

# HMP Wakefield

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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' monitoring 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 Wakefield is a male high security dispersal prison. HMP Wakefield was founded as a House of Correction in 1594 and is situated half a mile to the west of Wakefield city centre in Yorkshire. It was taken over by the government in 1878 and served as a convict prison and then as a local prison until 1945. It then became a training prison for medium- and long-term prisoners. It has functioned as a dispersal prison since 1966 and is a main lifer centre with a focus on serious sex offenders. HMP Wakefield accepts adult convicted male prisoners, Category A and Category B, serving sentences of more than five years. Provision is also available for high security remand prisoners. It holds approximately 100 category A and eight high risk category A prisoners. The prison houses a Close Supervision Centre, a small therapeutic unit which aims to provide a safe, structured and consistent environment for the most challenging offenders. Approximately 92% of offenders are serving sentences of over 10 years. The average length of stay is approximately five years but some offenders may serve most of their sentence at the prison. Accommodation is based around a Victoria radial design with single occupancy cells, and four wings radiate from a central hub. HMP Wakefield releases few offenders directly into the community and the nature of offences means that future employment may be difficult to find. Few offenders were released directly into the community in 2007. Most prisoners leaving HMP Wakefield progress to other prisons within the secure estate. The operating capacity of the prison is currently 751.
2. HMP Wakefield has a purpose built education department consisting of 17 classrooms and a library. It has three dedicated information technology (IT) classrooms, a cookery room, an art room, a tailoring room and a fully equipped training kitchen. Nine workshops and a prison kitchen provide a range of work and some offer opportunities for vocational qualifications. The Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) provider is The Manchester College. It provides a range of courses which include literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), information and communication technology (ICT), art GCSEs and courses focused on personal development. In addition The Manchester College provides vocational qualifications in two of the workshops. Approximately a third of the prison population access education.

## 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: Satisfactory: Grade 3
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: Satisfactory: Grade 3
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. More specifically, achievement and standards in personal development and social integration and literacy, numeracy and ESOL are good. Achievement and standards in employability training are satisfactory. The quality of provision in personal development and social integration and in literacy, numeracy and ESOL is good. The quality of provision in employability training is satisfactory. Leadership and management of learning and skills within the prison are good, as is the prison's approach to equality of opportunity.

### Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

4. The prison has undergone changes to the management structure of learning. A new head of learning and skills was appointed during the summer of 2007 and a new governor was appointed in April 2008. A new strategic plan has been developed with a strong focus on quality improvement. The prison has worked hard to identify areas for improvement in the provision and numerous aspects of the programme have been improved. The curriculum has developed and improved significantly to better meet the needs of the prison population with a focus on the personal development of offenders. Better opportunities have been introduced to enable long-term offenders to progress. Workshops have been relocated and re-equipped. Much staff training has taken place to improve teaching across the prison. Staff development has also taken place to enable the introduction of accredited qualifications in more workshops. Quality assurance systems have been developed and improved, and introduced into all areas of the prison where learning and skills takes place. Progress since the previous inspection has been good. Most strengths have been maintained and improved. Weaknesses from the previous inspection have been resolved.
5. The self-assessment process is good. The self-assessment process forms part of the prison's overall continuous improvement strategy. The process is inclusive and all staff have an opportunity to contribute to the report. Staff have a good understanding of the process and how it links to continuous improvement. The report is clear with a good range of evidence to support key judgements. Data was used well to support strengths and areas for improvement. The report was critical and identified most of the strengths and areas for improvement found during the inspection. Grades proposed by the prison generally matched inspection findings. The process is used effectively as a tool to improve the quality of the provision as a whole. The resulting action plan is reviewed at each quality improvement group meeting where functional heads are required to report on their progress towards meeting objectives.

## Key strengths

- Good strategic development of learning and skills with a strong focus on quality improvement
- Good internal partnership working to benefit learners
- Effective actions to promote inclusive learning
- Much good achievement and development of personal skills
- Good range of provision
- Very good initiatives to promote literacy

## Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient workshop places
- Insufficient data analysis to ensure accurate assessment of access to activities
- Insufficient recognition of personal development in some workshops

