

# HMP Bedford

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## Contents

Background information .....	3
Inspection judgements .....	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider .....	4
Summary of grades awarded .....	5
Overall judgement .....	6
Effectiveness of provision.....	6
Capacity to improve .....	6
Key strengths .....	7
Key areas for improvement .....	7
Main findings.....	8
Employability training .....	8
Achievement and standards .....	8
Quality of provision .....	8
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL.....	9
Achievement and standards .....	9
Quality of provision .....	9
Personal development and social integration .....	11
Achievement and standards .....	11
Quality of provision .....	11
Leadership and management .....	13
Equality of opportunity .....	13
What learners like.....	15
What learners think could improve .....	15

## 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 Bedford is a local, Category B prison that has been on its current site since 1801. It was enlarged in 1849 and a new gate lodge, houseblock and health care centre were added in the early 1990s. It has an operational capacity of 506 prisoners. At the time of inspection there were 435 prisoners, 305 of whom were sentenced. The prisoners at HMP Bedford are all adult men, over the age of 21. The average length of stay is currently 50 days, although the typical stay is often much shorter. Twenty-one per cent of the population are foreign nationals of whom 3% are non English speaking prisoners. Twenty-one prisoners have life sentences.
2. The head of offender management responsible for learning and skills reports directly to the Governor and has a wide range of responsibilities. HMP Bedford operates a 'spilt regime', offering part time work to prisoners on A, B, D and F wings and full time occupation for prisoners on E wing. Prisoners on C wing are usually involved in a stage of the induction process and are not usually available for work.
3. The contracted Offenders Learning and Skills Service provision is delivered by A4e. Other provision is provided by learndirect for basic information communication technology (ICT) in literacy and numeracy. The Ormiston Trust provides a parenting course and 'Storybook Dads'. The prison service provides a number of programmes including industrial cleaning and catering. Tribal provides the information, advice and guidance service. The Shannon Trust provides the 'Toe by Toe' reading scheme.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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	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	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards overall are good. The quality of provision including teaching and learning, the extent to which provision meets learners' needs and guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Specifically, achievement and standards for employability training, literacy, numeracy and language, and personal development and social integration are good. The quality of provision for employability training, literacy, numeracy and language, personal development and social integration are satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The prison's approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

### Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The prison has demonstrated it has sufficient capacity to make improvements. An action plan has addressed all of the key challenges since the previous inspection. Additional learning and training opportunities have steadily been introduced to cater for the wide range of abilities at the prison. Systems and procedures to ensure the quality of the learning and skills provision have recently been reviewed but there has been some slippage in completion of some of the actions.
6. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. It is a valued part of the normal business planning cycle of the prison. The self-assessment process focuses on all activities within the prison including those of partners. The involvement of staff in the self-assessment process has been mostly satisfactory. Learners' views are systematically taken into account. The self-assessment report used for the inspection was the third produced by the prison. The report is excessively descriptive and contained many strengths that did not have a substantial impact on the learner. It is effectively aligned to the inspection strands. Data are appropriately used to make relevant judgements about achievements. Trends over time showed a satisfactory improvement in achievement and attendance rates. The section of the report describing the quality of provision under each strand was insufficiently comprehensive. The grades awarded at inspection are in some areas lower than that identified in the self-assessment report.

## Key strengths

- Much good achievement across learning and skills activities
- Good engagement of learners in personal and social development programmes
- Good strategic planning to improve learning opportunities and activities

## Key areas for improvement

- Improve and increase the programme of the quality improvement cycle
- Improve the timing and quality of information advice and guidance for learning
- Insufficient reinforcement of learners' understanding of equality and diversity

## Main findings

### Employability training

#### Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

7. Achievement and standards are good. Achievement rates are good. As an average, the achievement rate across all programmes is high at 85%. More specifically, the achievement rate in the largest programme of ICT is 92%. Fifty-five per cent of the learners taking part in the learndirect ICT programmes also achieved an externally accredited qualification. Current learners are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress with their awards.
8. Learners' attendance and punctuality to the sessions are good. The standard of learners' work is mostly satisfactory and for some ICT learners is good. Learners' adherence to health and safety and food hygiene is adequate overall. Through the learning programmes learners acquire satisfactory workplace skills. Many learners have increased their confidence by achieving a work related qualification.

#### Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching, training and learning are overall satisfactory. In the better sessions there is good use of contextualisation, the different abilities of learners are taken into account and they participate well. In other instances, the sessions are heavily led by the tutor and learner engagement is poor. In some independent sessions where learners are working at their own pace, not all learners are being engaged in learning. Learning styles are not being considered in teaching sessions. Much learning is based on completing workbooks which contain excessive text. Teaching and learning are conducted in appropriate environments and the use of resources is satisfactory. The classroom atmosphere is relaxed and tutors promote the use of good manners. Learners behave appropriately during the sessions. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Assessors make the appropriate judgements to establish learners' competence, and give good feedback.
10. Planning and recording of individual learning is ineffective. Individual learning plans do not link to the length of sentence. There is no recording of short-term targets in many learning plans. Handover comments from one tutor to another for the same class do not set specific targets for learners. The progress reviews do not highlight the learning that has taken place.
11. The programmes are well structured to meet the needs of the short-term prisoners. Access is good to employability skills courses for all learners. There are no waiting lists. A wide range of courses has been specifically designed to be completed in a very short time to help prisoners to gain employment in other prisons and on release. The balance is particularly good between theory and practice in the industrial cleaning programmes.



12. Longer term learners have limited vocational training choices. The prison is planning to rectify this with the development of further vocational programmes in painting and decorating and brickwork in the near future. Those learners who are undertaking National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in catering at level 1 are not able to exercise a choice over their optional units and undertake little or no practical cookery.
13. Support and guidance are satisfactory overall. Learners receive satisfactory learning support. Tutors deliver effective individual support during the sessions and apply their own knowledge and experience to enhance learners' understanding. Learners receive ineffective information, advice and guidance. The initial screening process has been improved but it is slow and many new arrivals at the prison have to wait for a number of days before they receive their screening. Some learners are placed on the incorrect programme.

## Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

14. Achievement of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners is very good, with 84% of those staying for the planned duration achieving the qualification, and the remainder still in learning. Learners' work within their files is good and indicates good progress in language skills.
15. Achievement is good in numeracy. In Skills for Life provision managed by education, achievement for level 1 and level 2 numeracy is high, at 88% and 83% respectively. This provision is delivered through other programmes such as employability skills and business management, ensuring relevance to learners' interests and developing expertise. Achievement in learndirect level 2 numeracy is very good, with 94% of learners who stayed for the full duration gaining the full qualification. Learners across learndirect Skills for Life provision are successful in achieving personal learning goals. However, qualification achievement on other learndirect level 1 and level 2 programmes is significantly lower than that for level 2 numeracy, at between 50% and 60% of those staying for the planned duration.
16. In the discrete Skills for Life provision within education, which covers entry level literacy and numeracy, achievement of literacy entry levels 2 and 3 is good at 74% and 76% respectively. Learner numbers and achievement on other programmes are insufficient for statistical reliability. Attendance of learners in Skills for Life provision is good.

Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Teaching and learning within Skills for Life provision are satisfactory. Most learners maintain focus and motivation through the lengthy course sessions and make satisfactory progress. Tutors establish good, constructive relationships with

learners, and care is taken to ensure that topics and examples are relevant. Planning of programmes and individual sessions is satisfactory. The analysis of learners' needs and monitoring of individual progress are effective. However, there is insufficiently robust use of Skills for Life data to analyse the achievement of different learner cohorts, to inform the planning and development of provision.

