

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HMP YOI Thorn Cross**

**22 April 2005**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

## Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

## Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

## Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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## **HMP YOI Thorn Cross**

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. HMP YOI Thorn Cross is an open establishment for male juvenile and young adult offenders situated in a rural area to the south of Warrington, Cheshire. It is the only establishment in the country to hold juvenile offenders in open conditions, and one of the few to allow juvenile and young adult offenders to work together in education and training activities. The prison's operational capacity is 316. In the week of the inspection, 310 offenders were held at the prison, of whom 59 were juveniles and 251 young adults. Thirty-nine of the young adults were on a programme unique to HMP YOI Thorn Cross, known as the high intensity training (HIT) programme. This includes an extended schedule of physical activities and separate education provision. The proportion of the prison's population from minority ethnic groups is approximately 19 per cent. Prisoners are held at HMP YOI Thorn Cross for periods which vary from less than one month to up to two years.

2. All offenders are engaged in work or training activity. Most of the prison's education and training activities are provided by Wigan and Leigh College acting as subcontractor to the prison. The college also holds contracts with two other local prisons. The college provides courses in the education unit, the HIT programme, and also training in industrial cleaning, recycling, and plumbing. The other activities available to offenders are provided by the prison service's staff. These activities include work and training in the farm and gardens, and training in engineering and construction. All juvenile offenders attend 90 minutes of education classes every day, focusing on literacy and numeracy development. They also attend physical education (PE) for six hours a week. Outside this time they attend education, training or work, depending on their sentence plan. A small number of young adult offenders are employed outside the prison during the day, and two attend college courses, returning to the prison each evening.

3. Education, training, and PE are the responsibility of the prison's head of learning and skills, who reports to the governor. The head of learning and skills is supported by a senior officer and an administrative assistant. Some responsibility for the everyday management of the training workshops is delegated to the head of PE. The education department is contracted to deliver a total of 25,000 hours of teaching each year. The education department is open from 0830 to 1145 every weekday and from 1300 to 1630 from Monday to Thursday. Classes are also offered on four evenings a week. The education department is led by an education manager. There are 18 full-time and 14 part-time teaching staff, a special educational needs co-ordinator, and six learning support assistants. The department also employs an education liaison officer and two full-time administrators.

4. The prison gym is managed by a PE principal officer, with a senior officer and eight qualified PE officers. They are responsible for the programme of recreational activity for the offenders as well as the vocational training in sport and leisure.

5. The prison library is operated by Warrington library service. It is managed by a part-time librarian, who has a contract for nine hours a week, and a part-time library assistant, who works for three hours a week. The library is open for six hours a week and is open on Monday and Wednesday evenings and Friday afternoons.

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS****Grade 4**

**6. The overall effectiveness of the provision is inadequate.** HMP YOI Thorn Cross's leadership and management of training and education are inadequate, as are arrangements for quality improvement. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Provision in foundation programmes and construction is good. However, provision in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and engineering, technology and manufacturing is unsatisfactory.

**7. The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process in education is well developed. There are regular course reviews and all staff contribute to the self-assessment process. The prison has instituted a process which involves all areas in self-assessment, though this is not yet thorough, or based sufficiently on evidence of performance.

**8. The provider has demonstrated that it is in a poor position to make improvements.** Outside the education department there is too little effective action-planning or monitoring of targets. There are no formal plans to develop or improve the provision. Monitoring of the quality of provision is weak, and there is too little collection or analysis of data to evaluate performance.

**KEY CHALLENGES FOR HMP YOI THORN CROSS:**

- increase the range of vocational training opportunities
- develop a strategy for education and training at the prison, and share it with all staff
- clarify the role of the head of learning of skills so that it is known and understood by all staff
- improve links and sharing of good practice between different aspects of the regime
- develop and operate more comprehensive quality improvement procedures
- introduce systematic verification procedures
- improve the use of management information systems for monitoring achievement and progress
- expand the provision to cater better for the needs of learners above level 2
- improve links between the library and the education and training department

**GRADES**

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate*

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		4

<b>Construction</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<i>Construction crafts</i> Other government-funded provision	10	2	

<b>Engineering, technology &amp; manufacturing</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<i>Motor vehicle/cycle</i> Other government-funded provision	10	4	

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> Other government-funded provision	22	4	

<b>Foundation programmes</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>	
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Other government-funded provision	150	2	

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

9. A team of inspectors from the Adult Learning Inspectorate and the Office for Standards in Education visited the prison as part of a wider inspection by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons. The two inspectorates worked together throughout the visit to cover all types of provision, including that for juvenile offenders, young adult offenders, and the HIT programme. They inspected and graded provision in education, engineering, PE, and construction. Evidence was also examined from industrial cleaning and amenity horticulture to support judgements in the report.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learners interviewed	64
Number of staff interviewed	35

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

10. **Achievement in education is good.** Retention and pass rates are high on most courses, particularly in art and design, and information and communications technology. There are no areas in education where achievement is unsatisfactory.

