

HMP Erlestoke

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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 Erlestoke (the prison) is a category C closed training prison for convicted and sentenced adult male offenders. The prison has an operational capacity of 470. Of the eight residential units, one holds approximately 60 life-sentenced offenders. Black and minority ethnic groups account for 30% of offenders and in the recently built Marlborough unit around half the offenders are foreign national offenders. Many at the prison are released straight from HMP Erlestoke without going to open prisons. However, some are transferred to other category C and D prisons. The average length of stay is at least 10 months, only 1% stay less than a month and 57% stay for more than six months. During the inspection 414 offenders were in full-time employment and 52 were unemployed. Part-time places in education and training were available for 487 learners. Half of offenders were following accredited learning programmes and approximately 50 following non-accredited learning programmes.
2. Strode college provides 15,730 hours of learning and skills training and offers courses which include literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), citizenship, information technology (IT) and some skills training. Other skills training is provided by prison instructional officers. Skills for life and key skills are offered as outreach in other areas of the prison. Action for employment (A4e) provides just over 5,000 hours of learning and skills and offers social and life skills related learning which includes ceramics, art, media, diversity, customer service, money management and cookery. Three prison workshops offer packaging and light electrical installation work for outside commercial contractors. Plans to introduce equipment servicing work contracted from Speedihire are well advanced. Some of the work opportunities in the prison can be taken up with the same companies on release. Offenders also work as cleaners, painters and decorators, orderlies, peer mentors, kitchen workers, in waste recycling and in the prison farm and gardens. Offenders also work as assessors for the industrial cleaning qualification. Accredited physical education (PE) programmes are offered by the prison's PE department. An entry level PE course is provided by the prison for approximately 12 offenders. During induction, offenders can complete the food safety and manual handling courses if they have not already done so. Both full time and part time work, and learning and skills, are offered. Some offenders combine education and work. Tribal Hubs provides information, advice and guidance (IAG) and Wiltshire County Council the library service.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

3. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. The quality of provision including employability training, literacy, numeracy and ESOL, and personal development and social integration is good. Leadership and management and the prison's approach to equality of opportunity are good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

4. The prison has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements. The clear strategic vision which was demonstrated at the previous inspection has now been largely implemented. Strategic planning is well developed and clearly understood by staff. Significant improvements have been made to the opportunities available for accredited education and training, and to staffing. More offenders now participate in learning and skills. Employment in the prison has been developed. More training is now provided alongside employment and the work carried out by offenders is better related to outside work opportunities. Plans are well advanced to further develop learning, skills and work in the prison.
5. The self-assessment process is broadly effective, linking well to the overall strategic objectives for learning and skills within the prison. Most staff understand the self-assessment process and its importance in continuously improving learning and skills, however some prison learning and skills staff are not yet fully engaged in the process. The prison has satisfactorily addressed many of the areas for improvement in the current report. The self-assessment report is generally sufficiently critical but currently makes insufficient use of data to analyse and comment on provision. The report records most of the areas for improvement identified by inspectors but does not identify many of the key strengths in the strands.

Key strengths

- Good achievement and standards of work across all programmes
- Good teaching and learning
- Good range of provision to meet learners' needs
- Strong leadership to develop learning and skills
- Good operational management
- Good promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient recording of information in individual learning plans
- Insufficiently well established quality improvement arrangements in some areas of the provision
- Insufficiently coherent system to collate and analyse management information about the offender learning journey

Main findings

Employability training

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

6. Achievement of qualifications is good in industrial cleaning, horticulture, painting and decorating, lift truck, European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) and Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT). For example, between September 2007 and February 2008, nearly 80% of learners who started the horticulture course achieved full qualifications. In the same period 90% of learners who remained on the CLAIT certificate and diploma courses achieved a full qualification. The full ECDL qualification was completed by 80% of learners in the same time period. However, in all courses some learners are unable to complete their qualifications due to early release or prison transfer. Procedures for recognising and managing attendance are satisfactory.
7. Development of practical and personal skills is good. Learners develop good horticultural and industrial cleaning skills, quickly gain confidence in their work and are able to complete a wide range of different tasks to a good industrial standard. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety and effectively link commercial awareness to their practical work.
8. Learners in the painting and decorating workshop work confidently, demonstrating good technical skills and, when not in the painting and decorating workshop, are encouraged to provide estimates and materials schedules to those departments in the prison that request redecorating support. Learners in vocational areas effectively apply business concepts learned on the Firm Start programmes to improve employability on release. In CLAIT classes, learners routinely analyse and evaluate their work before submission for assessment.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

