternoon, five days a week. Learners attend part-time for up to five sessions a week. Courses in the ALC include information and communications technology (ICT), business administration, literacy, numeracy and ESOL, key skills, driving theory, personal and social development and art. In addition to literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses, learning programmes are offered on a six week rotational basis, some leading to progression awards. The college offers full-time vocational training in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Other providers include Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent College and the Training Partnership. Both the 'Women in Prison' charity and the Prisoners Education Trust support distance learning. One hundred and eighteen learners are enrolled on employability training, 77 are enrolled on literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes and 47 are enrolled on personal development and social integration programmes. Carter and Carter provides information, advice and guidance. Staffordshire County Council Libraries runs the library at the prison. Learndirect is not available in the prison.
4. The prison provides both recreational and vocational training in PE. Some 35 prisoners work in the kitchens. In the workshops, there are 154 places providing employment. Vocational training is offered in horticulture, catering, performing manufacturing operations, lift truck, retail but not in industrial cleaning. At the time of the inspection, over 30 prisoners were released on temporary licence on outworking schemes including both voluntary and paid work opportunities.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are good in employability and in personal development and social integration and are satisfactory in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. The quality of provision is good in employability and in personal development and social integration and is satisfactory in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Leadership and management of the provision and equality of opportunity are satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. The prison has demonstrated that it is in a satisfactory position to make improvements. The prison's commitment to improving the provision for learning and skills is good. Although it is too early to see the impact, appropriate changes have recently been made to ensure better communications across the provision. Since the previous inspection the prison has worked well to further increase the range of both accredited and non-accredited provision. However, there is a lack of clear strategic direction to ensure this provision is appropriate to meet the needs of all learners. Achievements of individual learning goals on many courses are good and most learners enjoy their studies. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Appropriate action has been taken to address most of the weaknesses from the previous inspection and modern facilities for hairdressing and beauty therapy are now in place. The prison has not fully addressed the use of data to analyse performance and set targets for improvement. This was a weakness at the previous inspection. The quality improvement group meets regularly and although the group is generally well supported, attendance is sometimes poor. There is insufficient follow-up of action points or issues identified at previous meetings.
7. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and there has been appropriate input from learners, staff and others involved in learning and skills. Each training provider and the prison produces separate reports. The prison self-assessment report does not include a summary of the provision across the prison or an overview of the management of learning and skills. The self-assessment reports are generally accurate and sufficiently judgemental. Inspectors agree with many of the strengths and areas for improvement identified in the reports. Most staff have an adequate understanding of the key areas for development and can clearly identify its importance in helping continuous improvement. The reports and action plan are shared with the senior management team and the governor takes a keen interest in supporting learning and skills.

Key strengths

- The good achievement across the provision
- Good support for learning and development

- Particularly successful promotion of healthy living
- Broad range of provision and enrichment activities
- Good use of partnerships to improve the provision

Key areas for improvement

- The poor attendance in lessons
- The weak target-setting to guide learners' development
- The unclear strategy to meet the needs of all learners
- The insufficient use of data for quality improvement and to promote equality of access

Main findings

Employability training

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

8. Achievement and standards are good. Learners on PE courses make good progress towards their learning goals and success rates are high. Learners build up qualifications incrementally starting with basic Level 1 programmes up to Level 3. On beauty, customer service and business management courses unit achievement is good. Unit achievement on computer literacy and health and safety courses however is low.
9. Skill development is good. Learners who have no experience quickly develop their skills and expertise. Learners in hairdressing work professionally and perform services in commercially acceptable times. In most workplaces, learners develop good skills and some work towards qualifications.
10. Attendance on some courses is erratic. In the lessons observed, learners were late for the start of the lesson and a number left the sessions early to attend other appointments.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

11. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are planned well to meet individual needs. In the best classes, individual learning aims are agreed between the teacher and learners at the beginning of each session. Learners are clear what they have to achieve each session and the further steps they need to take. In these lessons, schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed and clear. In other sessions, lesson plans and schemes of work have an insufficient range of learning activities and lesson plans are no more than a list of competencies and fail to differentiate for the range of learners' skills and abilities.
12. Individual learning plans are used well in hairdressing and clearly set out learning aims and short term targets are precise and regularly reviewed. In other areas, Individual learning plans are not always specific and do not sufficiently support learning. Target-setting is weak and does not help to guide the learner through their programme.
13. Physical resources are good. Classrooms are bright and well furnished and provide a good learning environment. The hairdressing and beauty therapy facilities are modern. Staff in the ALC are all qualified teachers and some prison officer instructors are working towards assessor qualifications. Learning resources are satisfactory although there is insufficient interactive equipment in ICT to support teaching and learning and some software is out of date. In hairdressing, some equipment to dress and style African-Caribbean hair is inadequate.
14. Prisoners can access a wide range of employability programmes. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, learners can select from a range of programmes at Levels 1 and 2. In PE, learners can also access a range of suitable short courses. Learners have the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh bronze and silver award. Most work activities include an opportunity to take an NVQ, but uptake is low. A new, popular, business start-up programme has been introduced recently which provides learners with realistic advice and help in planning and developing their business ideas.

15. Employer links are well developed. Towards the end of their time at Drake Hall, learners can access paid employment in a number of companies. Some learners, who have achieved qualifications and are supported by these companies, have gained full-time employment on release, often at branches near to their homes.
16. Access to courses during the core day for some learners in work is insufficient. Some learners can only access two sessions each week while others can attend up to five. Arrangements to ensure learners nearing release can complete their learning plans are underdeveloped.
17. Induction processes are satisfactory. Learners have an induction to their work activity, PE and to learning and skills. During their PE induction learners undertake manual handling and health and safety internal qualifications.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

18. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. College data indicates that achievement on most literacy and numeracy programmes is good. At entry level numeracy, 84% of learners achieve their learning goals. This increases to 96% for learners at Level 1 and is 75% at Level 2. Eighty six per cent of learners achieve entry level literacy and over 75% of learners achieve literacy at Levels 1 and 2. Achievements on the ESOL programmes are low. Too many learners leave before they have completed their learning plan and the development of their speaking skills is slow.
19. Literacy and numeracy learners make satisfactory progress. They are pleased with the opportunity to improve their skills. Learners are attentive and motivated to learn. Learners' standards of work are satisfactory.
20. Attendance in many lessons is poor. Lessons are often disrupted by the late arrivals or by learners who need to attend appointments elsewhere. Sometimes other training sessions are programmed which clash with their lessons.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

21. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In better lessons, learners receive good individual support for their learning. Teachers have a calm, encouraging and patient approach and regularly check that learners are not experiencing difficulties. Learners quickly settle down to their learning. Teachers use a good range of learning activities and learning resources which engage learners in well structured lessons. This was a weakness at the previous inspection. In weaker lessons, teachers make insufficient use of learning activities which engage and challenge learners and sufficiently reinforce learning. In some lessons teachers make insufficient use of differentiated learning activities to meet the needs of all learners.

22. All learners receive an initial assessment and further diagnosis of their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers make good use of this information to set challenging targets to support individual learning in numeracy. Target-setting in literacy is satisfactory. In ESOL, targets consist of a common list of tasks to be completed and are insufficiently individualised or challenging. Access to specialist support for learners who are dyslexic is available through the college.
23. The resources are good. The classrooms are bright and welcoming. In literacy and numeracy classrooms a good range of relevant posters are displayed on classroom walls and helpful learning resources are easily accessible. Learners have some access to computers to help them with their work, although they are not networked. Teachers are well qualified and experienced.
24. The ESOL provision is underdeveloped. Learners have not completed an initial assessment of their ESOL needs. An ESOL indicator test has been introduced, but it is not yet clear how effective this will be. ESOL programmes do not sufficiently focus on learners' everyday needs in the prison. The range of learning resources to support ESOL classes is too narrow. Learning outcomes on some programmes are too broad.
25. The prison has insufficient activities to engage reluctant learners with significant literacy and numeracy needs. Sixty five per cent of learners have literacy skills at Level 1 and below. Learners' numeracy skills needs are weaker, with over 60% having skills at entry Level 3 and below. Informal learning opportunities, such as Storybook Mums and Toe by Toe, are not firmly established in the prison. Successful outreach working to embed literacy and numeracy into workshop activities, suspended in late 2006, has only recently been reinstated. Plans to ensure these reintroduced arrangements are effective are not yet clear. Learners are reallocated to other work activities before they have completed their learning programme.
26. Learners value the support teachers give them to help with their personal problems. Teachers work well to reduce the impact these problems can have on learning. Learner summary records, which include learners' long term targets, are insufficiently helpful for planning learning as the targets are too vague. Staff make insufficient reference to sentence planning information, initial assessment and education, training and employment needs linked to resettlement when assessing each learner's suitability for a learning programme. Not all learners are familiar with these summary records.