11. The range of courses provided is adequate for most learners, but there is very little provision for level 3 qualifications. This means that the needs of about 10 per cent of learners, who already have qualifications at or above level 2, are not adequately met.

12. **There is very good retention and achievement on construction courses.** Learners acquire good practical skills and the standard of written work in their portfolios is good. However, there are insufficient links with the construction industry outside the prison.

13. **Learners receive a good induction to the gym, and those who complete their programmes generally pass.** However, retention rates are poor. For example, on some courses almost half of those who start programmes leave without completing the course. Only a small number of learners are able to receive vocational training in PE. Provision for recreational PE is satisfactory for juvenile and young adult offenders.

14. **Learners in construction cannot currently complete the apprenticeship framework,** as this requires competence in three areas of work. The closure of the brickwork workshop means that only two areas are currently offered. The prison is seeking accreditation for the plumbing workshop.

### The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	1	7	1	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>

15. **Teaching and learning in education classes is satisfactory, and much of it is good.** Teachers are well qualified and enthusiastic and display good subject knowledge. There are good relationships between learners and teachers. Staff appraisal is regular and leads to opportunities for staff development, so teachers are up to date with recent subject developments.

16. **In foundation classes, the teaching is good.** Juvenile and young adult learners are carefully assessed on entry to the prison unless they have had an assessment carried out in



a previous prison. There is special study group provision for young adults, where help with literacy and numeracy, is provided individually. All juveniles attend literacy and numeracy or key skills classes. They receive good support from learning support assistants, and make good progress.

**17. Provision in engineering is poor.** Learners receive good individual support, but the range of options is narrow, the teaching of background knowledge is poor, and assessment practice is very poor. There is no system for verifying the results of assessments, so assessment practice does not meet the requirements of the awarding body. Many learners leave before completing the five-week course.

**18.** Almost 40 learners work in the farms and gardens, and 12 of them are working towards a national vocational qualification at level 1 in amenity horticulture. **The prison has good garden areas with a wide range of plant types,** which enables learners to practise and develop their skills. All farms and gardens supervisors are trained assessors, so learners are well supported and are able to progress quickly.

### **Leadership and management**

**19. The education and training provision delivered by the contracting college is well managed and operates very efficiently.** This accounts for approximately 60 per cent of the total education and training provision made by the prison. Curriculum planning and delivery are good. Teachers meet regularly to share good practice and there are well-established procedures for quality assurance, staff appraisal and development. A new post has recently been established to link education to the resettlement department, and to promote participation in education following release. Since all juvenile offenders attend education this is of particular benefit to them, but a high proportion of young adults also attend education and so benefit also.

**20. The prison has good education and training facilities.** The facilities in most workshops are good. The industrial cleaning workshop has a wide range of surfaces to practise on, and a good range of equipment. Facilities in painting and decoration, and plastering are also good. However, the facilities and equipment for plumbing are not yet fully developed. Classrooms in education are sufficiently large for the numbers using them, and are well decorated.

**21. The range of vocational qualifications offered by HMP YOI Thorn Cross is too narrow.** Over the past two years, vocational training courses in catering, brickwork, and welding and fabrication have ceased. They have not been replaced and it is not clear whether any of them will be re-opened. There are long waiting lists, of up to two or three months, for the more popular training programmes. The number of learners eligible to work outside the prison is very small, so there is a need for a wider range of vocational training. There has been an increase in the range of vocational training in sport offered by the PE department.

**22. There are poor links between different elements of the learners' programmes.** In many cases, a learner will start a five-week course, only to be moved on to an offending behaviour course within a few days. This has a serious effect on retention and achievement rates.

**23. There are insufficient links between different providers of training in the prison.**

There is no effective forum for the sharing of good practice and identifying common needs and problems. The quality of vocational training provision is inconsistent.

**24. The use of data to monitor the performance of education and training is poor.** In education, a start has been made by analysing the retention and achievement of each course and generating a report using graphics to display the data. However, this data is not aggregated by the prison management to determine which programmes are performing best. Training programmes outside education only record the achievements which contribute to the prison's key performance targets.

**25. Management of quality improvement is poor.** The prison has a quality improvement group, but it is not effective in monitoring the quality of the provision or setting targets for improvement. The self-assessment process is poorly developed outside the education department. The self-assessment report did not identify important weaknesses in the training provision. There are no arrangements for standardising assessments or implementing common policies in areas such as verification or curriculum development.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- well-managed education and related training provision
- good achievements in education
- good teaching
- good education and training facilities

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient planning for the development of education and training
- narrow range of vocational training opportunities
- inadequate quality assurance processes
- insufficient use of data to monitor performance
- weak internal verification

## **Construction**

### *Strengths*

- very good retention and achievement rates
- good practical teaching
- good practical skills acquired by learners
- very good portfolios of evidence
- thorough monitoring of learners' progress
- good resources in painting and decoration and plastering