18. Accommodation and resources to support learning are satisfactory overall. The main base for literacy and numeracy within the education block is appropriately resourced and is suited to the size of the group. The language room, although physically adequate to accommodate the small learner groups, is a constricted space and not suited to the dynamics of whole-group work. The main learndirect baseroom is well resourced, with a suite of 10 personal computers available to learners. Its position at the main cell hub restricted access to some cell-blocks, and a further small learndirect room has been set up to ensure equity of access.
19. The range of programmes to develop and support Skills for Life is satisfactory. Within education, there are discrete courses to support literacy and numeracy at entry levels 1, 2 and 3, while language learners are supported from pre-entry level to a point where they can cope effectively with entry level literacy. Learners with literacy and numeracy skills at level 1 or 2 can gain these qualifications within other education programmes such as employability skills. Opportunity to gain level 1 and level 2 literacy and numeracy is also provided through learndirect provision. This arrangement effectively caters for individuals with different learning styles. Collaborative work between education and kitchen staff, and also with the Ormiston Trust, has enabled the development of established literacy and numeracy to facilitate dual accreditation of literacy at entry level where this is appropriate.
20. Support for learners is satisfactory overall. Identification of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs once they are allocated to education or learndirect is thorough. Tutors give effective learning support to individuals within sessions, and learners appreciate the support they receive. All classes within education are timetabled for a regular library visit, where learners with literacy, numeracy and language support needs can access a good range of appropriate resources. Toe by Toe is currently being developed, with representation now on all wings. Information, advice and guidance are ineffective in accelerating the move to education and learning, and learners sometimes have an unacceptable wait to access provision to meet their needs.

## Personal development and social integration

### Achievement and standards

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

21. Achievement on the parenting course is very good, with 100% of those staying for the planned duration gaining the level 1 qualification in parenting. This strength is recognised in the self-assessment report, as is the need for a higher level programme to support progression and recognise the standards being achieved. Learners are highly aware of and can articulate the progress they have made on the course and of the relevance and applicability of the knowledge and skills they are acquiring to other areas of their lives, in particular to their relationships with their children and partners.
22. Learners on the very recently introduced qualifications of alcohol awareness and anger management programmes are producing work of a good standard. Within the newly accredited art programme, learners are gaining in skills and producing work of the standard to meet the requirements of the qualification. Attendance on personal and social development programmes during the inspection is good.

### Quality of provision

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

23. Learners remain well engaged through the long teaching and learning sessions. In the best sessions, they contribute well to constructive group discussion, showing good development of knowledge and understanding and an increase in self-awareness. The rapport and respect between tutor and learners and between learners is good, with learners supporting each other where appropriate. Learners in all sessions exhibited the ability to work well independently and to maintain concentration. A particularly effective basic art programme is available every afternoon in healthcare.
24. Teaching is satisfactory overall although sessions observed by inspectors during the inspection showed a significant variation. In the best sessions, tutors led very well planned and paced sessions which engaged and motivated learners and which were made particularly relevant to their life interests and issues. Learners were both supported and challenged well. Assessment of learning was clearly structured and in some cases at the same time maximised opportunities to recognise achievement. In other sessions, however, there was insufficient planning for learning and achievement, learning goals and targets were not detailed or precise, and teaching approaches were insufficiently varied.
25. Resources to support personal and social development are satisfactory overall, and are deployed to ensure that learners' needs are met. For example, staff take provision onto health care and tailor it to individual learners' needs. There is a full programme of activity for vulnerable prisoners. The well stocked library provides a good resource for learners who have regular time-tabled access through education.

26. However, some accommodation used for personal and social development programmes does not adequately support a learning environment. Some of the rooms are cramped for the numbers attending, and become uncomfortably warm and claustrophobic. In one session observed, the door had to be left open for much of the session to create some air-flow. In another, electronic equipment exacerbated the existing over-heating problem.
27. The programme range is satisfactory for the size of prison, and the provision is under-pinned by supportive cross-prison working. Education works with health to ensure that the needs of those in health care are appropriately met. Vulnerable prisoners have access to a full range of programmes. Learners are well supported in accessing open learning opportunities. Personal and social development is well supported through the chaplaincy. Links with the library to extend learning are good. Art and music provision is available to learners; however, waiting lists indicate that the limited creative arts provision is insufficient to meet all needs and interests.
28. Support for learners is satisfactory overall. Diagnostic assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs once they are allocated to education is thorough. Tutors give effective learning support to individuals within sessions, and learners appreciate the support they receive. All classes within education are timetabled for a regular library visit, where learners with literacy, numeracy and language support needs can access a good range of appropriate resources. 'Toe by Toe' is currently being developed, with representation now on all wings. Learners are supported in accessing open learning opportunities where appropriate. Those engaged in open learning are well supported through a weekly open learning session which includes library access. However, information, advice and guidance are ineffective and learners sometimes have an unacceptable wait to access provision to meet their needs.