Personal development and social integration

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

27. The promotion of healthy living is particularly successful. Many learners significantly improve their levels of physical fitness, develop good habits in taking regular exercise and achieve appropriate targets in weight loss or weight gain. Many learners learn to lead exercise classes and work well with other learners coaching them in exercise and healthy living. A small number of learners have taken an external course on smoking cessation. They work well with other learners, mentoring and supporting them to give up smoking.

28. Achievements on many courses are good. In particular, over 85% of learners on the courses in money management, assertiveness, drug and alcohol awareness and those linked to family learning successfully complete their learning goal. Many learners develop good creative writing and craft skills. Most learners achieve well on the open and distance learning courses, and courses they attend at local colleges. Since 2002, pass rates for the 78 learners on Open University courses have been 83%. Learners attending the short, six-week courses successfully extend their practical understanding of subjects such as cookery and nutrition or explore ways they can support their children's development. Their development of personal and social skills includes increased self-belief and motivation, more sustained concentration on specific tasks and improved presentation skills. Achievements on courses on healthy living and women's health are satisfactory.
29. Attendance is erratic on many courses. Although many learners complete the programmes, too many learners do not attend for the full sessions. This often disrupts their learning, as well as that of their fellow learners.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

30. Learners receive good individual support for their learning and personal development. Tutors quickly gain a good understanding of learners' different ways of working and provide clear additional information and explanations. On the sports programme, qualified peer trainers are particularly skilled at encouraging new learners to participate in suitable gym activities.
31. Courses in personal development and social inclusion are planned effectively. Each course has appropriate schemes of work, with some good adaptations to meet individual needs. Learning sessions are managed well and include a good range of stimulating activities. Learners participate well in discussions and group work and support one another effectively when working on individual tasks.
32. Target-setting is not sufficiently detailed. Most individual learning plans list courses, activities or qualifications as targets. The learning objectives linked to the qualifications provide adequate learning information for learners on what they will achieve. However, few learning plans include personal and social development targets. Learners do not have the opportunity to discuss their personal development and identify the priority aspects to improve. Similarly, although many learners make significant progress, they do not receive sufficient specific feedback to help them recognise and remember their achievements.
33. Opportunities for enrichment activities are good. Prison and provider staff work very effectively with local partners to provide a good range of additional learning and development activities. Many of these activities make a very good contribution to the local community and promote social inclusion effectively. Links with a local school for children with learning difficulties and disabilities is particularly beneficial to learners. Other successful activities involve fund-raising and voluntary work. The overall offer of personal and social development programmes is broad, particularly at Levels 1 and 2. However, many of the short courses are only offered up to four times a year and take-up is low.

34. The few courses on topics such as motivation and assertiveness, that are more directly relevant to learners' resettlement needs, provide appropriate opportunities for learners to explore their own behaviour and attitude. However, there are insufficient links between the different aspects of the learning journey. Tutors and prison staff do not adequately share information to help them plan one, overall learning programme for each learner. Learners on distance learning programmes have inadequate access to the internet to support research activities, or communicate with their tutor or other learners. The induction to learning and skills and information on courses available is satisfactory.
35. Two peer mentors provide particularly effective support to help the women settle in the prison and how to apply for work or courses, or making complaints. They also provide a well managed support service for learners on open and distance learning courses.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