### *Weaknesses*

- narrow range of provision
- poor links between different elements of the programme

- weak links with external agencies

## **Engineering, technology & manufacturing**

### *Strengths*

- good links with external agencies
- good individual support

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient background knowledge training
- very poor assessment practices
- narrow range of provision
- poor links between different elements of learners' programmes
- no quality assurance or internal verification

## **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

### *Strengths*

- high pass rates on most courses
- good induction process
- good curriculum development

### *Weaknesses*

- very low retention rates on most courses
- insufficient development of good teaching techniques
- no use of information learning technology (ILT)
- insufficient links to the education department
- poor attention to quality improvement

## **Foundation programmes**

### *Strengths*

- good achievement
- good teaching and learning
- well-conducted and effective initial assessment
- good relationships and support for learners
- well-managed education and training provision for juvenile offenders
- good resources for most courses

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient use of management information by staff
- insufficient progression for the more able learners

- insufficient links between the education, training and PE department

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HMP YOI THORN CROSS:**

- being treated with respect by staff
- freedom to move around the prison site
- activities are available in evenings and at weekends

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK HMP YOI THORN CROSS COULD IMPROVE:**

- insufficient places on the training provision
- the help available to prepare for release
- being moved from one activity to another without warning

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 4**

#### Strengths

- well-managed education and related training provision
- good achievements in education
- good teaching
- good education and training facilities

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient planning for the development of education and training
- narrow range of vocational training opportunities
- inadequate quality assurance processes
- insufficient use of data to monitor performance
- weak internal verification

26. The provision subcontracted to the college is well managed. Curriculum planning and delivery are good. Teachers meet regularly to share good practice and there are well-established procedures for staff appraisal and development. The deployment of teaching staff in the education department is efficient. Almost all staff are qualified teachers. Classes are well attended, and there is specialist support, particularly for juvenile learners. Teaching and learning are good. Staff expect learners to work in a productive manner, and learners respond well. Assessment is effective, and retention and achievement rates are good on most courses. The college has produced an annual development plan which sets out improvements and new developments in the education provision, based on the self-assessment report. A new education liaison officer post has been established to link education with the resettlement department, and to promote participation in education following release. The officer also attempts to place learners on college courses before release, but the number of learners involved is very small. Only one learner was involved in this at the time of the inspection. Achievements in education are good, and are celebrated through wall displays and in regular award events, which are attended by the prison governor. The education department has targeted retention, and on most courses, retention rates are now satisfactory.

27. The prison has good facilities for education and training, which are used by juvenile and young adult learners. The workshops are purpose-built and provide plenty of space. In construction and industrial cleaning there are good facilities to simulate industry conditions. The gardens and grounds are maintained to a good standard and provide good facilities for teaching amenity horticulture. Outdoor playing areas for PE are good, and there is a good-sized sports hall, though some of the equipment is broken or in poor condition. The education unit is attractively decorated with adequately sized and equipped classrooms. However, some facilities are under-used. The brickwork workshop had recently closed, at the time of the inspection, and the catering training facility was also closed. The library facility is adequate but its opening hours are very limited. There are insufficient links between the library and education department.

28. Arrangements for planning and managing the overall education and training provision are unsatisfactory. Senior managers have a commitment to education and training as a means of reducing re-offending, but they have not developed strategic or development plans for these areas. There is no formal planning process. The prison has not carried out a skills audit to determine what employment opportunities are available to young people after their release. Managers have anecdotal information, such as a general shortage of construction workers, but do not use this to decide what provision should be offered. Provision has been discontinued without clear plans for its replacement or renewal. There is insufficient clarity in the management arrangements for education and training. Competing proposals are made for the use of workshop facilities, and there is no clear process for resolving them. Some staff have been asked to take on middle management responsibilities, but their roles and responsibilities are not adequately specified, leading to confusion and loss of effectiveness. Different elements of the prison's regime are insufficiently co-ordinated, resulting in timetable clashes which in some cases severely affect learners' progress. For example, there are cases where learners have started an education and training programme, only to be taken off it after a few days to do an offending behaviour programme instead.

29. The range of vocational training opportunities at the prison is insufficient to provide learners with adequate preparation for release. There are no courses above level 1, and in most areas, only a five-week introductory course is offered. The vocational training provision has reduced over the past two years, with the loss of brickwork, catering, and welding and fabrication programmes. This has happened because workshop instructors have left the prison and their posts have not been filled. The remaining courses provided are horticulture, plastering, PE, and motor vehicle engineering. A plumbing course has just commenced, but is not yet accredited by an awarding body. In total, these programmes provide spaces for only 60 learners. There are long waiting lists, of up to two or three months for the more popular training programmes, and many learners find that they will leave the prison before getting the chance to take a vocational training course.

