

HMP Chelmsford

Reinspection report

Reinspection date

9 October 2008

Reinspection number

329254

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Background information

Reinspection 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 reinspection 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 reinspection

In deciding the scope of the reinspection, inspectors consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorate's reinspection monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection. Inspectors also 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.

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 reinspection focused on:

- Preparation for life and work programmes:
 - employability training
 - literacy, numeracy and ESOL
 - personal development and social integration

Description of the provider

1. HMP Chelmsford is a category B male local and young offender prison, based in the centre of Chelmsford, Essex. The prison has an operational capacity of 695 prisoners comprising of young offenders, vulnerable, remand, unsentenced, short sentenced adults and lifers. On 26 September 2008 the prison's population was 690 of whom 497 were adults and 193 were young offenders. 268 were sentenced. The average length of stay is between one and four weeks. Chelmsford holds a relatively high number of foreign nationals, approximately 16.5% of the population.
2. The prison serves the courts by holding remand prisoners, transporting them to and from the courts and transferring them on to training prisons or into the community to serve their sentence. The numbers of prisoners arriving and leaving the prison each day is very high as a result of this working practice.
3. A wide variety of providers support learning and skills. Milton Keynes College (MKC) is the main contractor providing LSC funded provision. This includes programmes for those offenders with literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) needs; and a range of programmes intended to improve offenders' personal development and social integration skills such as cookery, sex and relationships and art. The college also offers vocational programmes in, for example, barbering at Level 2, British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICS), qualifications at Levels 1 and 2 and a range of construction related qualifications at Level 1.
4. Other organisations which offer programmes in the prison include Tribal which gives information, advice and guidance to offenders; Foundation Training Company (FTC) providing information technology, communication and preparation for life qualifications; St Giles Trust which provides opportunities for offenders to gain qualifications in information, advice and guidance and teaching as well as providing programmes for those offenders who are about to be released; Prison Information and Communications Technology Academy (PICTA) offering a range of more technical information and communications technology (ICT) qualifications; Every Step Ltd delivering learndirect programmes and the Ormiston Children and Families Trust delivering parenting programmes. The prison delivers a range of vocational training in catering, physical education (PE), laundry, carpentry, portable appliance testing, and waste matters. The library service is provided under a contract with Essex Libraries.
5. The prison was last inspected in July 2007. At that inspection the effectiveness of the provision, leadership and management and the quality of the provision were all judged to be inadequate. However, inspectors judged the prison's capacity to improve, achievements and standards and equality of opportunity to be satisfactory.

Summary of grades awarded at previous inspection

| | | |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| Effectiveness of provision | | Inadequate: Grade 4 |
| Capacity to improve | | Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Achievement and standards | | Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Employability training | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 | |
| Literacy, numeracy and ESOL | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 | |
| Personal development and social integration | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 | |
| Quality of provision | | Inadequate: Grade 4 |
| Employability training | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 | |
| Literacy, numeracy and ESOL | Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4 | |
| Personal development and social integration | Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4 | |
| Leadership and management | | Inadequate: Grade 4 |
| Equality of opportunity | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 | |

Summary of grades awarded at reinspection

| | |
|---|--|
| Effectiveness of provision | Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Capacity to improve | Good: Grade 2 |
| Achievement and standards | Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Employability training | Contributory grade: Good Grade 2 |
| Literacy, numeracy and ESOL | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Personal development and social integration | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Quality of provision | Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Employability training | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Literacy, numeracy and ESOL | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Personal development and social integration | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Leadership and management | Good: Grade 2 |
| Equality of opportunity | Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3 |

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory in literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes as they are in personal development and social integration programmes. In employability programmes achievement and standards are good with a significant improvement in the number of learners achieving vocational qualifications. Learners develop good skills and produce work of a good standard.
7. The quality of the provision is now satisfactory in all three strands. At the previous inspection the quality of the provision was judged to be inadequate in literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes and in personal development and social integration programmes. Teaching is generally well planned and structured and one-to-one coaching is good. The range of programmes is generally satisfactory although the range of personal and social integration programmes is good. The effectiveness of the use of individual learning plans has improved since the previous inspection although some aspects of target-setting, especially for non-accredited outcomes, are poor.
8. At the previous inspection leadership and management were judged to be inadequate. They are now good. There have been a number of effective changes to the way that the prison manages learning and skills. The prison's senior management has taken a key role in addressing most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection and ensuring that there is a good emphasis on improving learning and skills. Operational management has improved with good working relationships between all those involved with learning and skills across the prison. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory, as it was at the previous inspection.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

9. At the previous inspection inspectors judged the prison's capacity to improve as satisfactory. It is now good. All but one of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The prison has a clear focus on learning and skills with the senior management leading improvement strategies.
10. The self-assessment process is detailed, thorough and appropriately consultative. Good reference is made to supporting documentation, data and observation activity. The report identifies many of the issues highlighted by inspectors and the subsequent quality improvement plan addresses issues of concern within appropriate timescales. The senior management team and staff have a clear focus and direction in taking the prison's learning and skills provision forward.

