

HMP Pentonville

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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 work programmes:
 - Employability training
 - Literacy, numeracy and ESOL
 - Personal development and social integration

Description of the provider

1. HMP Pentonville is an adult male category B prison, which serves the local courts in north London. The prison can accommodate 1152 offenders at the time of the inspection the population is 1095 offenders. Of these 57% are on remand and 43% are convicted offenders. One wing houses up to 60 vulnerable offenders. For approximately 35%, English is not the first language. The average length of stay is five weeks.
2. Education is provided by the City & Islington College, through an Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) contract. The education department is not open during the evenings or at weekends. It offers courses in literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), financial literacy, key skills, employability and employment skills programme, art, and information and communications technology (ICT). Education has approximately 140 part-time places available each day. Approximately 45% of the population attend education full-time or part-time. The London Advice Partnership is contracted to provide Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and the library is managed by Islington Central Libraries Service.
3. Offenders are employed in the workshops, in cleaning, in the kitchens, on painting and decorating, and as orderlies in the gym and library. Approximately 50% participate in meaningful work including education in the prison. The prison has five workshops; three carry out light industrial work including textiles and contract electrical repair and maintenance, some of which is accredited. One shop is an industrial cleaning workshop offering accredited industrial cleaning and biohazard training. One is dedicated for resettlement. The prison has an indoor sports hall and a small workshop equipped as a fitness area to provide both recreational and some accredited training.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade: 3

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Overall achievement and standards are satisfactory and the quality of provision is good. This includes employability training, literacy, numeracy, ESOL and personal development and social integration. The provision for those attending the healthcare day centre is broad and well managed and the support for ESOL meets individual learners' needs and is particularly well delivered. Learners are supported well, although the provision of IAG is limited. The prison benefits from strong leadership and commitment to learning and skills development. The management of some aspects such as the use of data is weak. The prison's approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade: 3

5. The prison's capacity to make further improvement is satisfactory. Since the previous reinspection in 2006, HMP Pentonville has made staff changes, including the appointment of a new governor and head of learning and skills (HOLS). The senior management team has undergone a significant restructure and the development and provision of learning and skills continues to be a strong focus. Changes to accommodation, more specifically the relocation of the library and the physical education (PE) department, have improved accessibility for offenders.
6. The strengths identified at the reinspection of good change management and good links with external agencies and partners have been further strengthened. The weakness identified in low participation in learning and skills has been partially addressed. Participation in learning and skills has increased steadily over the past three years to 45%. This includes some offenders who may only attend for one session per week. Improvements have been made to quality improvement processes. The IAG service is under resourced and does not fully meet the needs of the prisoner population. Additional resources have been identified but it is too early to measure the impact. A wide range of data is collected but the use of it as a means of measuring performance and setting targets for improvement is weak.
7. The prison has a well considered range of strategic and operational objectives for the development of learning and skills set out in its document 'Pride of Pentonville'. The focus on resettlement and the Pathways and actions to reduce the likelihood of reoffending is clear. The range of provision aimed at supporting education, training and employment (ETE) has been successfully introduced and a small number of offenders are released under temporary licence into the community. Progress in introducing a system to recognise and record learners' progress and achievement (RARPA) has not yet been fully developed.

8. The self-assessment process is satisfactory with appropriate input from learning and skills providers and highlights effectively progress from the previous inspection. Action and development plans are thorough and carefully followed through. Effective use is made of learners' views. Most staff fully understand the content of the self-assessment report and how it contributes to improving the quality of provision. The report identified many of the strengths and areas for improvement noted at inspection and matched most the grades awarded by inspectors. Judgements were generally clear and evaluative. Little effective use was made of data to support statements regarding achievement and standards.