9. Teaching and learning are good. Working relationships between learners and staff in the workshops and education department are particularly good. Teaching staff are both competent and enthusiastic. Many learning sessions have good mentoring peer support provided by experienced learners and new learners are provided with particularly effective individual peer support. Learning session plans and schemes of work are satisfactory and teaching staff are particularly skilled at providing well differentiated support to a range of learners at different stages of their programme. Learners receive useful verbal feedback on their progress and relevant guidance on how to improve performance. Key skills are effectively integrated with vocational courses and learners are made aware of the additional skills that they are obtaining. Learners are clearly fully committed to their learning.
10. The range of programmes in the education department is good, particularly to support learners' employability prospects. Learners in horticulture and performing manufacturing operations support the development of a community interest company, actively promoting and costing products made by the company for sale to the general public and for using funds generated to develop further products. Facilities for teaching industrial cleaning are good. Learners are able to practice their skills on the range of floor surfaces available in the workshops and on those found in the prison. Staff from other prisons are taught

industrial cleaning skills by learners before introducing the qualification in their own prison. Learners in catering and hospitality have access to a specialist kitchen for NVQ level 1 and are introduced to work in the main prison kitchen to complete qualifications at level 2. An accredited vocational training in the workshops has recently been introduced, one workshop providing accredited assembly and packaging activities. Learners work to an acceptable commercial standard and there is recognition of the skills learners have developed through an NVQ in performing manufacturing operations.

11. All learners participate in a prison induction process during which they receive a satisfactory range of information on education, training and work opportunities. No specific induction to the education and training department exists, but staff are currently finalising an appropriate and comprehensive induction programme. The outcome of the assessment of literacy and numeracy needs is routinely made available to help develop the support required in the workshops and education classes. No specific external links exist for additional needs referral and support, but all training and education staff, including peer mentors, give learners satisfactory personal support. Learners receive appropriate guidance on health and safety issues.
12. Accommodation is generally satisfactory and considerable efforts have been made to ensure good use of difficult buildings and to ensure that they are clean and well presented. In particular, considerable efforts have taken place to re-establish the horticultural space that had been devastated during the recent building works. The relatively small library space has been sympathetically restored to provide an effective and welcoming environment for learners. However learners do not have sufficient access to online resources to do research for qualification assignments and complete online testing. This is particularly relevant for those learners on distance learning.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

13. Achievement of qualifications is good in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Between September 2007 and February 2008, all ESOL learners achieved full qualifications. Nearly 80% of learners who started training in literacy and numeracy achieved qualifications at levels 1 and 2, with some learners also achieving key skills qualifications. Standards of work are high. Tutors place a strong emphasis on achievement and progression and raising aspirations. Most learners' understanding of the links between gaining qualifications and their future employability is good.
14. Attendance is good. Tutors are informed of reasons for non-attendance in a timely way and class registers clearly record transfers, early releases and sickness.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

15. Teaching and learning are good. Learning sessions are well planned and in most sessions respond well to learners' individual needs. The pace and variety of activities are good and the encouragement and use of praise effectively contribute to learners' enthusiasm and interest. Good working relationships effectively promote a purposeful atmosphere in learning sessions. Effective teaching strategies meet a range of learning styles. In one class, learners were encouraged to extend vocabulary and engage in discussion as they

were asked to consider the advantages and disadvantages of living in the country and in cities. Most tutors enable learners to try to solve problems and to think independently. Displays of learners' work celebrate achievement and encourage others. Resources to support ESOL work are good and there is a satisfactory range of books available in the library for those with literacy needs.

16. Insufficient use is made of individual learning plans to inform learners of their progress, where they are used, tutors support learners and review learning well at the beginning of sessions to ensure that the learners are aware of what they need to do to make progress. In these instances, learners have a greater sense of their own learning and their learning needs. In less effective sessions, the quality and use of individual learning plans is weak, targets are too general and learners are insufficiently engaged in determining their learning progress.
17. A good range of provision is available to meet learners' needs and to support progression from entry level up to level 2. The education department ensures that classes do not have too wide a range of learning needs, for example an additional entry level class was established rather than overcrowding an existing class or placing learners in a higher level group. ESOL sessions were delivered in a new classroom in a residential wing.
18. The information, advice and guidance (IAG) service carries out an initial assessment with all offenders during their induction. Initial assessment is effective and information about learners is passed on to tutors. IAG staff, who have good formal and informal links with education staff, appropriately encourage those with low levels of literacy and numeracy to attend education programmes. Basic screening for dyslexia is available during initial assessment. Where further diagnosis is recommended referrals are made to a specialist tutor who is appropriately qualified. Not all tutors are able to provide sufficient support for learners with dyslexia within their teaching. Following initial assessment, learners who would benefit are referred to outreach and other individual provision.
19. The education department provides a good range of outreach support to different parts of the prison which is well led and managed. Literacy and numeracy tutors offer individual support to around 20 learners each week and there is a waiting list of a further 20 offenders who have either self-referred or been referred by IAG staff. Additionally, the key skills' tutor supports over 100 learners on an individual basis or in small groups across education, workshops, employment, PE and on the residential wings. Tutors work sensitively with learners to identify what they need and encourage learners to achieve appropriate accreditation.
20. Further support is provided to learners through the Toe by Toe mentoring system. Currently 16 peer mentors are available to give support and there is no shortage of volunteers who are appropriately trained and supported. Learners are encouraged to move into formal classes from outreach and Toe by Toe sessions. A librarian has set up a small reading group that meets weekly. In addition, the library provides themed weeks in line with the National Year of Reading to encourage greater use of the library and the enjoyment of reading. A library orderly has introduced a 'Storybook Dads' programme for fathers to record stories for their children.