Key strengths

- Good standards of learners' work
- Well planned and structured teaching
- Good leadership and operational management

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient employability training for vulnerable prisoners
- Inadequate assessment, monitoring and recording of non-accredited outcomes

Main findings

Employability training

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

11. Achievement in employability training is good. The prison assessed itself as satisfactory. Overall, in 2007/08, 1028 externally accredited vocational qualifications were achieved. This is an increase of 64% compared with achievements in the same period before the previous inspection. There are particularly high rates on the BICS programme (96%), on the sport and recreation programmes (93%), and on the barbering programme (90%). Achievement on the construction related programmes is 81% and on the Offender

Learning and Skills Service funded ICT programmes is 79%. Achievement on the Level 2 FTC programmes is 74%. However, achievement on the PICTA ICT programmes during the last year was only 43%. This has been recognised by the management and appropriate action undertaken: achievement rates on the PICTA programmes increased significantly during the two months before reinspection.

12. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners develop their practical skills well. In the construction workshops, learners demonstrate good levels of basic competence in using hand tools. In these workshops, portfolios work is very well presented. On the barbering programme, learners develop skills sufficient to cut hair to standards acceptable in commercial salons. Learners on the BICS programmes develop skills beyond the minimum required for accreditation. Learners on the Level 3 information, advice and guidance course develop good listening skills and understand well the issues of confidentiality and appropriate intervention. In sport and recreation programmes, learners develop skills which equate to those within the leisure industry. Within PICTA, learners develop graphic design skills to a high standard. Learners are encouraged to reach a high level of skills to help them apply for and gain employment on release.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. The quality of the provision is satisfactory, in line with the prison's self-assessment. Teaching and learning in accredited PE provision is well planned. Practice and theory are effectively combined to produce programmes of learning which meet the wide range of learners' needs. Instructors use the very good industry standard facilities effectively. Learning materials are very well presented. Assessment is thorough.
14. The Level 3 IAG training course is delivered flexibly to meet the needs of learners in a prison environment. It supports a very effective peer mentoring programme within the residential wings. There are also examples of good peer mentoring within the employability training programme. Within the barbering salon, an offender previously trained and qualified through the programme demonstrates techniques and gives one to one support to new learners. On the BICS course, two offenders have now qualified to Level 3 and act as learning mentors. One of these mentors has qualified as an assessor and regularly assesses work of Level 1 learners.
15. The range of employability training has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. In sports and recreation, industrial cleaning and ICT there are good progression opportunities from entry level to Level 3. However, there are insufficient progression routes in the construction workshops where there is no provision beyond Level 1. There has been very slow progress towards the introduction of externally accredited qualifications in the laundry. No catering qualifications are offered within the main kitchens.
16. With access to only ICT training and laundry qualifications, vulnerable prisoners have very limited opportunities for employability training.
17. There is insufficient initial assessment of employability skills. The process for recognising and recording progress and achievement has been embraced as a means to record achievements in non-accredited learning. However initial assessments within employability training are not sufficiently detailed to act as a benchmark against which to

measure future progress. Most individual learning plans only record when a learner has achieved a specific skill rather than progress from initial assessment to the achievement of short and longer term targets. Internal certificates describe tasks that can be successfully completed rather than skills learnt following benchmark assessments.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

18. Achievement in literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes is at least satisfactory, in line with the prison's self-assessment. Overall, in 2007/08 72% of learners who start externally accredited programmes achieve a full qualification. For learners who start and complete an externally accredited programme retention is 76%. Achievement rates for those learners who complete programmes have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. The 234 learners who completed programmes in 2007/08 achieved 255 full qualifications. Some learners achieved accreditation at more than one level. Achievement rates for 2007/08 for numeracy programmes at all levels is good at 89%, but is unsatisfactory for literacy programmes at 54%. Achievement rates varied from 90% in ESOL entry Level 2 to 25% in literacy entry level 1. On learndirect programmes, the 85 learners who completed achieved 96 full qualifications. Attendance at timetabled classes is good at 83%. Learners' written work is satisfactory. Learners use computers well to enhance their learning and produce work to a good standard.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