30. There are insufficient links between different providers of training within the prison. For example, the link between PE and education is not strong enough to provide support for background knowledge teaching. There is insufficient development of good teaching techniques in PE. There is no effective forum for the sharing of good practice and identifying common needs and problems. Some instructors are not supported in their work and the quality of vocational training provision is inconsistent. There is insufficient sharing of good practice about teaching, assessment and verification, and not enough support from the centre for vocational assessors to enable them to work with confidence.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

31. The management of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The prison's contract with all its learners begins with an agreement to treat all with respect regardless of race, religion, or sexuality, and this is reinforced through a respect code discussed at induction. In the education department, procedures for observation of teaching include consideration of how equality is promoted. The education curriculum includes coverage of diversity issues in social and life skills and citizenship courses, but respect for diversity is not reinforced in other curricula or in vocational training. Attendance at diversity training is mandatory for all staff at the prison, and all education and training staff have attended at least two of the three training programmes. In recent months learners have taken part in several events

designed to promote understanding of religious and cultural diversity. These events include a trip to Liverpool to visit different places of worship, and a 'faith understanding' day held in the prison chaplaincy.

32. There are good arrangements to support learners with specific needs in education. There is an active approach to screening and support for dyslexia, and funding is accessed where required to support learners with other disabilities. Because the prison buildings are new, most provide good access to the ground floor for wheelchair users, but there is generally no access to upper levels. There have not recently been any juvenile or young adult offenders who required this facility.

33. There are few complaints concerning race equality, and these are effectively investigated and resolved. The race relations liaison officer monitors the ethnic composition of groups on all activities every month, and distributes a report throughout the prison. Where under- or over-representation of any group is detected this is flagged up for attention and action. There is an active race relations monitoring committee, which includes the head of learning and skills and education manager. The prison has policies for equality of opportunity, and an anti-bullying strategy. Learners reported that there was little bullying at the prison.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 4**

34. The education department at HMP YOI Thorn Cross follows established procedures for quality assurance and improvement. These include the collection and analysis of learners' views every six months, and the use of trained observers to evaluate the quality of classroom teaching. Annual course reviews consider a range of performance indicators, and help to produce the self-assessment report and development plan. These are moderated by managers at the contracting college, and support from the college for department aims is strong.

35. In other areas of the prison's training provision, there is little systematic assurance of the quality of the provision. Training workshops and the gym are not required to produce data showing their performance. Only details of accreditations which contribute to the prisons' key performance targets are collected. There are no targets set for performance measures such as retention and achievement. No attempt is made to determine the views of learners. Efforts have been made to involve all areas in the production of the prison's self-assessment report, and some training of staff has taken place. Despite this, the process is not widely understood and participation in most areas is insufficient for it to have an effect on the quality of the provision. The self-assessment report did not identify the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors.

36. The prison has established a quality improvement group which is chaired by the head of learning and skills. The group meets every three months, with representation from most areas of the prison. It is not effective in monitoring or improving the quality of provision. The terms of reference of the group are unclear, and many of the listed participants do not attend. Minutes indicate that there is discussion about a range of operational issues, but too little direct examination of the quality of the programmes. In particular, there has been no moderation or review of the self-assessment reports produced by the different centres of activity in the prison.

37. Management of internal verification is poor. In most areas the verification carried out



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meets minimum standards, but there is no central direction of verification. For example, there are no standardisation meetings, or sharing of good practice between different workshops. In one area, verification practice is very poor and does not meet the requirements of the awarding body. This was not identified by the prison.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Construction

### Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Construction crafts</b> Other government-funded provision	10	2

38. Vocational training in construction is offered in painting and decorating and plastering. The prison has applied for accreditation to run a plumbing course, but this has not yet been received. Brickwork was offered until recently, but this has now stopped. At the time of inspection, 20 learners were working towards an externally accredited qualification in multi-crafts. All learners receive initial assessment for basic skills on entry to the establishment and can apply for a construction course. Applicants are selected for one of the courses by the labour board. There are 10 places on each programme, with some places allocated to juveniles and some to young adults, including those on the HIT programme. There is currently one juvenile in training, but normally there are two. There are waiting lists for all programmes. Training workshops are open 34 hours a week. Learners gain additional experience by working on placement in the prison. Achievement of the full qualification takes an average of five to seven weeks. Two qualified and experienced instructors deliver training for young adults and juveniles. Young adults attend the training workshops for up to four and a half days. Juveniles attend most days, but receive 90 minutes of education each day, and PE on two afternoons. Juveniles are allowed 10 weeks to achieve the qualification. Learners on the HIT programme attend for five-week blocks.

#### *Strengths*

- very good retention and achievement rates
- good practical teaching
- good practical skills acquired by learners
- very good portfolios of evidence
- thorough monitoring of learners' progress
- good resources in painting and decoration and plastering

#### *Weaknesses*

- narrow range of provision
- poor links between different elements of the programme
- weak links with external agencies

### Achievement and standards

39. In the past year, the qualification being delivered has changed. Until November 2004, learners were working towards a different externally accredited qualification. Forty-eight learners started working towards this qualification and 22 achieved it. Since the introduction of the new qualification in November 2004, retention and achievement rates

have improved and are now very good. Twenty-seven learners have started on the new programme, 15 of whom have achieved the qualification in full and 10 are still in learning. Retention and achievement rates are the same for young offenders and juveniles.

