

# HMP Swaleside

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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](http://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](http://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 Swaleside (the prison) was opened in 1988 as a purpose built category B training prison. It is located on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent and is the main centre in the area for stage 1 lifers. The prison also accepts stage 2 lifers and those imprisoned on indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPP), as well as other long-term offenders. HMP Swaleside is one of the three prisons in the HMP Sheppey cluster formed in April 2006. The cluster includes HMP Elmely and HMP Stanford Hill and is managed by a chief executive with a central reducing re-offending team. Each prison has its own governor and senior management team.
2. The current population at the prison is 774. Approximately 26% of offenders are IPPs and, in addition, 54% are lifers and approximately 25% overall are foreign nationals. The prison has very small numbers of vulnerable offenders. Approximately 31% of the population participate in learning and skills although the vast majority of activities are part time. Over the past year approximately 53% of offenders have been assessed at below level 1 in literacy and numeracy. The average length of stay at HMP Swaleside is five years. The prison is currently undergoing a building programme to increase the capacity initially by 180; the additional offenders are expected to be IPPs.
3. The reducing re-offending central management team is divided into offender management and interventions strands. The head of learning and skills role is covered by one of the two ETE pathway managers within the interventions strand. The ETE manager (education) is responsible for the education and library contracts, the gymnasium and all other vocational education and training activities. The day-to-day operational management of industries, horticulture and recycling is the responsibility of the second ETE pathway manager.
4. The training provider, A4E has held the OLASS education contract since August 2006 which includes skills for life including Storybook Dads, Firm Start, literacy and numeracy skills at entry level, level 1 and 2, keys skills application of number up to level 3 and ESOL up to entry level 3, ICT and GCSE level Art and and AS and A2 Art. Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) is offered via a subcontract between A4e, St Giles Trust and the prison. The Open University offers a range of higher education programmes. There are approximately 120 full time places in education. The **learn direct** provision is specifically provided for those offenders on the induction wing.
5. Prison employment activities include industrial cleaning, engineering, catering and horticulture which offer accredited vocational qualifications and a range of commercial workshops offering paid work. The gym also offers vocational qualifications through the prison service with progression routes to level 3, as well as recreational PE. Approximately 140 offenders are taking vocational qualifications although some offenders are undertaking more than one course. A new woodworking shop is due to open shortly. The prison library is accessible to all offenders and those in healthcare or segregation receive a mobile service.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3

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<b>Achievement and standards</b>		<b>Satisfactory: Grade 2</b>
Employability Training	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 2	
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3	
Personal development and social integration	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2	
<b>Quality of provision</b>		<b>Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
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	
<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
<b>Equality of opportunity</b>		<b>Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

#### Satisfactory: Grade3

6. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. More specifically, achievement and standards in employability training and personal development and social integration programmes are good. The quality of provision including employability training, literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and personal development and social integration programmes are satisfactory. Leadership and management are also satisfactory as is equality of opportunity

#### Capacity to improve

#### Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. The prison has satisfactory capacity to improve. The self-assessment process has been updated following the previous inspection and the report gives a reasonably accurate picture of the key issues needing to be addressed. Although judgements are clear in most areas of the report, some of the key strengths are overemphasised and considered as normal practice by inspectors. The grades awarded by inspectors were generally in line with those identified in the self-assessment report. However, action planning is generally weak and lacks clear targets and the quality improvement group has not been used effectively as a forum to drive change.
8. The prison has recently introduced some good initiatives to improve and broaden the curriculum offered in education and training. These include the procurement of high tech computerised machinery to introduce woodworking, engineering milling and plastic injection moulding into the prison. Although some of these developments are slow in implementation. There is no clear overarching strategy for learning and skills which has a low profile in the prison. Responsibilities and accountabilities are unclear with staff although there is now better management of vocational training since the previous inspection. However, there have been insufficient improvements to resolve some weaknesses identified in previous inspection reports. There is still too little accreditation of vocational training and data is not used adequately to support quality improvement.

