

HMP and YOI Chelmsford

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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 ESOL
 - personal development and social integration

Description of the provider

1. HMP and YOI Chelmsford (the prison) is a category B prison for men, local and young offender prison, in the centre of Chelmsford, Essex. The prison has an operational capacity of 695 for remand, un-sentenced, and sentenced offenders. New buildings opened in January 2007 and increased the capacity by 120 prisoners. At the time of the inspection, the prison held 679 prisoners of whom 215 were young adults and the remainder adults. Between 30% and 40% of offenders stay at the prison for less than four weeks. The proportion of foreign national prisoners is approximately 18%.
2. The head of learning and skills has overall responsibility for learning and skills. The prison provides learning and skills directly and with partners. Since August 2006, Milton Keynes College (MKC) has had responsibility for providing education and vocational training including literacy, numeracy and language, a range of social and life skills programmes, barbering, information and communication technology (ICT), electrical installations, plumbing, brickwork, industrial cleaning, 'fathers inside', and toe-by-toe mentor training. The prison provides vocational and recreational gym activity, and training in catering, textiles, recycling, yards and gardens, and laundry. The Inside Out Trust runs training workshops in wheelchair refurbishment and woodwork. The Foundation Training Company (FTC) provides short and long resettlement courses and courses leading to accreditation in ICT and communications. The Ormiston Trust offers parenting courses. The St Giles Trust offers a National Vocational Qualification at Level 3 in providing Information Advice and Guidance. Every Step provides **learndirect** training. Tribal holds the contract for provision of initial advice and guidance. Anglia Guidance holds a **nextstep** contract. Library services are provided by Essex Libraries. There are no evening classes.

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: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Personal development and social integration	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Leadership and management	Inadequate: Grade 4
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Inadequate: Grade 4

3. The overall effectiveness of the provision is inadequate. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The quality of provision and leadership and management are inadequate. The prison's approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. The prison has demonstrated it is in a satisfactory position to make improvements. Until recently, development planning for improvement has been weak and too slow, however, in the last few months the pace of improvement has increased. The change of college contractor to MKC is starting to take effect. Newly introduced vocational and education provision is extending the reach of learning into areas such as workshops and usefully broadening the range of programmes. Learners have a better choice of provision leading to accredited outcomes. Some areas of activity outside the Offender Learning and Skills Service contract are performing well, such as the physical education (PE) provision and the pre-release employability training. Although, as at previous inspections, leadership and management are inadequate, achievement and standards across learning and skills are now satisfactory.
5. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. It is a part of the normal business planning cycle of the prison. The current draft plan is due to be completed as scheduled in August 2007. It is aligned usefully to the three strands used in the revised prison inspection methodology. The self-assessment process is appropriately inclusive. It now draws in all learning and skills areas of the prison, including those provided by external partners and contractors. Most learning and skills staff contributed to the self-assessment report. Learners' views were considered. The report is comprehensive and suitably self-critical. Strengths and weaknesses identified in the report have had significant effects on learners. However, data was not used effectively to support judgements. Most grades awarded by inspectors were lower than those in the report.

Key strengths

- Very good PE programme
- Good range of initiatives to develop the provision
- Very good pre-release employability training

Key areas for improvement

- Weak planning of individual learning
- Inadequate use of data to improve learner outcomes
- Poor implementation of quality improvement processes
- Insufficiently co-ordinated access to activities