40. Learners work well in practical lessons. They develop their skills to a good industry standard. Learners' portfolios of evidence are very good. They are very neat and tidy. The portfolios contain thorough and detailed assessment plans, good photographic evidence, records of training progress and weekly work diaries. Clear written feedback is recorded on assessment decisions. The portfolios contain a copy of the relevant standards.

### **The quality of provision**

41. Teaching is good. All of the learning sessions observed during the inspection were graded as good or better. The standard of practical training is particularly high. Learners are given individual tuition which meets their needs, and they acquire good practical skills. Learners work to a good industry standard. Verbal feedback is given to learners about their work. This is constructive, with learners clearly knowing what they need to do to improve. There are no dedicated background knowledge training sessions.

42. Monitoring of learners' progress is good. Each unit or task is well recorded by instructors and learners are clear on what they have achieved and what they need to do to reach their next target. If a learner is released or moved, a detailed record of their achievements to date is completed, and instructors forward this or retain it if the learner's destination is not known.

43. Instructors are aware of learners' initial assessment results when they arrive in the workshops. The additional learning needs are identified following the testing for literacy and numeracy carried out by the education department. Support for literacy and numeracy is provided in the education department and in the workshop. The support is good, but is not linked to the vocational training.

44. The planning of learning and attendance is unsatisfactory. Learners regularly have their programmes interrupted to attend offending behaviour courses. Learners on the HIT programme have priority over others. Learners are regularly moved onto other courses at short notice. Juveniles are required to attend many other sessions at the same time as their vocational training, and often only attend for one half of each day. Extensions to the course are difficult due to a waiting list which can be as long as four months. There is much demand for construction courses and some learners never get on a course.

### **Leadership and management**

45. Resources in construction are good. The workshops simulate conditions found in the workplace. Bays in plastering and painting and decorating feature curved walls, high ceilings and complex obstructions. Learners in plastering use decorative mouldings, which are increasingly used in the workplace on high specification renovation work. Each workshop is spacious and well lit, with an ample supply of building material and good tools to carry out practical work. There is only one member of staff for each trade area, and the section closes when the instructor is absent.

46. Learners are currently unable to obtain the full award. They need to pass in three trades to obtain the certificate. Only two trades are currently accredited due to the recent

closure of the brickwork programme. The prison has applied for accreditation in plumbing, but this has not yet been received.

47. There are sound procedures for internal verification. The self-assessment process is not well established. Although there have been recent attempts to produce a self-assessment report, the exercise has not resulted in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

48. Links with external organisations are poorly developed. Opportunities for staff to attend network meetings with other establishments have decreased in recent times, and they do not hold meetings with further education colleges, employers, or other agencies. This reduces the prison's ability to advise learners on the requirements of local employers, and to maintain the currency of their own knowledge and skills. Instructors are not involved in jobsearch exercises, and have too little idea of what learners do when they finish their programmes.

**Engineering, technology & manufacturing****Grade 4**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Motor vehicle/cycle</b> Other government-funded provision	10	4

49. Vocational training is offered in motor vehicle servicing and repair. Currently, learners can work towards an externally accredited qualification in motor vehicle repair and maintenance. Practical training is provided in the motor vehicle workshop. There are training places for 10 learners, and there are currently 10 in training, two of whom are juveniles. One instructor is responsible for all practical training. The programme normally lasts 10 weeks, but is extended for juveniles because they are released to attend education for 90 minutes each day. Until recently, the course was for 16 weeks for all learners. Learners are recruited onto programmes through application to the labour board. There is a waiting list of learners wishing to join the motor vehicle programme. All learners complete a basic skills test, initial assessment and general induction followed by a workshop induction. The education department provides training in literacy, numeracy and language and key skills. There is currently no qualified engineering internal verifier. There are three learners currently on placement with potential employers outside the prison.

*Strengths*

- good links with external agencies
- good individual support

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient background knowledge training
- very poor assessment practices
- narrow range of provision
- poor links between different elements of learners' programmes
- no quality assurance or internal verification

**Achievement and standards**

50. There are no records to provide reliable data relating to the retention and achievement of learners. Discussion with prison staff indicates that, during the past 12 months, 80 learners have started on the programme, and 35 have stayed until the end. This represents a poor retention rate. Most learners who stay for the full period of the course achieve the qualification, but the prison was not able to provide the number of learners who have achieved accreditations.

51. The learners are developing their practical skills by practising simple tasks on repair and maintenance exercises. However, the overall skills development is very limited due to the poor condition of the vehicles they are working on and the narrow range of practical exercises.