Key strengths

- High achievement of literacy, numeracy and language skills
- Well prepared and managed initial assessment of learners' support needs and teaching and learning
- Good and appropriate use of offenders to support prison inductions and learning sessions
- Strong leadership and focus on learning and skills to support reducing reoffending
- Well developed and effective work with internal and external partners to support improvement

Key areas for improvement

- Narrow range of personal development programmes
- Inadequate use of data to inform decision making and set targets for improvement
- Poor management of attendance and punctuality
- Under developed use of processes to recognise and record learners' development
- Insufficient meaningful work opportunities for vulnerable offenders

Main findings

Employability training

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade: 3

9. Achievement and standards overall are satisfactory. In industrial cleaning and PE achievements are good at 100% for those who complete the programmes. Most Learners in industrial workshops achieve qualifications in company-specific electrical testing, as well as a range of health and safety qualifications. Achievement in ICT, sewing operations and equipment is satisfactory.
10. The standard of work is satisfactory overall for all programmes but good in some industrial workshops. Many learners have increased their confidence and self-esteem since attending education and training sessions. They are enthusiastic and more knowledgeable about the use of computers, work practices and procedures. Learners take pride in their work and enjoy working in a professional ICT environment and working on commercial contracts. They value their qualifications and the opportunity to learn new skills, which will improve their employment opportunities.
11. Punctuality is poor in the workshops and vocational training. Prison regimes often result in learners arriving up to 20 minutes late, which limits the time that they can participate. Attendance is poor in some sessions. For example, in some ICT sessions staff receive attendance lists which contain the names of up to 19 learners and often only a small number of learners attend. Staff are not sure who will be attending sessions or the level of competence of those who arrive. This was recognised in the self-assessment report.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade: 2

12. Teaching and learning are good in education and vocational training and particularly in practical sessions. Staff are knowledgeable and up-to-date with technical competence and expertise. Learners are well motivated and engage in learning sessions. The prison places a strong emphasis on creating an effective working environment and work practices. A good work ethic is maintained and promoted. This is particularly evident in industrial cleaning and tool hire workshops. The contracted tool hire workshop where learners carry out electrical repairs is linked to a national employer who manages the workflow from the site. Learners are involved at each stage of the maintenance and repair of a wide range of equipment for commercial contracts. Jobs include quality control checks to ensure high standards of work to meet industry needs. Learners are able to apply the skills they have learnt in industrial cleaning, particularly for biohazard cleaning, in the prison to good effect. The industrial cleaning team have recently won a national award for the quality of learners' skills developed in this area. They are also trained as assessors within the prison. Learners are able to work

very well in teams, interact effectively with each other and staff and clearly understand their own roles and responsibilities.

13. Education, training and practical work activities meet the individual needs of most learners. Training is flexible in education and in most workshops. Practical training in workshops meets employers' needs well and programmes are responsive to external requirements. Courses such as the Sports Leaders Awards and Fitness Instructor programmes in PE are well developed and aimed at employment needs. The Construction Skills Certification Scheme Award is popular and recognised by the industry for employment purposes. Media courses reflect commercial practice and good links with a national newspaper provides support for the prison magazine from visiting journalists.
14. Support for learners is good and learners have access to an effective range of support services and external agencies where appropriate. Induction to learning and skills for new arrivals at the prison is satisfactory but learners receive little formal impartial advice and guidance to help them choose the course which is right for them. Learners in workshops are able to access support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL, but staff are not always aware of which learners will attend these support sessions.
15. All staff ensure that learners work in a safe learning environment. Personal protective equipment is used well and safe working practices are carried out and monitored effectively in the workshops. Peer support is good and some learners deliver inductions to new offenders in industrial workshops. Others learners are responsible for delivering courses such as manual handling and supporting learners to gain health and safety qualifications. Learners and peer mentors have good rapport and respect each another.
16. Initial assessment of individual skills for those that join ICT classes does not take place. Although staff discuss individual achievements verbally with learners, these are not well recorded. Learners' prior experience is not formally recognised. Staff are often unable to plan effectively to meet individual needs.
17. Electronic learning plans have been established in ICT to record details on individual learners. Learners are also able to record details of the tasks they have completed in the session. Information recorded is generic and insufficiently detailed to allow learners to understand targets that they need to achieve for the next session. Reviews are mostly informal with little information recorded on previous actions completed and targets set for the next meeting.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade: 2

18. Achievement of part qualifications for literacy, numeracy and ESOL is high. In ESOL for the past two years around 150 awards have been gained with an

achievement of 90%. For entry level literacy and numeracy for the year starting April 2008 achievement overall was 90%. At levels 1 and 2 from August 2008 to April 2009 achievement was 85%. Many learners, however, leave the prison before completing learning programmes or achieving accredited units.