Main findings

Employability training

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. Learners develop their practical skills well. Learners in construction workshops demonstrate good levels of basic competence in using hand tools. In brickwork they use spirit levels carefully when building brick piers and in plumbing they work confidently with both plastic and copper pipe. Learners arriving with high skill levels extend these into new areas. For example, carpenters develop advanced joinery techniques. Learners on barbering programmes gain a good level of skill in haircutting. In work areas where learning is less structured, including the prison kitchens and waste management, learners routinely improve generic skills such as team working.
7. Some learners achieve accreditation for the skills they acquire. Pass rates for learners following programmes leading to accreditation in PE are high, running at 100% for most including longer programmes such as NVQs. Pass rates for newly introduced industrial cleaning courses are at least satisfactory. In most workshops, learners have a short period of structured health and safety training as part of their induction into the area, some of which leads to accreditation. However, in some areas the proportion of learners who stay long enough at the prison to complete programmes is low. Across the prison, too few learners gain accreditation.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. Pre-release employability training is very good. The FTC provides a well-established programme for offenders approaching their release dates. Two-day short courses and a longer programme meet the needs of both long and short-term offenders effectively. Programmes concentrate closely on developing their employability, jobsearch and ICT skills. Access to a range of other providers of advice, guidance and support is carefully integrated to help prisoners into jobs and to meet their other practical needs. Learners' attainment is carefully monitored and their progress clearly recorded. The course base room is welcoming and well-equipped. Other providers, such as Anglia Guidance, provide effective pre-release support information advice and guidance on request, and through a regular pre-release event the prison offers.
9. Accredited PE provision is well structured. The prison offers a good range of programmes aimed appropriately at employability. These include short courses in areas such as manual handling and cardiac first aid as well as longer programmes including NVQs at Level 1 and 2. Standards are high. Teaching is good, combining theory and practice effectively. The planning of learning and assessment is thorough.
10. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Staff in training workshops carefully explain and demonstrate procedures which learners then follow and practice. In most workshops, learners who already have good skills provide useful extra help and good role models to individuals or small groups. Resources are satisfactory. Training workshops vary but overall provide adequate facilities.
11. The development of training provision leading to vocational accreditation is slow. Revised contractual arrangements for learning and skills started in August 2006. Four new

construction workshops were completed in January 2007, however, these only opened to learners in April. Accredited construction training started during the week of inspection but is only on offer in one workshop. A revised strategy for construction training has been proposed, but is at an early stage of development. Training in industrial cleaning is very recent, and accreditation for barbering has only been reintroduced in July 2007 after a gap of a year. Plans to offer vocational qualifications in other areas, such as the kitchen and for waste management exist, but have yet to be agreed. A well-conceived initiative by St Giles Trust offering training to NVQ Level 3 in providing advice and guidance is well conceived but too new to judge its effectiveness. Accreditation of wider key skills is available in some workshops, but support for this, and for literacy and numeracy development, is often very limited. Arrangements to recognise and record non-accredited vocational learning are weak. Some programmes are not designed to recognise the fact that learners may be in prison for a short period of time.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

12. Learners' development of skills is at least satisfactory on many courses, particularly in numeracy where they develop specific mathematical skills, using fractions, percentages and multiplication, to complete exercises successfully. Most learners on ESOL programmes increase their vocabulary well and feel more confident in expressing their views in English. However, although some learners increase their confidence in carrying out literacy tasks, many learners' progress in literacy is slow, especially those working at and below Level 1. They have difficulties decoding longer words, and using correct punctuation. Many do not have sufficient spelling strategies to complete written tasks accurately without help.
13. The college and **learn**direct provider keep appropriate records of the numbers of learners who achieve qualifications each month. However, data on achievement rates was not available during the inspection. Pass rates are satisfactory. Between 60% and 75% of learners who sat for adult literacy and numeracy certification at Levels 1 and 2 were successful. Recruitment to some classes is low, but attendance rates overall are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Inadequate: Grade 4

14. The prison has developed its provision to identify and support learners with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties very effectively. The very well-managed project has supported 96 learners since it started in January 2006. Initial screening for dyslexia is now a systematic part of the prison's learning and skills induction process. Training for learners to become mentors and carry out this initial screening is particularly good. Mentors develop a good understanding of dyslexia and are skilled at reassuring potential learners and encouraging them to take part in the assessment. A very skilled tutor effectively uses a wide range of diagnostic assessments and learning resources to provide highly individualised learning support. Learners make significant developments in understanding the specific nature of their disabilities and learn how to identify and build on their existing abilities to help them achieve task they have previously found difficult and frustrating. Many increase their confidence and self-esteem and progress to other

classes or work. However, the other learning and skills staff and learners are not included sufficiently in this area of work.