## Leadership and management

Satisfactory Grade 3

Equality of opportunity                      Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

29. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good strategic planning to improve learning activities for prisoners has resulted in clear plans to effectively develop the provision in the vocational training area within the existing space constraints of the establishment. Senior staff responsible for learning and skills in education have changed in the last 12 months and have been effective in improving the networking and working relationship between all involved in learning and skills. Communications in the education team are frequent although informal with little recording of minutes. Operational issues and learner performance are appropriately discussed at the meetings.
30. The recognition and recording of the progress of achievement has been implemented in non-accredited provision however many learners are being issued a certificate with an inappropriate heading, using an acronym for non-accredited programmes rather than specifying what it is they have achieved. Learners think they are gaining a qualification. The certificates do not record the progress made by learners. The process of setting targets and recording the progress of these achievements is insufficient across all the non-accredited provision in the prison.
31. Staff are sufficiently qualified and their planned personal development activities link well with their job responsibilities. Some members of staff did not receive an appraisal over the last year but this is currently being addressed by the current management team.
32. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. A number of policies have been produced including one for diversity, and older prisoners and the one for disability is in the process of being reviewed. Throughout the prison there is a good ethos of respect shown by all staff and prisoners reflected by the good attendance and punctuality by prisoners. The pay for prisoners has been reviewed and gives incentives for learning and work. An excellent monthly diversity newsletter produced since November 2008 has been well received by prisoners and staff but the font size is small and does not reflect different reading abilities. A variety of successful events take place in the year to celebrate different cultures. The library has an excellent range of foreign books reflecting the diverse population of the prison. Although translation services are available little information is produced in different languages. A recent purchase of translation equipment has started to address this gap. A programme of staff training is taking place for equality and diversity but there is a lack of reinforcing the understanding of equality and diversity during training and work by tutors. Some lesson plans do not contain clear and specific activities related to the further development of equality and diversity topics. The prison recognises that access for those with mobility difficulties is difficult in this prison and training and education is adapted to ensure access and to meet individual needs by taking training to the individual

when required. The art class in healthcare has meant that long stay prisoners can receive pay for attending.

33. The information advice and guidance service is ineffective in correctly signposting learners within the prison. Although language translation services are available, there is no provision of information literature in any languages other than English. The information, advice and guidance service is available to all prisoners including those residing in specific wings however, not all interventions are conducted in an appropriate environment. No pre release resettlement courses are available. A well attended discharge board is run about six weeks before with relevant supporting agencies staff providing some information and guidance on release into the community.
34. Quality improvement is satisfactory. The quality improvement group has been expanded to all organisations involved in learning and skills in the prison. The group is beginning to implement and understand their role in quality improvement with good links made with all the services involved in learning and skills. A learning and skills quality action plan is linked to the common inspection framework and progress is assessed on a monthly basis. Realistic targets are now set to improve the provision. The implementation and continuation of quality assurance process has been slow over the last year. The frequency of teaching and learning observations has slipped, with many new staff not being observed within the first three months of commencement of employment. A few staff carrying out the teaching and learning observations are not sufficiently trained and there is no moderation of observations. This area for improvement was partially recognised in the self-assessment report. Internal verification activity is now satisfactory. The education department has been active in addressing a gap by training more staff as internal verifiers. Learner feedback in education has not always been systematically analysed and the provider is reviewing this process to improve the quality of the feedback obtained.

## What learners like:

- I like this way of working. I can see the progress I am making (learndirect)
- I like art – it is therapeutic
- It is good getting some external recognition for what I have achieved
- I like learning about myself
- The parenting course was good, it taught me a lot
- The style is good not like school
- I feel safe in education
- The trainer explains things clearly
- Education keeps me busy
- I will use these skills when I get out

## What learners think could improve:

- Tea breaks during the classes
- My medication treatment means I miss some classes
- Limited range of activities
- Takes too long to get on a course
- I would like to do bricklaying or carpentry
- I would like education twice a day