Personal development and social integration

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

21. Achievement is good at 100% for those learners who complete the courses. A small proportion of learners fail to complete either due to transfer or release.
22. Standards of work are very good. The ceramic artwork produced is of a very good quality and some items have been sold from a recent outside exhibition of offenders' work. The prison was very successful in the recent Koestler competition where offenders' work won 13 awards. Offenders produce art work of exceptionally good quality. Learners on the professional cookery programme use their skills effectively to contribute to other aspects of learning and skills, for example at a recent learning and skills award ceremony they produced a well made and presented small buffet including food from different cultures. The learners on the media course regularly produce a prison magazine which is of an outstanding quality in its production and contains a good range of content. Portfolios of work are of a high standard and include a good range of learners' work and extensive use of photographic evidence. Learners develop good social and expressive skills.
23. Attendance and punctuality are good. Tutors refer any unexplained absences to prison officers for investigation.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

24. Teaching and learning are good. In the best learning sessions, the activities are well planned to engage the interest of the learners. Group discussions and lively debate are good and contribute to learners listening and speaking skills. Learners are highly motivated and engage well in the learning activities which have been carefully planned. Tutors are skilled in their subject areas and contribute their own work to assist the teaching. The initial assessment identifies prior achievement and recommends courses to meet the needs of the learners. Classes include learners of mixed ability and individual learners' needs are met through good differentiation. Carefully selected classroom orderlies work effectively with tutors to guide and motivate learners.
25. Classes are well managed with learners working well together. The relationship between learners and tutors is one of mutual respect. Tutors are quick to share personal experience and to encourage learners to reflect upon their own experiences with regard to their learning. Behaviour in classes is good and any inappropriate behaviour is challenged by staff or by other learners and tutors. Learners are not routinely set useful learning targets which would help them plan their learning and make progress. Individual learning plans do not always contain all necessary information, however tutors make constructive comments to help learners make progress. Learners record their progress after each session but spelling and grammatical errors made by learners are not corrected.
26. Teaching resources are satisfactory. Some of the classrooms are small and the art room lacks natural light, but natural light fluorescent tubes have been provided to compensate. The rooms have been adequately equipped to meet the needs of the learners. Access to IT resources is adequate. The kitchen for the cookery course is well equipped and has sufficient space to accommodate six learners comfortably. The room used for ceramics is small but well equipped with a fully operational kiln. The range of books available in the library for personal development needs is satisfactory. Staff are well qualified and suitably experienced.

27. The number of subcontracted teaching hours available for this provision is small and the range offered is good within these limitations. However, there is not enough provision to meet overall demand and most courses have waiting lists. The waiting lists are well managed to take into account length of time left to serve. Courses range from entry level to level 3 across arts, ceramics, cookery and a variety of courses related to health and relationships. The life skills' course is a mixture of cookery, art and parenting skills sessions which are designed to complement each other. The recently introduced employability programme enables learners who do not have the opportunity to gain qualifications to have their work experience accredited in a variety of personal skills areas.
28. Other personal development and social integration activities take place across the establishment, such as various faith courses run through the chaplaincy, which are currently not formally recorded as achievements. Completion of some non-accredited courses and work are recognised through certificates issued through the provider. Learners' achievements are celebrated and they take pride in their awards, collating their achievement certificates in a learner achievement file provided by the education department.
29. Support for learners is satisfactory. Initial assessment is used to identify learner needs and refer learners to the appropriate provider, it is thorough and well recorded. Tutors check that learners are able to understand each session and help is available from tutors and orderlies for literacy and numeracy needs. Orderlies support learners in the actual subject areas and also assist in the presentation of learners' work in the classrooms. Staff make every effort to fully involve learners and support their learning needs. Learners develop good social and personal skills through the prison's Business Enterprise Community Interest company. Several learners with no previous employment history have subsequently left prison and set up their own businesses on the strength of their experience in the company.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