19. Learners show good standards of work in written tasks and are able to articulate well in class to demonstrate good understanding of topics covered. Learners are keen to engage in learning and respond enthusiastically to set tasks and complete these well. Their behaviour in sessions is good. Many learners experience increased self-confidence and improved personal effectiveness.
20. Learners' attendance at sessions is irregular and low overall. Often less than half of the registered learners attend due to other prison activities. Tutors are uncertain who will attend. Irregular attendance contributes to a lack of continuity in learning and this is making forward planning and target-setting difficult.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade: 2

21. The quality of provision is good. Arrangements for initially assessing skills and diagnosing learning needs are particularly good. Dedicated tutors carry out thorough screening and assessment of offenders learning needs and make recommendations for learning plans based upon their findings. Interviews are used effectively to identify learners' aspirations and preferences and to record prior learning and work experience. Assessment records are forwarded to appropriate tutors and the findings are used well to place learners in courses and groups suited to their abilities, preferences and needs. ESOL learners are promptly identified and assessed well for skills levels using specialised tests.
22. Tutors prepare well for lessons and pay particularly good attention to providing a range of differentiated activities to enable individual learning. Tutors are enthusiastic and use their skills well to motivate learners. Management of sessions is strong. Tutors are skilful at engaging learners. Tutors use their teaching skills well and set interesting and suitably challenging tasks, enabling learners to make progress. Frequent use of praise and encouragement by tutors is a key factor in developing learners' skills. Some lesson plans are particularly good and well structured and include well planned activities for learners at different skills levels.
23. Lessons are well resourced with good learning materials, which meet specific individual learning needs. The new computers and information learning technology (ILT), such as interactive whiteboards, are used well to engage learners. Learners with low literacy skills are encouraged to improve by using multisensory computer-aided learning. Most classrooms provide stimulating learning environments, decorated with information posters and displays of learners' work.

24. Learners are well supported by tutors. Relationships between tutors and learners are good with a high level of mutual respect. Learners receive good levels of individual support during lessons with tutors being frequently assisted by learning support assistants and peer supporters. In one numeracy session two peer supporters took managing roles to lead and encourage learners to good effect.
25. The prison does not have a formal Skills for Life strategy, although strategies for improvement are included within the learning and skills action plan. The curriculum for discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL is adequate to meet the needs of those offenders wishing to learn. Waiting lists for courses are short and well managed and learners start programmes soon after completing education induction. A range of courses are provided from pre-entry to level 2, although provision for learners above level 2 is limited to key skills and some distance learning with few learners. A new accredited course at level 3 in journalism has been introduced in collaboration with a national newspaper.
26. Outreach work extending learning to offenders who are unable to attend education, although recently increased, remains under-developed. Literacy, numeracy and ESOL support sessions are timetabled for workshops, healthcare and the residential wing for vulnerable offenders. Learning support is provided on demand in the segregation unit. In some cases venues for outreach work are not fully fit for purpose, minimal resources and intrusion of noise from adjacent workshops, make teaching difficult.
27. Learning plans contain useful information to guide further learning. However, learning plans are generally insufficiently personalised. Learning plans are composed largely of records of past and current learning and achievement and targets within them are insufficiently specific to guide individual learning.

Personal development and social integration

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade: 3

28. Learners' achievements are satisfactory on the few accredited courses that are offered. Some learners in the main education centre attend art classes and achieve one or more units of the qualification providing they stay long enough to complete the necessary 30 guided learning hours per unit. Nineteen learners achieved units in the last six months. Insufficient information is collected about learners' achievements on other accredited courses, such as financial literacy and skills for life preparation for work programmes.
29. Learners produce very good standards of work in art and pottery. The prison has commissioned art work for the visits and reception areas from learners and the work is much acclaimed by visitors and staff alike. Artwork is often displayed in the prison visiting room and in local hospitals. Much good work is done with offenders to develop their personal skills. This is particularly noticeable in the resettlement skills for life programmes where they are encouraged to look closely

at their strengths and weaknesses and develop action plans to help them move on to a pre-release course and ultimately gain work upon release. Learners also develop confidence and self-esteem through delivering equality and diversity sessions during the offenders' inductions and as orderlies in areas of the prison.