## Key strengths

- High achievement rates on most vocational training programmes and OCN programmes
- Good progression through the levels in skills for life
- Good development of skills for those receiving training
- Successful development and use of peer tutors
- Good range of levels and subjects in skills for life and personal development and , social integration
- Good initiatives to develop some aspects of provision

## Key areas for improvement

- The insufficient accreditation of vocational training
- Insufficient action to meet the identified skills for life needs for many offenders
- Strategic leadership and direction for learning and skills
- Weak and unfair processes for allocating prisoners to learning and skills
- The inadequate systematic information advice and guidance
- The inadequate use and analysis of data to measure and evaluate

## Main findings

### Employability training

#### Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 2

9. Achievement rates are very high on most programmes and the few learners who have access to vocational training make good progress towards their learning aims. Across the learning and skills provision, achievement rates are high at between 85 and 100% for those completing the programmes. However, only about 15% of the prison population were able to participate in accredited work related skills training at the time of the inspection.
10. The small proportion of learners who access vocational training develop good skills, particularly in painting and decorating, industrial cleaning, engineering, ICT, PE and food preparation and cooking. In some workshops however, menial work is undertaken which does not develop relevant employability skills. Learners in the engineering workshop produce good-quality work to industry standards and under real working timescales. Many of these learners had no previous experience in engineering. Learners quickly achieve good levels of ICT skills and are confident in using a wide range of applications. Learners in the gym are able to competently instruct others and one learner is about to become a qualified assessor. Attendance is generally good and learners are punctual.

#### Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. Most teaching and learning is satisfactory or better. Lessons are suitably planned and a good range of activities helps to stimulate learners. Staff are well qualified and knowledgeable. Learners in the prison's kitchen are taught good basic cookery skills with a strong emphasis on health and safety. Learners in welding and fabrication gain valuable experience in interpreting drawings and specifications for industrial projects. Equipment is of a good standard and safety is promoted well. Those attending painting and decorating courses learn fine graphics and sign writing skills but they not accredited for this learning. Information learning technology (ILT) is used well in some lessons and learners on PICTA ICT courses benefit from a good range of computer resources including industry standard hardware. Accommodation is satisfactory and workshops and classrooms are generally well spaced out and bright.
12. Learning plans are satisfactory and most are completed well with clear targets set. Assessments are well planned and learners are able to complete courses in a timely manner. Following external verifiers' comments, staff in the kitchen have made recent improvements to assessment practices to ensure more thorough and consistent procedures are followed.
13. Working relationships between education/prison staff and learners are positive and supportive. Tutors take time to explain technical terminology and find effective ways to support learners where they can. Learners on vocational courses who have additional learning support needs are able to attend education to get help in literacy and numeracy if they wish to, although little qualified support is given in the vocational areas. Peer tutors are used particularly well on courses in industrial cleaning and in the gym.



14. The range of relevant work related training activities to support learners' needs is narrow and only a small proportion of offenders' access vocational training programmes. This has been recognised by the prison and plans are well advanced to introduce courses in woodworking and manufacturing processes. However, information, advice and guidance on the courses available are not well promoted and offenders are often unclear about what they can take part in and how to apply.

## **Literacy, numeracy and language support**

### **Achievement and standards**

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

15. Learners attending literacy, numeracy and language classes develop their skills well and some learners make good progress through the levels from entry level to level 2 and above. Learners working with peer mentors on the Toe by Toe reading scheme or in the prison's learndirect centre on the induction wing also make good progress. Learners are punctual and attend well. They are proud of their achievements and are pleased to talk about their ability to understand concepts such as graphs, ratio and reported speech that has confused them in the past. However, some learners make slow progress and only attend one or two education classes a week, preferring to earn a higher wage in the industries.
16. Achievement of qualifications is satisfactory. Achievement rates were good in ESOL and communication skills at levels 2 and 3 at 80% and 88% respectively, and satisfactory in literacy at level 1 and below. However, only 60% of the learners who left a numeracy course at entry level and level one achieved the qualification.