## **The quality of provision**

52. Learners are allocated motor vehicle tasks to work on. They receive individual tuition on how to deal with the task. Most of learners' time is spent on practical exercises that help to develop their practical skills. There is no formal background knowledge training, though relevant videos are regularly shown to learners. There is no structured planning of background knowledge sessions or group sessions to meet the needs of learners. The training provided does not routinely cover the information learners need to support the practical exercises.

53. There is very poor assessment practice. No continuous assessment records are kept, and no paperwork is completed at the time of assessment. A single sheet on which the tests are listed and which is used to mark when a learner has taken a test is the only record of assessment. This is completed when learners reach the end of their programme. No judgements are made about the assessments, and no written feedback is given to learners.

54. The externally accredited qualification in motor vehicle repair and maintenance offered at HMP YOI Thorn Cross is not recognised in industry. A fabrication and welding programme was offered until recently, but this has since been withdrawn.

55. There is good individual pastoral and vocational support for learners. Instructors are very supportive, and quickly and discreetly identify and deal with any areas of concern. Instructors are aware of the learners' initial assessment results when they arrive in the workshops. The additional learning needs are identified following the testing for literacy and numeracy carried out by the education department. Support for literacy and numeracy is delivered in the education department and in the workshop. The support provided is good, but it is not linked to the vocational training.

56. There are good external links with local employers. Partnerships have been established with employers to enable learners nearing the end of their sentence to find employment. There are currently three learners working on placements with local employers. Learners can also work on some employers' vehicles. These are brought into the prison for service and minor repairs. Some learners secure employment after working on placement.

57. The planning of learning and attendance is unsatisfactory. Learners regularly have their programmes interrupted to attend offending behaviour courses. Learners on the HIT programme have priority over others. Learners are regularly moved onto other courses at short notice. Juveniles are required to attend many other sessions at the same time as their vocational training, and often only attend for one half of each day.

## **Leadership and management**

58. Resources for motor vehicle are unsatisfactory. The practical workshop is well equipped with small tools and equipment, but the vehicles are very old and have been worked on to such an extent that they are no longer representative of a real garage experience. There is no classroom or other resources to deliver background knowledge training in the motor vehicle department. There is only one member of staff, and the department closes when he is absent.

59. The self-assessment process is not well established. Although there have been recent

## HMP YOI THORN CROSS

attempts to produce a self-assessment report, the exercise has enabled the prison to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The overall self-assessment report for the prison made no reference to the motor vehicle provision.

60. There is currently no internal verification of the motor vehicle provision, and no records are available of any previous verification. There are no other effective measures to effectively assure the quality of the provision. Both assessment and verification practice are very poor. This weakness has not been identified by the prison.

**Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel****Grade 4**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i></b> Other government-funded provision	22	4

61. Twelve young adults and 10 juveniles can attend each accredited course offered in PE. These courses range from basic health and safety and first aid courses to sports injury and refereeing awards. All learners attend the provision full time for the duration of the course. There is an annual programme for the different courses. Training is provided in two small classrooms adjacent to the sports facilities. Courses are organised as part of the core day. There is no evening or weekend provision. PE training is provided by a principal officer, a senior officer and eight instructors. There are two staff vacancies. All staff work full time. Facilities include a four-court sports hall, a gymnasium for both weights and fitness training, a small cardio-vascular training area, a hard court area and three external grass pitches.

***Strengths***

- high pass rates on most courses
- good induction process
- good curriculum development

***Weaknesses***

- very low retention rates on most courses
- insufficient development of good teaching techniques
- no use of information learning technology (ILT)
- insufficient links to the education department
- poor attention to quality improvement

**Achievement and standards**

62. Pass rates on most courses are good. Most courses last for between one and five weeks, and those learners who complete the course generally achieve their qualification. PE courses were first offered in 2004-05 and achievement rates on 16 of the 22 courses were between 80 and 90 per cent. The overall achievement rate was 70 per cent. Two of the 22 courses were for juveniles. These courses had satisfactory achievement rates. On three courses, 100 per cent of those learners who completed a course achieved the qualification. However, the achievement rate on a more advanced and longer duration course was very low.

63. Retention rates on most courses are poor. In 2004-05, only 58 learners remained on their course out of the 84 who started courses. There are too many interruptions to the continuity of some courses. Learners are unable to stay on programme due to other regime priorities. For example, on a sports leader course, 12 learners started, but five left to join another course and one learner was unsuitable for the course. Course reviews identify numerous incidents where other regime activities disrupt learning.



64. Learners' practical work is of a high standard. The mixed-ability groups are given challenging targets and are largely successful. During background knowledge training sessions, learners demonstrate a well-developed understanding of lifting techniques, anatomy and the basics of good fitness training. The performance of learners in question and answer sessions is good, but written work is poor. A learning support assistant encourages and aids development of basic literacy and numeracy skills in six of the juvenile sessions. There is no learning support for young adults.