36. Leadership and management of learning and skills are satisfactory. The prison has introduced a broad range of provision to ensure the development of good employability skills for those who have access. Some prisoners are able to work in busy, realistic working environments and gain useful qualifications. A good range of accredited programmes are offered in such areas as horticulture, food preparation and cooking, PE and hairdressing and beauty therapy. Useful courses are also offered to prisoners to develop their driving skills and for those who wish to become self-employed upon release.
37. There is a strong commitment to improving the provision of learning and skills and providers work hard to develop courses as funding becomes available. The learning and skills strategy fails however to take account of the needs of all learners in the prison and does not identify a clear plan of implementation. Although the prison has made good use of a recent needs analysis to inform the learning and skills strategy, insufficient use has been made of the requirement of sentence plans, labour market information or the employment potential of learners. The skills for life strategy is underdeveloped and the accountabilities for the provision of information, advice and guidance are not clear.
38. The prison has developed good links with a broad range of employers and other agencies to help learners resettle into their communities when they leave. The prison makes good use of outside employers to improve employment opportunities. Strong links have been developed with support agencies and charities to help learners while in prison or on release. Some learners have worked hard to raise money for local and national charities and others benefit from working with young people with learning difficulties from a local school. The prison has established a strong working relationship with a local army base that has successfully employed several prisoners upon release. The prison has well developed plans to introduce a work related programme in industrial cleaning in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent College. This is aimed at securing jobs with the local county council. A particularly good number of learners are completing higher level courses through distance learning or the Open University. These learners are well supported by the prison and staff from City College Manchester.

39. The promotion of equality of opportunities is satisfactory. It is adequately promoted at induction although there is little reinforcement at learner reviews. There is a strong culture of mutual respect between learners and teachers. Learners are generally polite and courteous and their relationship with teaching staff is mostly good. An active prisoner focus group on diversity meet regularly to discuss any concerns or issues. Observations of teaching and learning and learner reviews do not adequately monitor the promotion of equality and diversity. Learners working in a few work areas have restricted access to classes in the ALC. The prison and the college have been slow to complete diversity training.
40. Quality improvement is satisfactory. The prison's and the college's self-assessment reports are broadly accurate and are adequately self-critical. The prison does not have a summary report to assess the overall quality of the provision. The quality improvement strategy is sound and clear processes are in place to assure the quality of provision. The prison makes good use of learner focus groups and feedback questionnaires to improve provision. Observations of teaching and learning are satisfactory and appropriate actions are taken to address poor teaching in the ALC. Regular course reviews are undertaken and appropriately recorded. Assessments and verification are satisfactory and are clearly planned and recorded. Attendance by some members at the quarterly quality improvement group (QIG) meetings is poor and there is insufficient follow-up of action points or issues identified at previous meetings.
41. The prison and the providers have few opportunities to share best practice. The prison has recognised the importance of better communications across the provision and has recently introduced curriculum strand meetings to give staff the opportunities to be more fully involved in curriculum development and quality improvement. It is too early to see the impact of this initiative.
42. The prison makes insufficient use of data to set targets to improve performance. Staff are not using data adequately to monitor and review trends in participation, retention and achievements. Equality data is collected but mainly used for contract compliance. The prison makes insufficient use of data to monitor or improve the performance of different groups of learners. The prison is in the process of developing a comprehensive management information system to improve this, however.
43. The management of attendance in the ALC and learning and skills is weak. There is insufficient attention given to work allocations and inadequate information is used to fully inform the process. Insufficient attention is given to individual learners needs and waiting lists are not kept to ensure a fair and equitable approach. Attendance at classes in the ALC is sometimes low and classes are often disrupted by learners who are called up to other areas. Insufficient checks are made of these learners to ensure they return to their classes promptly.

What learners like:

- 'The help I have had to unscramble my brain'
- Learning interesting and useful skills
- Help given at Signpost
- The healthy fitness programme — 'I'm a different person'
- Gaining a sense of achievement and purpose through training in the gym
- 'Education gave me the inspiration I needed to get my life back'
- 'Tutors are good — very helpful'

What learners think could improve:

- Insufficient qualifications above Level 2
- More opportunities to attend classes
- The slow response to requests/applications for distance learning
- Offer full-time education — 'so I can finish my course before I am released'
- 'It's difficult to find out what courses are on offer and where'
- 'There is nothing to do at weekends'
- 'We want parity in pay'