### **Quality of provision**

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Teaching staff have good expertise in their specialist subject areas. They are well qualified and have extensive experience working with offenders in custody and in the community. Tutors provide clear and useful explanations and learners develop a good understanding of the technical aspects of literacy and language learning, such as the use of apostrophes, word recognition techniques and the use of tenses. In numeracy and application of number, learners use the projects and exercises well to develop their understanding of mathematical concepts. However, some learning activities are not linked sufficiently to help learners develop the skills they need to meet the requirements of their sentence plans. Recording of learners' progress is satisfactory.
18. There is insufficient use of computers as a learning tool in literacy and numeracy. The prison has identified this as an area for development and some teaching staff are scheduled to attend a training programme on e-learning and plans are underway to update the intranet for learners. The use of computers is taught as a subject in ESOL and some learners use computers to develop their projects in communication and application of number. However, many of the teaching rooms do not have sufficient access to computers.
19. The prison offers a good range of levels, spread across literacy, numeracy and key skills, including communication and application of number at level 3. This range of courses provides good progression routes that are used well by learners. The education department has recently extended the provision with a 12-week course on 'well man' that effectively promotes health awareness and healthy living. Specialist support sessions have recently

started for learners with dyslexia and other learning difficulties, but recruitment is slow. There is inadequate progression for learners who complete ESOL at entry level 3.

20. The prison is not meeting the literacy and numeracy needs of many offenders. According to recent records, approximately 53% of offenders are assessed at level or below level 1 and many of the 102 learners currently on programmes are working at level 2 and above. Although there are a small number of initiatives to attract learners reluctant to attend education, take-up is low. The prison does not adequately challenge offenders' reluctance to address their low skills and there is poor marketing of the provision. The implementation of the prison's skills for life strategy is slow and the action plan is in very early development
21. Learners receive effective individual support to help them complete their programmes. Tutors provide useful additional learning resources and take the time to help learners remain motivated. Peer tutors and mentors supplement this support very effectively by providing good support and advice. Learners receive appropriate information about the courses available at induction. However, this is not sufficiently recorded with learners' other training and development needs across the seven resettlement pathways.

## **Personal development and social integration**

### **Achievement and standards**

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

22. High standards of work in art are achieved by learners on GCSE and GCE AS/A2 level courses. Learners are highly motivated to develop their practical, research and written skills. Retention for those that stay in the prison is good at 80%, with 12 learners currently making final assignment preparations for externally examinations.
23. There are high success rates on Open College Network (OCN) awards at levels 1 and 2 in citizenship, assertiveness, dependency awareness and in performing arts at entry level 3. These are between 86%, and 100%. Retention is good at 89% on OCN level 1 family relationship courses although course numbers are low. Completion rates on the 2007 five-month Kainos Community challenge to change programme were high at 84%. The wider key skills awards had high success rates until they ceased due to staffing issues in mid-2007.

### **Quality of provision**

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

24. Knowledgeable and skilled teachers effectively manage learning. Good use is made of a variety of teaching and learning strategies. In some lessons, stimulating discussions take place, effectively using learners' prior experiences appropriately and developing their skills and knowledge. Teaching rooms are mostly adequate in size, although the three learning pods have no natural light. The room used for distance learning support and the prison magazine preparation is cramped.
25. Good support is given by experienced peer workers. The five information, advice and guidance peer-workers who offer housing, benefit and families' support are qualified at NVQ level 3 in information, advice and guidance through the A4E contractor. Other peer-workers provide good library support, Kainos Community courses or tutoring in skills such as calligraphy and Braille translations. A good range of activities across the prison

supports the development of learners' personal and social integration skills. There are a high number of learners on Open University and distance learning courses and nearly 200 offenders on non-accredited behavioural change programmes.

26. There is good monitoring of assessments and personal development in art. Clearly completed monitoring sheets are displayed on the studio walls. Progress reviews and learning plans have useful teacher and learner comments and clear action points to help learners improve. However, individual learning plans and reviews are not used as well on other education courses.
27. Insufficient use is made of information about learners' literacy abilities to plan for and support learning. At the prison education induction all new arrivals are offered an assessment of their literacy and numeracy abilities to help decisions about planning activities for their time in prison. Results are available on the computerised system, but these are not systematically accessed by all staff nor is there a process to ensure they are used by staff in preparing and supporting learning.
28. Insufficient recognition and recording personal and social skills takes place to celebrate and further develop learners' skills'. Support for staff in implementing a new process for doing this has started across the prison, linked to individual learning plans and progress reviews. In addition, the Kainos Community courses are using personal development criteria to review and record learners' progress at three points in their programme.
29. There is insufficient co-ordinated information, advice and guidance. Across the prison, there is much hard work and personal effort by individuals to communicate, avoid conflict in allocations and duplication of provision. There is too much ad hoc word-of-mouth promotion. There are no offender or staff wing-representatives. The newly produced ETE prospectus relates only to paid activities and does not contain other related and voluntary provision. There are unclear processes for offenders to become peer tutors.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Satisfactory: Grade 3**