30. The leadership of learning and skills is strong and makes a highly effective contribution to its development. The clear strategic vision demonstrated at the previous inspection is well communicated and shared with all staff. Most of those strategic plans have been effectively implemented. The range of education and accredited training has been increased and improved. Employment opportunities in the prison are now better related to outside work opportunities. The extensive focus on learning and skills has raised its profile in the prison. Learning and skills are now much more central to the prison's resettlement and reducing re-offending strategy. More offenders are now participating.
31. Operational management is good and provision is well managed. Tutors review courses to ensure they meet the needs of learners and flexible scheduling enables various combinations of education and work activities. Careful recruitment of appropriate staff has contributed to the building of effective teaching and learning teams. Working relationships are good. Staff employed by subcontractors work together to improve provision. Informal

communication is timely and very effective and it is complemented by useful and productive formal meetings from which actions follow. The good communication enables the integration of education, work, offending behaviour programmes and other activities. The monitoring and management of resources and accommodation, participation, attendance, behaviour and punctuality are good.

32. The quality improvement arrangements in some areas of the provision are insufficient, in particular, they are not fully established or implemented in the training workshops run by the prison and an external provider and in PE and the gym. The learning and skills department does not yet have formal arrangements in place to assure itself of the quality of provision in these areas nor to identify and share good practice. Overall, improvements have been made to quality improvement arrangements since the previous inspection. They are now more systematic and better established and are being used to monitor the quality of provision and make improvements. The learning and skills department now has a quality calendar with a clear cycle for actions and the quality improvement group holds regular and productive meetings. The self-assessment process has improved. Useful learner feedback is obtained through the re-established learner survey and regular learner focus groups. Results are clearly displayed to keep learners informed and changes are made to the provision in response to the feedback received.
33. Subcontractors use their own systems to observe and comment upon teaching and learning sessions which they offer in the prison. These systems are thorough although they differ slightly from each other. Summary reports are shared with the prison learning and skills staff and are used effectively to improve teaching and learning. New arrangements to observe and comment upon all areas of teaching and learning have been developed and approved by the prison and it is planned to introduce these in the near future.
34. The arrangements to collate and analyse management information about the overall learning progress of each offender in relation to their sentence plan targets are not well co-ordinated, and no central system exists. Offenders' achievements and personal development, and their learning and skills progress while at the prison, are not identified and recorded in one system. Although effective informal links with offender management and sentence planning have been established, these have yet to be formalised to ensure the collation of all the appropriate offender information. Currently, each subcontracted provider is using its own management information system. These systems do not give easy access to achievement and progress against learning targets by groups of learners. The local collection, analysis and use of management information on participation, achievement and attendance at subcontractor level, and often by individual tutors, are effective. These systems are sufficiently accurate and comprehensive to enable effective assessment of subcontractor performance. Information is shared between subcontracted providers and the prison learning and skills department and is effectively used to review provision, make improvements and monitor overall progress. However data is not sufficiently co-ordinated or in a format that allows comparisons between groups to help develop management decisions.
35. Equality of opportunity and diversity are promoted well within the provision. The ceramics course reflects different styles of work and use of resources from different cultures. Learners are encouraged to explore different ethnic themes within the course. Several groups of learners are currently working on a mural which celebrates iconic leaders from different parts of the world. Cookery classes produce foods from different

cultures and encourage discussion of various ethnic issues relating to foods and nutrition. The healthy living and parenting courses include discussions of diversity issues such as the considerations for children fasting during Ramadan. Staff and learners have a good understanding of equality of opportunity issues and make good use of opportunities to explore issues within the discussions.

36. Allocation to education and employment is effectively controlled. The activities allocation unit is responsible for all decisions relating to allocating, changing and removal from activities. Decisions are based upon the initial assessment information, the preferences of the offender and the risk assessment of the actual activity, and access is fair. Any special cases are discussed at the interdepartmental risk management meeting.
37. Data about the ethnic composition of the learners is collected. The management has identified that learners from Black and minority ethnic groups and younger learners are over represented in the education department. Action has been taken to try to encourage more mature learners to engage in education. This data is analysed but not in sufficient detail to identify whether these learners are clustered in any particular parts of the provision or whether they achieve any differently to other ethnic groups. However, tutors can identify any patterns within courses and these are discussed during course reviews.
38. Efforts have been made to engage with a Black support group in the community and a variety of speakers of different ethnic backgrounds have been invited into the prison. Black history week, anti-slavery week and gay and lesbian week have been celebrated through displays of work within the prison.

What learners like:

- 'The education department is an oasis'
- Excellent tutors
- An atmosphere conducive to learning
- Good encouragement and support
- Good progression opportunities
- Good library
- Good learner reviews

What learners think could improve:

- Internet access for IT and distance learning
- Access to computers on the wings
- The availability of employment opportunities in the prison which are linked to outside work
- Different wages for education and employment in some workshops
- Access to evening classes