## Main findings

### Employability training

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Achievements in ICT, catering and industrial cleaning at level 1 are high. In industrial cleaning, learners are able to carry out real work on the wings and three have gained qualifications as assessors. Achievement is high on catering at level 1. Learners have developed a range of hospitality skills including menu costing and planning. Some learners use these newly acquired skills to prepare meals for other offenders on the wing. Achievement in ICT is generally good. Many of the learners have been very successful with little or no prior experience of IT. Learners in the charity and Braille workshops are competent at independent learning and have good decision-making skills.
7. Many of the accredited courses available in workshops have only been introduced recently and insufficient data is available to measure achievement of accreditations reliably. In workshops where no accreditation is available learners are developing good work skills and developing personal skills such as working together and taking instructions.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. Teaching overall is good. ICT sessions are well planned and delivered. Learners working on different exercises are particularly well managed. The tutor establishes a good rapport with all learners, is firm, fair and effective in keeping all learners on task. Learners with specific difficulties are sensitively and respectfully dealt with. Frequent checks are made on learners' progress and good open questioning helps to determine learners' understanding. Learners receive information at induction on good health and safety practice when using ICT. However, good practice is not reinforced in sessions. Individual training in tailoring and ICT is good. Coaching and learning in physical education (PE) sessions is good. PE officers are very well qualified and share their knowledge and personal experiences effectively to sustain learners' interest. Staff are good role models and maintain very high standards of conduct and levels of expectation.
9. The range of overall activities is satisfactory. Opportunities for learning are being expanded and improved. However, access to accredited qualifications is low. Very few learners have the opportunity to achieve substantial skill development or qualifications in the workshops. Many learners are employed in non-accredited work. Opportunities for category 'A' offenders are limited to a narrow range of options and a significant reduction in workshops has restricted the total amount of opportunities available. Many opportunities have recently been established but have had insufficient time to make an impact. A significant period of workshop closure and relocation badly affected the range and depth of learning and skills development. Recently ICT, industrial cleaning, tailoring and main prison catering have provided significant diversity in learning opportunities and skill development.

In catering, a training kitchen is fully functioning with learners progressing through level 1 and level 2 awards in food preparation. National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) have been established recently in the main prison kitchen. Learners are effective and competent in real work food production which they achieve in a pressurised and often demanding team.

10. Literacy and numeracy support in the workshops is variable in amount and quality. Designated areas for support have been introduced. However, these are not yet all fully operational. Support is often provided within the working area which is often noisy and disruptive. Some learners are inadequately prepared to progress to higher levels. Discrete support from workshop managers is good. Managers listen and interact with learners and jointly agree on how best to progress. Sentence planning is thorough and is reviewed for each offender annually. Appropriate targets are established following reports on achievements and behaviour. Staff from various departments co-operatively discuss the best course of action for the learner. The learner can attend and play an integral role in this process. Allocation to work is by application, and offenders are interviewed before starting work. Records of learners' personal and social skills for those in non-accredited programmes are insufficient. Some learners have highly developed language and numeracy skills and have developed good work ethics but these are not recorded or used to best effect.

## Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

11. Achievement and standards are good. Achievement rates on literacy and numeracy programmes at levels 1 and 2 are high. Rates have remained above 80% over two years, but have declined slightly in 2007/08. Retention rates have improved significantly from 50% in 2006/07 to between 85% and 90% in 2007/08. Achievement and retention rates on ESOL programmes at all levels in 2007/08 are excellent at 100%.
12. Achievement rates in literacy and numeracy entry level unit accreditation programmes are excellent at 100%. Achievement rates of full qualifications are satisfactory. Retention rates are low and have significantly declined over two years from 90% to 58%.
13. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Learners are moved to education sessions efficiently and arrive promptly. Reasons for absence are well recorded and most are for valid appointments within the prison rather than learners refusing to attend.
14. Overall, skill development is satisfactory. For some learners, particularly in literacy and numeracy sessions where ICT is used as a method to develop these skills, learners improve quickly. In other literacy sessions, learners develop good skills and confidence in speaking, listening, and in their application of grammar.