19. The quality of the provision is satisfactory, in line with the prison's own self-assessment. During the previous inspection the planning of learning was weak. Teaching has improved and lessons are now well planned. Lesson plans are now carefully prepared to meet the varying needs of the learners. Learners are given a learning styles assessment during induction and tutors use this information effectively to meet individual needs. Tutors work sensitively with learners and give much encouragement to the many learners who lack self-confidence. A wide variety of appropriate learning packages and activities are used to support learning and to enable learners of different levels to be accommodated within the same lesson. In most classes, tutors use question and answer techniques effectively to check learning and maintain the interest and involvement of learners. In learndirect classes, teaching and learning is very well supported by an experienced and capable peer mentor.
20. Support for learners with dyslexia is very effective. Staff from across the prison establishment, including residential officers, workshop supervisors, library staff, and education and training staff are sufficiently aware to refer offenders to the specialist dyslexia and learning difficulties team. Peer mentors, trained within the information, advice and guidance programme sponsored by the St Giles Trust, act as key referral agents by giving offenders confidence to come forward for assessment. Within the last 12 months over 300 men have been referred to the team of which 60, following full assessment, were diagnosed as dyslexic. Peer mentors have been trained to recognise potential signs of dyslexia, reassure potential learners and encourage them to take part in the assessment. Skilled and experienced tutors effectively use a wide range of learning resources to provide individualised learning support. Much of this support takes place within the training workshops and on the residential wings.

21. The use of individual learning plans is satisfactory. Each learner has an individual learning plan specific to each course he is taking. Targets are set and reviewed every two weeks. Tutors and learners comment on progress towards the targets at the conclusion of each class. This progress is recorded with the individual learning plan framework. As the prison's self-assessment report recognises, diagnostic testing is not routinely used in literacy, numeracy and ESOL to identify learning needs and set targets. Targets are not always sufficiently specific and soft skill targets are rarely recorded. For learners who remain in prison for too short a time to enter for national qualifications, internal certificates to recognise their achievements have been developed. However, there are no robust internal verification procedures to standardise and moderate the achievement criteria of these certificates.
22. There is a satisfactory range of learning and progression opportunities. In literacy, numeracy and ESOL external accreditation is available from entry level 1 to Level 2. Many learners progress well from one level to the next.
23. Insufficient literacy, numeracy and ESOL tutors are qualified to nationally recognised standards. Although an appropriate staff development programme is in place, of the 23 staff teaching on the programme at the time of inspection, there is only one with a Level 4 qualification in numeracy, one with a Level 4 qualification in literacy and two with a Level 4 equivalent in ESOL. Four other staff have postgraduate teaching qualifications but not directly relating to literacy, numeracy and ESOL.

Personal development and social integration

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

24. Learners on personal development and social integration programmes produce good standards of work and demonstrate good levels of understanding. Learners gain useful knowledge and skills in, for example, cookery, garden design, drug awareness and healthy living. Learners speak positively about the skills they have acquired and how they will be able to use them on release. Many learners taking art programmes make very good progress, enabling them to create pictures that show some skill and expertise. There is some evidence of improvements in soft skills such as self-esteem and confidence or team working skills, although the recording of these improvements is often lacking in detail. Learners speak positively about how they feel better about themselves and how they feel more confident.
25. The rate of qualification achievement is satisfactory overall, as it was at the previous inspection. In 2007/08 achievement rates for the three largest accredited programmes were 66%, 71% and 85%. Attendance at programmes is good.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Satisfactory Grade 3

26. The quality of the provision has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory, in line with the prison's own self-assessment.
27. Pre-release employability training is good. The Foundation Training Company (FTC) provides a well planned programme for offenders approaching their release dates. Two-

day short programmes and a longer programme meet the needs of both long term and short term offenders effectively. Programmes focus on developing employability, jobsearch and ICT skills. Offenders particularly benefit from guidance on disclosure issues. The programme also provides access to a wide range of guidance and support regarding employment and other practical matters, for example housing. Support is also available for those on remand so that early planning for a return to employment can be made.

28. Many learners benefit from good one to one coaching. Tutors know and understand their learners and give support sensitively. They successfully build learners' confidence and encourage respect. The quality of the teaching has improved overall since the previous inspection and prison lesson observations would suggest that few lessons are uninspiring or dull. However, only a minority of lessons include any aspect to improve learners' understanding of equality of opportunity.
29. The prison now offers a good range of personal development and social integration programmes. For example there is range of over 30 short two week programmes covering, for example, sex and relationships, creative writing, alpine gardening and interior design. Most offenders are able to complete at least one of these during their time in HMP Chelmsford. Longer programmes include everyday cookery and art. Many of the personal development and social integration programmes have an emphasis on developing learners' skills such as self-esteem, team working or improved confidence although the monitoring of the achievement of these is not always well recorded. While the range of programmes for vulnerable prisoners is narrower than the rest of the prison's population the range on offer to them is appropriate with over 30 programmes. The number of offenders taking open learning programmes has increased since the previous inspection.
30. Guidance and support for learners is generally satisfactory. At the previous inspection the prison did not use individual learning plans effectively but their use has improved since then. However, target-setting for soft skills such as improved self-esteem, team working or confidence is poor. When a learner completes a programme tutors identify whether the learner has improved, for example, his confidence or self-esteem. However, these skills are not assessed at the start of the programme making objective judgements about improvements difficult. Similarly targets or goals for their improvement are not recorded. Targets associated with the core aim of the programmes are recorded although many are insufficiently precise or are simply a list of the competencies identified in the qualification and are not personalised.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory Grade 3