15. Accommodation used for literacy and numeracy sessions in the original education block has improved significantly since the previous inspection. In the new block, classrooms are attractive and well lit, however, the facilities used for learning on some of the residential wings are inadequate.
16. The range of literacy, numeracy and ESOL, provision, including **learndirect**, is satisfactory, but take up on some programmes is low. Improvements since the last inspection include the offer of on-site training in literacy and numeracy for learners in the prison's ICT academy and the gym. Some new programmes have only recruited small numbers of learners. College and prison staff have identified the need to make further changes to the curriculum, and are currently developing pre-entry courses.
17. Initial assessment is timely. Learners routinely receive appropriate literacy and numeracy assessments during the first week of induction. However, results from the initial assessment currently used do not always accurately reflect learners' abilities.
18. Planning of learning to meet individual needs is weak. Tutors identify and set targets appropriately for the specific skills learners need to develop. However, teaching and learning to help learners achieve these skills is not planned effectively and does not adequately meet the needs of all learners. Most tutors use a very narrow range of learning activities and rely too much on the use of worksheets, exercises and practice tests. Learners do not receive sufficient opportunities to develop and practice their skills in a wide enough range of relevant and meaningful contexts. Activities are not linked sufficiently to other aspects of their development in prison or to their long-term aims. Some tutors use multimedia technologies, especially in ESOL, but too few learning sessions include effective use of computers.
19. Learners' progress is not sufficiently assessed or recorded and learners receive insufficient feedback on the quality of their work. Comments from tutors in class, as well as in learners' diaries or work-logs, are not specific enough or helpful. Learners do not receive sufficient information on where they have made progress in literacy, numeracy or ESOL to help them work out how to maintain and build on these new skills. The prison has identified that systems for recording achievement are weak. Learners do not receive a permanent record of their achievements against identified learning targets to take to their next learning programme at the prison or elsewhere. Many learners leave the prison without evidence of their progress and achievements.

Personal development and social integration

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

20. The prison has some good initiatives to develop the personal and social skills of a few learners. Prisoners involved in the 'Listener's' scheme and others who act as mentors in learning groups develop very good skills. They improve their confidence, are able to help others very effectively and develop their interpersonal skills well. Small groups of learners working with the writer in residence improve significantly their confidence in written communication. One group forms the editorial team that publishes a prison magazine of very high standard. Some of this team follow accreditation in journalism at certificate and

diploma level. They are very enthusiastic and report this gives them new direction and motivation. The magazine is exchanged with other European prisons.

21. For those learners completing their programme, qualification achievement is satisfactory. For example, 11 of the 14 learners completing a cookery programme and 38 of 56 learners completing a family relationships programme were successful. Many learners identify how their class has helped them to work more effectively with others. However, many classes are too small to offer suitable opportunities for a variety of group work or to give prisoners the opportunity to learn effectively from one another. The prison uses a prescribed programme well to support and develop learners' parenting skills and an associated homework club encourages prisoners to work more closely with their children.
22. Much of the work that learners produce in art classes is of a high standard and learners are proud of what they achieve. Good work is displayed in the education centre. However, the art programme has been running only since March and the number of learners involved is still small.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

23. The prison offers a good range of activities to promote health and fitness. The gym provides very well planned and effective recreational programmes. Varied programmes cater well for the needs of different groups such as older prisoners. Prisoners referred by the health centre or who self-refer benefit from carefully designed individual programmes to help to rectify cardiac and weight problems. Access to recreational PE is good. The day care centre gives good support to prisoners with mental health problems.
24. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most teachers give learners good support and encourage them to contribute to activities and discussions. They successfully build learners' confidence and encourage respect within groups. In the weaker classes, teaching is uninspiring. Teachers do not sufficiently vary materials or methods. In these classes, weaker learners struggle with the materials, while the more able learners do not receive sufficient challenge.
25. Accommodation in the new building is good. Classrooms are well equipped and spacious. Accommodation in the old building is generally satisfactory. The art room is bright and well maintained.
26. The prison does not use individual learning plans effectively. Most include initial targets, but these are not sufficiently specific or measurable. Teachers and learners regularly record classroom activity in the learning plan, but do not use these records as basis for planning subsequent learning. The recordings do not help learners to understand what they need to do next to achieve their targets. Learners do not have a copy of their own plan and these individual learning plans are not used effectively to structure learning into small and easily achieved steps. Vulnerable prisoners who attend classes only once a week cannot take back to their cell any record of what they have achieved.
27. The range of personal development and social integration programmes is not appropriate to meet many learners' needs. The offer is not sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of learners who stay at the prison for only a short time. Too few courses are available for learners that the prison assesses as posing a high risk. Most classes in personal and social integration learning have very low numbers enrolled and attending. Too many learners

who start classes do not complete their qualification. For example, of 125 learners starting a cookery programme since August 2006, only 14 completed it. The prison has recognised this weakness and restructured the programme. The prison has recently extended its education provision to some learners on the wings, but take up is low. Very few prisoners follow open learning programmes. The curriculum is poorly developed. A recent needs analysis has yet to lead to significant innovation. No foundation programme exists to attract and engage new potential learners. The prison does not offer a victim awareness programme, although one is planned.