**Quality of provision****Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2**

15. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the best sessions, learning is well planned with a good range of learning activities that motivates and engages learners. Tutors know their learners well and are sensitive to those who lack confidence, supporting them well to fully participate in activities. In less successful sessions, learning tasks are repetitive. The use of worksheets at every session as the only method of learning de-motivates many learners. Many session plans do not consider how learning will be measured sufficiently.
16. Accommodation and resources are good. Classrooms are well decorated, with good quality furnishings, and provide a suitable environment for learning. Computers are provided in each classroom. Interactive whiteboards have recently been installed and training is planned to support staff in using them. Posters and learners' work are used well to give classrooms a curriculum focus. Most learning resources are well produced.
17. The small number of learning mentors and learning support assistants are not deployed well in learning sessions. Tutors do not consider sufficiently how this very limited resource can be used to best effect when they are planning their session. Learning mentors do not have the opportunity to gain qualifications to recognise their skills.
18. Assessment is satisfactory. Staff monitor and review learners' written work and keep a diary of progress in learners' files. The use of individual learning plans is developing. They are becoming better linked with information, advice and guidance and other areas of the prison. Long-term targets linked to qualification aims are set with target start and completion dates. However, short-term target-setting is ineffective. The prison has identified the deficiencies in the process and is working well to improve it.
19. The range of provision is very good at meeting the diverse needs of learners. In education, the range of provision is good with qualifications from entry level to level 2. In 2007/08, the provider successfully introduced ESOL qualifications for learners. Education has worked well to provide literacy and numeracy on the wings for learners who, due to security risks, cannot access education sessions. Tutors support individual learners well, often in difficult circumstances that are not conducive to learning. Education staff have been less successful in integrating literacy and numeracy in workshops. Few attempts are made to acknowledge naturally occurring evidence gained through work as evidence towards qualifications.
20. The library links well with education to improve learners' literacy skills through a range of very good initiatives. Learners participating in the Toe by Toe initiative meet on a weekly basis as a group with their mentors and the reader in residence. The reader in residence also works with retired learners to run a reading club. A writer in residence develops learners' creative writing skills through a range of activities including drama. These initiatives are very effective

in supporting learners to develop confidence and literacy, personal and social skills.

21. Learning support is good. Tutors provide good pastoral support. Staff record incidents and learner issues in a diary, which are shared at weekly meetings where support strategies are agreed. Literacy and numeracy, and further diagnostic screening are satisfactory. Learners' additional learning needs are assessed and appropriate support is put in place. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory and all learners have access to an interview at least annually.

## Personal development and social integration

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

22. Achievement and standards are good. Learners are developing a range of personal skills through a variety of activities. Many learners have not previously accessed any formalised learning and work hard to develop skills that enable them to take part in group activities. Learners gain confidence in communication and engage successfully in group discussion. Creative writing learners develop critical analysis skills and learn to take constructive criticism from their peers. Art learners develop creative skills and produce work of a high standard. Good personal development takes place on qualifications available in the gym. An exceptionally high standard of art work is displayed throughout the prison with achievement of some prestigious national awards.

23. Achievement on most courses is high and remained consistently high over a sustained period. Most learners starting courses in personal and social development complete the course and achieve. Courses delivered by the chaplaincy to help learners develop their personal skills have high achievement rates, many at 100%. Achievement on PE courses focused on developing personal development is high. However, achievement on GCSE courses is low.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

24. Teaching and learning are good. Sessions are well planned to ensure that individual learners' needs are met. Tutors are good role models and inspire learners with good quality teaching. Tutors are skilled at working with learners with widely differing abilities. Tutors know their learners well and work effectively to help them successfully engage with activities. Tutors have good subject knowledge and use a range of techniques to respond to different learning styles. Learners benefit from a high degree of individual support. Tutors are skilled at helping learners develop their communication skills and use their prior experiences to illustrate key learning points. In most cases learners' personal development progress is well recorded in individual learning plans. Learners are motivated, enthusiastic and effectively engaged in learning. Sessions are managed well and standards of behaviour are good. Tutors and learners share a

high degree of mutual respect. Classroom accommodation is good. Wall space is used effectively to support and reinforce learning.

25. The prison has developed a good range of programmes to help learners develop their personal development and promote social inclusion. The chaplaincy provides a range of accredited courses in a variety of subjects that focus on supporting learners to develop their personal skills. Some courses are specifically designed for under-represented groups which help learners develop confidence to engage with activities.
26. The high population of elderly prisoners are actively encouraged to engage with education to continue their personal development and promote social inclusion. Learners have good access to higher education and are supported well in their work. Student centred learning is in place to help and support learners with a specific educational need to help their personal development.
27. A clearly written and informative prospectus has been produced which effectively promotes courses on life and social skills programmes. Good progression routes are in place to help more able learners progress into Open University courses. Learners studying at higher education levels are well supported and opportunities for study are planned well. Targets for sentence planning are considered well. A flexible approach is taken to the sequencing of activities and offending behaviour treatment programmes to ensure the best benefit for learners.
28. Information, advice and guidance have improved significantly. Information, advice and guidance workers ensure that all offenders have the opportunity for an individual interview in preparation for the sentence planning review meeting. Good support is provided in helping learners understand the options that are available to them to best help their personal development.

## Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

29. The overall strategic direction for learning and skills is good with a strong focus on continually improving the provision. The governor and the senior management team have a clear focus on the learning journey. The head of learning and skills has produced a clear development plan which is linked well to quality improvement of the overall provision. Many changes have been made and strategies introduced to improve achievement of qualifications. Work to move and re-open new workshops has been managed well. Staff have a good understanding of the objectives of the prison and are clear about the progress that is being made. Staff morale is good.
30. Good links between learning and skills and other departments of the prison have been developed successfully. Learning and skills works well with sentence

planning and the psychology department to help develop and plan courses to help learners effectively. Good communication takes place. Other departments have access to offenders' individual learning plans through the prison intranet.

Meetings take place regularly between the departments to ensure a shared understanding of the prison's objectives. Information, advice and guidance have a very effective input into allocation to activities board with good links to sentence planning. Sentence planning board meetings are a multi-functional meeting with a clear focus on short- and long-term plans being developed for offenders which are sequenced in appropriate ways to benefit learners. The education staff work with the psychology department in helping develop flexible programmes that help and support offenders in the development of their personal skills.

31. The prison works well with the education provider to develop flexible programmes to best accommodate the needs of learners. Staff development is good for education and prison staff, and most have achieved recognised teaching qualifications. Tutors in post are appropriately qualified. The education department is managed well with appropriate quality assurance processes in place which include a system for the observation of teaching and learning. However, some observations focus insufficiently on the assessment of learning.
32. Quality improvement of learning and skills is satisfactory. The quality improvement group has been extended to include all areas within the prison where learning and skills takes place. The prison has a clear focus on improving the overall provision. Managers are responsible for presenting a report on their performance against the action plan. The observation of teaching and learning within all areas of the prison is now taking place with a strong focus on improving the overall quality of teaching. However, this process has only been introduced recently and as yet no effective analysis has taken place.
33. The prison has insufficient places to ensure that all offenders have equal access to activities. Many of the workshops at the prison have been closed as a result of a serious security risk. Workshops have now been relocated in a different part of the prison. However, not all workshops have yet been fully relocated. Category A offenders are unable to access many of the new workshops restricting their access to the full range of work available to the rest of the prison. Waiting lists are in place for some of the most popular courses in education. However, these waiting lists are managed well and learners are allocated to an activity until their chosen course is available.
34. Analysis of data on learners' access to activities is weak. The prison collects data on a wide range of offenders' activities. However, systems are not in place to give accurate information on what activities are accessed by learners to effectively use the range of existing places available. Waiting lists are in place for many courses however, these do not accurately reflect the number of learners waiting to access specific activities. The data system does not have the capacity to generate reports that will give clear information on who does not access activities in a way that helps support planning and development of activities.

35. Equality of opportunity is good. The prison has a strong focus on developing an inclusive learning environment. The prison provides education and work to some of the most difficult to manage offenders within the prison service. Learners in the close supervision centre have the opportunity to engage in a range of activities on an individual basis. Learning is also provided for offenders on remand and in healthcare. Programmes are developed on an individual basis and delivered in a flexible way to meet the needs of learners effectively. Strong links with the chaplaincy are used effectively to develop specific groups of under-represented learners such as traveller and Rastafarians. Support groups developed through this route help learning and skills engage with these hard to target learners utilising the opportunities to promote learning and skills. Specific activities have been developed to target the elderly population within the prison. Support groups meet twice each week and activities such as craft sessions are in place. Staff are skilled at supporting learners with very specific needs such as mental ill health. Staff receive a good range of training activities to ensure they are aware of how to support and recognise vulnerable adults and comply with government guidelines on safeguarding. Cultural diversity is celebrated well with a range of events that promote social inclusion. Staff and learners have worked hard at creating a positive learning environment where learners feel safe.

## What learners like:

- Fantastic support from tutors
- 'The creative writing course is brilliant'
- The opportunity to take part in activities
- The opportunity to develop creative skills
- The tutors who really care
- The help from tutors in arranging higher education courses
- The respect from managers and work supervisors
- Great PE staff
- The opportunity to learn a language - 'I couldn't speak English a year ago. I can now'
- 'The opportunity to get a certificate to show my family'
- 'The opportunity to learn things I didn't think I would ever be able to do'
- 'The way staff tell me I am good at something'

## What learners think could improve:

- More vocational courses
- 'Being able to get on a course I really want to do'
- More access to computers
- More advanced courses
- More access to work
- 'It takes too long to get on courses'
- 'I want to do real work like brick work and plumbing'
- More interesting vocational work
- Mathematics course is too long
- 'We should have metal cutlery in the training kitchen'
- 'I really enjoy the Friday social club and we should have more sessions like this'