31. Leadership and operational management have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now good. The prison judged itself to be satisfactory.
32. The prison has a clear strategy to develop learning and skills within the prison. The senior management team regularly discusses the provision offered at the prison. A report is provided once each month for discussion at the SMT meetings. During the past six months

the profile of learning and skills within the prison has been raised with the deputy governor chairing or attending most of the most important meetings regarding learning and skills. Many of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been addressed effectively at a prison-wide level. For example the restricted access to the library and to some learning and skills provision has been dealt with at the highest level in the prison. A new policy has been put in place and, while it is not yet fully implemented, the number of cancelled sessions due to prison officer redeployment has been reduced significantly since April 2008. The amount of education, training and work has increased since the previous inspection and few offenders are now unemployed. Relationships between the various learning and skills providers within the prison have improved significantly and all providers now work well together, sharing information and working together for the benefit of learners. Others not directly involved with learning and skills are aware of developments within learning and skills.

33. The prison has a good focus on improving the quality of the provision. The self-assessment process is now a routine part of the prison's quality assurance cycle and is supported at every level within the prison. The process is appropriately consultative and, although quite long, the report is appropriately evaluative and many of the strengths and areas for improvement are similar to those identified by inspectors. Grades in the self-assessment report are either the same or a grade lower than inspectors' judgements. The use of data is significantly improved compared with the previous inspection. An increased amount of data, suitably analysed, is available to inform managers. Arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are appropriate. The processes which are used by MKC are well established and joint observations with the head of learning and skills to enable her to be assured that the process is robust and accurate now routinely take place. The head of learning and skills undertakes observations of other providers within the prison. All providers within the prison carry out a regular review of programmes to identify the strengths and what could be improved in each course.
34. Partnership working is effective. The prison works with a wide range of external organisations. These partnerships are effective and benefit learners. For example Chelmsford Council works with prisoners on arts projects. Colchester museum has brought in artefacts from the Roman and Anglo Saxon periods for learners to draw. Links with other organisations provide useful opportunities for employment after release. The prison, through a European Social Fund project, is working with 10 European prisons to share resources and ideas and to enable prisons to create a prisoner magazine. Another project is used to identify skills shortages in the country of origin of foreign national prisoners to increase their chance of employment on release. Partnership working between all the providers who deliver programmes within HMP Chelmsford is particularly good. The prison has developed good links with employers throughout Essex. The prison holds an annual event for employers to show them the way that offenders develop useful workplace skills. The event is well attended.
35. Access to the library, which offenders value, is significantly better than at the previous inspection. It is, however, small and cramped limiting its usefulness.
36. Activities to promote equality of opportunity at the prison are satisfactory, as they were at the previous inspection. Learners are treated with respect. The prison has a well established diversity team which includes offenders and representatives of all the major faiths. This team produces a useful leaflet designed to help others understand diversity and

how it might affect them. During induction offenders are made aware of the prison's approach to equality and diversity. They also receive appropriate training to improve their knowledge of equality of opportunity. Prison staff and staff from all subcontractors receive good, well planned diversity awareness training and most have a good understanding of equality of opportunity. However, tutors do not sufficiently incorporate equality of opportunity issues into their lessons to reinforce and raise learners' understanding of equality and diversity. Processes to ensure that learning materials used by tutors do not reinforce stereotypes are largely informal. Basic prison information is translated into other languages to meet the needs of offenders whose first language is not English. Prisoner pay policy encourages offenders to participate in learning and skills rather than take up work without training. Each year the prison runs a week of activities to promote equality and diversity across the prison. Events include a session by Essex police on race hatred and a wheelchair basketball competition. The prison has an appropriate policy for complaints, which are dealt with in a timely manner. The prison is aware of its obligations for safeguarding learners and procedures are appropriate to meet government requirements. Policies and procedures are appropriate, although not all staff have received specific training on safeguarding.

What learners like:

- Friendly, helpful tutors
- 'Tutors make things interesting'
- Tutors are really patient
- 'Doing the art has really made me feel better about things'
- 'Education is dead good!'
- Gaining a qualification that's useful outside
- 'Learning to cook has changed my whole life'
- Doing this course will help me get a job

What learners think could improve:

- Nothing!
- More practical classes like building and lift truck driving
- 'We could do with a better library'
- Not enough employability training for VPs
- Classes on Saturday and Sunday
- 'You just get started on a course and then you get shipped out'