### **The quality of provision**

65. There is a comprehensive induction process for all learners. It is well matched to learners' needs and provides useful information for the learner and the instructors. Young adults and juveniles complete induction together but there are separate sessions when appropriate. Induction records are stored efficiently and results are used as a basis for referrals, courses and access to the specialist clubs and squads. The practical activities and physiological tests are administered professionally and results are reviewed periodically.

66. The range of qualifications offered is adequate, and has increased in recent years, but the numbers attending vocational training are low. Most courses are of a basic or introductory nature, which suits the needs of most learners. There are no long-term courses or distance learning. Learners are able to participate in a series of short courses to compile a useful portfolio of qualifications, including qualifications based on coaching and instructing, personal performance and those linked to work in the sport and fitness industry. There are insufficient courses based on associated PE subjects, such as diet and nutrition, management, anatomy or physiology.

67. Practical training is satisfactory. Learning sessions are well planned and teachers are able to demonstrate techniques and actions to a high standard. However, many background knowledge learning sessions are poorly delivered. In many sessions there is poor use of teaching aids and insufficient basic classroom management. Sessions occur in cluttered and poorly arranged classrooms. Instructors are not confident when using boards and flip charts, and sessions are not interesting or sufficiently varied. PE instructors are not trained teachers and there are currently no plans to offer this professional development to them. Recording of individual learners' progress is poor. Records focus on the effort made by each learner and not how well they achieved the tasks set. They are bland and repetitive, and do not set meaningful targets for learners.

68. Links with education are insufficient to create a cohesive education experience for learners. There is no strategic plan to link the two departments and there is too little sharing of good practice. Initial assessment results, obtained in education, are not communicated to PE staff. PE staff are not knowledgeable about the basic skills and key skills curricula. Key skills and literacy, numeracy and language training do not form an integral part of any PE session. Learners needing additional support are referred to education when difficulties are identified during the courses. This additional support is delivered through activities which do not relate to the core PE activities.

69. There is insufficient use of ILT during sessions and poor access to computers for the learners and staff. Session plans and learning materials are not sufficiently developed. Learners have no access to interactive software or CD-ROMs. Learning materials are poor. Staff rely too heavily on text materials that many learners find difficult to read and understand. There is also too little colour and use of images in text materials.

## Leadership and management

70. In the past two years the PE department has redesigned the PE timetable and successfully introduced full-time PE courses. Two years ago, there was no vocational training, and now 31 per cent of the timetable is designated for training. Deployment of staff is satisfactory, with clear roles and responsibilities and good communications between the large team.

71. Resources are satisfactory. There is a good range of facilities that enable traditional games, minor games, fitness, and indoor and outdoor sports to be accommodated. The sports hall is a good resource and very well stocked with equipment. However, some facilities are in poor condition. The drainage on the grass pitches is poor rendering them unusable at times and the hard court area is unsafe for practical activity. The weights room equipment is in poor condition and some critical cardio-vascular equipment is broken. The cardio-vascular space is over-crowded and shower facilities for the juveniles are inadequate. Classroom furniture is inadequate, in poor condition and is often broken and shabby.

72. There is no system in place to quality assure the teaching of PE. No observation of teaching takes place. Course reviews are carried out, but they are not thorough, and often fail to come to judgements or provide sufficient detail about the performance of the course. There is a procedure for the evaluation of learning sessions but it is not applied consistently. However, the self-assessment report produced by the PE department was generally accurate in its findings.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 2**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Literacy and numeracy</i></b> Other government-funded provision	150	2

73. The education department is responsible for approximately 65 per cent of the prison's education and training provision. There are 59 juvenile learners, who attend detention training order classes for a minimum of six hours a week, studying a curriculum based on literacy, numeracy, citizenship and information technology (IT). The rest of their week is spent in vocational places or education classes. For the 37 young adults on the HIT programme there are courses based on key skills, and a range of evening classes such as do-it-yourself, art and design and healthy living, which do not lead to accredited qualifications. Approximately 60 other young adults attend classes in art and design, key skills, IT, and life skills such as money management, healthy living, sex and relationships, and drug awareness. There is also a five-week course specifically for learners who are below school leaving age. All these courses lead to accreditation. In art and design, learners are able to progress to level 3 qualifications. For young adults who do not attend education classes there are 24 half-hour study group places each day, where they receive help with literacy and numeracy. There is also formal numeracy support for a further 12 young adults. In addition, outreach provision is made for young adults who may need support with literacy, numeracy and language skills and to complete their portfolios in their workplaces. The department also provides vocational training for approximately 40 learners. There are courses in industrial cleaning and plumbing for juveniles and young adults, and in recycling for young adult learners only. An unusual feature of provision at HMP YOI Thorn Cross is that juveniles and young adults attend the same classes. Typically, classes contain many more young adults than juveniles.