28. The prison does not use ICT sufficiently to foster learning. ICT facilities are routinely available in classrooms, but staff and learners rarely use them. The library has a particularly powerful and well specified computer, but this is not available for prisoners to use.

Leadership and management

Inadequate: Grade 4

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

29. Resources for learning and skills at the prison have increased significantly. Hours available for education provision have more than doubled since Autumn 2006 from 167 hours a week to 432 hours at present. The number of learners attending education has increased. New construction training workshops opened in April 2007 aimed at offering training to meet local employer needs. Provision of learning and work for vulnerable offenders has increased.
30. Initiatives to promote diversity to learners and staff are good. An established diversity team which includes offenders and representatives of all major faiths actively promotes diversity in the prison. For example, offenders from the team are responsible for a useful leaflet designed to help others understand diversity as it affects them. Diversity awareness training for prison and education staff is well-planned. Useful initiatives to promote inclusion include using computer-based software to translate basic prison information into other languages for foreign national learners, and increasing the amount of ESOL provision. A very recent restructuring of the pay policy has increased incentives to participate in learning and skills rather than take up work without training. However, equality and diversity is not sufficiently promoted within the content of the learning and skills curriculum.
31. The prison's strategy to meet the language, literacy and numeracy needs is satisfactory. Additions to the strategy made by MKC are appropriate. However, implementation of the strategy is not yet complete.
32. Access to learning and skills activities is not sufficiently well co-ordinated. Information collected at induction, including initial advice and guidance interviews, is not used effectively across the prison. The prison service and the education contractor share responsibility for allocating offenders to learning or work. This arrangement is poorly co-ordinated. Criteria used in deciding learners' eligibility for specific learning and skills activities are not sufficiently clear. For example, computer courses and qualifications at Level 1 and 2 are offered in both the education department and the prison ICT academy with no clear rationale as to which a learner should choose. The practice of allocating too many offenders to particular workshops or classes is common and impedes organised learning. Learners are regularly turned away from workshops or classes or left in their cells although expecting to attend the particular activity. Access to the library is poorly managed and inadequate for some prisoners. Not enough education, training and work is available to offenders and over 30% are unemployed.
33. The prison has a detailed range of policies and procedures for managing learning and skills provision. However, their evaluation, review and implementation is ineffective. The prison's learning and skills quality improvement group successfully brings together parties responsible for learning and skills in the prison, but does not act sufficiently to quality assure provision. Monitoring of progress on actions in the learning and skills development plan is not clear or thorough enough. Observations of teaching and learning by MKC do

not effectively identify technical weaknesses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Records of observations of prison staff are not sufficiently evaluative.

34. The collation and use of data to contribute to management decision-making is poor. Data collection has improved since the current college contractor took over its responsibilities. However, data on retention completion and achievement rates is not readily available or routinely used in setting targets for improvement. Data comparing the outcomes of learners according to their length of stay in the prison is not sufficiently used in curriculum planning. The prison's arrangements to recognise and record progress and achievement in non-accredited learning are poorly developed. They currently do not provide useful data.
35. Staff recruitment following contractual changes last year has been too slow. The information advice and guidance provider and MKC have had significant difficulties filling posts appropriately. Too many vacancies remain or are covered by temporary arrangements. Appointments to some co-ordinator posts have been only very recent. Many teaching staff at MKC are new to working in a prison environment, and some have little or no teaching experience. Arrangements to induct and support these staff are not sufficiently thorough. They do not have sufficient opportunity to work with or gain ideas from the more experienced colleagues.

What learners like:

- ‘I’ve learnt a lot’
- The chance to be involved — ‘Mondays don’t come around quick enough’
- The help from the tutors and staff — ‘They made me realise I have a future’
- As a mentor — ‘The chance to be appreciated for what I am doing to help others’

What learners think could improve:

- The time they have to wait to get a programme
- The limited opportunities for work on the vulnerable prisoners’ wing
- The limited opportunities to do music, drama and art
- The initial assessment system — ‘I have taken the same test 11 times’