#### **Equality of opportunity**

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

30. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The prison has introduced good initiatives to improve the curriculum offered in education and training. Good use is made of external funding including the European Social Fund (ESF) to create additional opportunities for prisoners and continuing professional development for staff. The prison has recently introduced clear procedures to recognise and record wider key skills and 'soft skills' such as work ethics, working in teams and following instructions throughout the industry contract workshops. There is effective collaboration with the education provider and other partners in the development of a learning and skills portfolio for all offenders participating in activities. A radical review of the pay policy, due to be implemented imminently, is clearly focused on equality of access to provision. The development and use of peer tutors and mentors is a strong feature of learning and skills at the prison. Peer support tutors and mentor work across the prison supporting learners from induction and throughout the offender learning journey. Teaching staff are also well qualified and have good expertise.

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31. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners receive appropriate and relevant information at induction and through leaflets and many equality and diversity offender-representatives reinforce and support their peers on relevant issues, such as anti-bullying. Kitchen menus provide a wide range of food to meet cultural, religious and individual dietary requirements and the PE department is good in providing recreational activities to meet the specific needs of specific groups of offenders. The procedures for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults meet current government requirements. Equality of opportunities is not discussed at quality improvement group meetings and data on equality and diversity are not well used. Although a new pay policy has been approved, the current pay policy disadvantages offenders participating in education and training. Systems for allocating offenders to activities are unclear and inconsistent across the prison.
32. There is good mutual respect and effective working relationships among learners and staff. Attendance and punctuality are good and learners and staff are generally respectful of each other. The prison and the education provider promote diversity well and provide good support and specialist equipment for learners with disabilities. Physical access to learning and skills facilities is good, with wide corridors, lifts and ramps. All offenders have good access to the library which, although small, has an adequate range of materials.
33. There is insufficient strategic leadership and direction for learning and skills. HMP Swaleside does not have sufficiently clear specific objectives or targets to guide the implementation of the overall reducing re-offending strategy for the cluster. Learning and skills has a low profile across the prison. Responsibilities and accountabilities for driving forward learning and skills across the prison are unclear. Some of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection still remain. Action planning is generally weak, although many quality improvement arrangements, such as monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, self-assessment and the use of learners' views are satisfactory. The prison does not set sufficient targets to enable progress to be clearly measured.
34. There is insufficient use of management information to effectively monitor participation and performance. Although the prison and education provider systematically collect a wide range of data, it is not used effectively to analyse the effect of initiatives and management decisions. The prison does not effectively monitor the take-up of learning and skills by learners identified with low levels of literacy and numeracy. Similarly, staff do not use equality and diversity data adequately to explore trends in participation and achievement among the full range of diverse groups of offenders. There is insufficient use of data in the self-assessment process.
35. There is insufficient information, advice and guidance (IAG) on employment, training and education. A useful information area is available on each residential wing, but there is insufficient information on learning and skills. The emphasis of IAG in the prison is on housing, finance and debt. It does not meet the wider range of individual needs of learners. The prison adequately promotes the seven reducing re-offending pathways throughout the prison. However, many learners and staff do not have a sufficiently wide range of information on employment, training and education options to help learners make informed decisions about their development.

## What learners like:

- The good teaching
- 'I have made so much progress in reading, I don't need to ask someone to read my letters for me'
- The opportunities to work on computers on E Wing
- The good opportunities for peer tutors to get training and work in different departments
- Ordering books from the library
- Getting such good support from peer tutors and mentors – 'they are one of us'

## What learners think could improve:

- The amount of training and work – 'there aren't enough places for everyone'
- The pay structure – 'I can't afford to go to education more than once a week'
- 'I need more advice given about all the courses available here'
- The way they are allocated to activities