***Strengths***

- good achievement
- good teaching and learning
- well-conducted and effective initial assessment
- good relationships and support for learners
- well-managed education and training provision for juvenile offenders
- good resources for most courses

***Weaknesses***

- insufficient use of management information by staff
- insufficient progression for the more able learners
- insufficient links between the education, training and PE department

**Achievement and standards**

74. Achievement across the provision is good. Retention and achievement rates are high for most courses and individual work. Learners gain an average of 3.2 units of accreditation

each month. Accredited outcomes for the past year indicate that juveniles are more successful than young adults. Over the past 12 months there have been a total of 445 accreditations in literacy and numeracy, 57 and 105 respectively by the juveniles and 73 and 62 by the young adults, and 78 and 70 for learners on the HIT programme. Achievement of qualifications is particularly good in art and design and IT. Overall, 17 per cent of learners leave without achieving a qualification. Most learners achieve well in relation to their starting points.

75. Learners arrive at classes punctually and are ready to settle quickly. Instructors' expectations are clear, and all sessions are productive. Learners are generally confident in their approach to practical work and collaborate effectively with one another during group work. Targets are set and are based on thorough initial assessment. Teamwork is encouraged and learners share and develop ideas collaboratively. Most learners are able to use appropriate technical and critical vocabulary to express their ideas. Learners produce good work which is based on sound research. For example, in an art and design class, learners developed their drawing and painting skills with considerable success and the standard of drawing and painting was high even among those relatively new to the group. All learners in this class were on target to achieve their qualification, including three learners working towards a level 3 qualification. Similarly, in IT, learners worked hard and improved their skills quickly reaching the standards required for level 1 and 2 qualifications.

### **The quality of provision**

76. Teaching is good on most courses. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during inspection. In one third of classes observed, teaching was very good. Carefully prepared lesson plans and schemes of work provide a good basis for ensuring that learners learn effectively. Teachers display good subject knowledge and make use of a suitable range of teaching strategies. In a healthy living class, learners asked and answered questions intelligently on matters central to the lesson that reflected their interest and growing understanding of the issues raised. Similarly, in a citizenship class, learners contributed and acquired useful information about how a general election is organised and what the main parties were proposing in their manifestos.

77. Instructors are well qualified and enthusiastic. Nearly all staff regularly take part in relevant training and are up to date with recent subject developments. In a recent drive to further improve teaching and learning, a lesson observation scheme has been introduced through which managers encourage good practice to be more widely shared. Resources and accommodation are good, though IT provision is used variably. Learners in class receive good support from learning support assistants where necessary. The library contains a useful selection of books and other resources for learners but these are not well used. There are insufficient links between the library and the education department.

78. The range of courses provided is satisfactory. Nearly all courses lead to entry level, level 1 or level 2 qualifications. Most of the entry level and level 1 courses last for five weeks and allow learners to join at any time. Most courses meet learners' needs. The prison has recently opened a weekly breakfast club, where learners who are not coping well with prison life have the chance to mix with other, more able offenders as well as staff in an informal situation. The club demonstrates a positive approach to helping learners' social skills and improving their commitment to education. Most learners benefit from the mixing of juveniles and young adults in class. It also means that learners from either group can access specific provision where appropriate. However, for the minority of learners

who already have level 2 or 3 qualifications or who have a long sentence there is very little provision outside of art that meets their learning needs or requirements. Ten to 15 per cent of learners fall into this category. The HIT programme is signed centrally rather than at the prison. There are now many flexible courses leading to accredited outcomes and an imaginative programme of voluntary enrichment activities. However, the number of pre-vocational opportunities for juveniles and young adults has declined.

79. Assessment is fair and accurate. It is also supportive. Initial assessment results are shared efficiently with staff and learners. Efforts are made to establish previous attainment from other prisons. Diagnostic assessment is well used. The juveniles have their needs identified and dealt with by the special educational needs co-ordinator. There is effective monitoring of learners' progress. Learners are given suitably detailed and timely feedback about what they need to do to improve. Challenging targets for improvement are set and individual learning plans provide reports that include actions for improvement. Most learners know and recognise the importance of their individual learning plans but some teachers are more successful than others in setting and monitoring challenging targets.

80. Learners benefit from good guidance and support both in and out of lessons. Initial assessment is used as a basis for additional support needs and the support provided by the full-time learning support assistants is very effective and contributes significantly to the effective learning seen in most lessons. Attendance averaged 81 per cent during the inspection and is effectively monitored.

### **Leadership and management**

81. Operational management is good. The senior education managers work effectively with the contract manager. The everyday management of the department is very efficient. There are clear lines of responsibility and support for professional development and staff feel well supported. Effective communication is supported by regular meetings and planning time. The self-assessment report is accurate, although it is insufficiently detailed in some areas. The department is aware of its main weaknesses. There is a good team spirit supported by open classrooms enabling the sharing of good practice. Too little focus is placed on reviewing accredited outcomes in relation to learners' starting point.