30. Attendance is irregular. Learners generally attend punctually, although arrival at sessions is sometimes delayed by prison regimes. The prison often recruits up to double the class size to ensure that classes are full. However, sessions often run with small numbers of learners.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade: 2

31. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with good aspects in individual learning sessions, particularly in the practical and creative learning sessions. In the Healthcare Day Centre tutors are very experienced in working with offenders with a wide variety of learning and social barriers. They work closely with the mental health staff to provide a supportive environment for learning.
32. Learning sessions are well prepared. In the better sessions learners are enthusiastically engaged in learning and group work is used very effectively in drama and music sessions to provide opportunities to develop social skills. Learners work well together and increase other learners' confidence and self-esteem. In some sessions group work is often inhibited where only a small number of learners attend.
33. In most learning sessions learning plans are not used to develop short-term targets or support needs. Learners' skills development, improvement in relationships and interpersonal skills are not always recognised or recorded. Opportunities to link to the wider key skills, such as working with others and improving own learning and performance are missed. The prison has recognised this as an area for development in the self-assessment report.
34. The range of formal learning opportunities is very narrow and in many instances not linked to qualifications. This is recognised by the prison in its self-assessment report. The curriculum for vulnerable offenders is particularly narrow with limited art and music facilities offered. The curriculum offered in the healthcare day centre is broad with an emphasis on the therapeutic value to offenders with activities such as drama, music, basic skills, cookery and yoga. The day centre provision caters for about 25 offenders at any one time, although many more offenders take advantage of the opportunity to attend sessions. Attendance is open to any offender who is deemed to benefit from time in a supportive learning atmosphere and is not limited to those in healthcare. Prison wide interventions and activities across the prison focus well on supporting offenders' personal and social skills development. Offenders are used well as classroom assistants and a recent innovation is the peer support programme, which offers accreditation to level 1 and 2.

35. Resettlement support is satisfactory. Good focus is given to reducing the reoffending agenda and the pathways to resettlement. Links with internal and external agencies such as Jobcentre Plus are good and good support is provided through the social and life skills programme, which supports the preparation for work course and helps learners develop jobsearch and curriculum vitae writing skills. Job/training fairs are frequently held and supported well by employers and training providers. They provide information about employment and training opportunities and are often attended by around 100 offenders.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade: 3

Equality of opportunity

Satisfactory: Grade: 3

36. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection the prison has set a comprehensive action plan with clear objectives and outcomes. This has been frequently monitored and some actions such as improvements in relationships with the OLASS contractor and the relocation of the gymnasium and library achieved. Some aspects such as the collection and use of data for monitoring and target-setting for improvement and the establishment of systems for recognising and recording learners' progress in non-accredited learning have yet to be fully developed.

37. The prison has undergone a restructuring of the senior management team and the governing governor and senior managers have been instrumental in driving the prison towards an inclusive regime. This has been well led. The strategic and operational management structures link learning and skills with, resettlement, offender management and the work related to the strategies to reducing re-offending. Participation in learning and skills has increased each year to 45% at this inspection. Approximately 15 offenders are studying short distance learning courses.

38. Communications between staff are very good and a well thought out structure of meetings links staff, providers and partners to self-assessment and quality action/development plans. This is an area that the prison has identified for further development. The Quality Improvement Group (QIG) now meets more regularly and a member of the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) plays a significant role in monitoring progress. However, the absence of reliable data inhibits effective future planning of the provision. Priorities for the prison are articulated well in documents such as the 'Pride of Pentonville' and the prisoner Magazine 'Voice of the Ville'.

39. Senior staff hold regular lunchtime awareness sessions around the prison aimed at improving communications and raising the profile of what goes on in the prison. The first was held in the new library to promote its services. This was well

attended and successful in improving links between staff and offenders. Quarterly job and training fairs involving external agencies are effectively organised and well attended by staff and offenders. The governing governor recognises achievement and presents awards personally to both staff and offenders. Staff awards include learning and skills staff who are nominated by other staff and offenders.

40. Links between learning and skills providers and other support agencies in the prison continue to be very effective. A recent innovation is the work of the St Giles' trust which provides IAG qualifications up to level 3 and offers employment opportunities for offenders upon release. Other visitors providing support include, for example, journalists from a national newspaper, sports personalities, and people involved in theatre projects. The chaplaincy provides good faith and pastoral support across a wide cultural spectrum with opportunities to gain accredited units of study although opportunities are missed to link these with literacy and numeracy programmes. Learners' engagement with the chaplaincy and other staff is especially good. The healthcare day centre education provision is well managed and learners are well supported both academically and pastorally.
41. Despite the recent relocation of the library to a more accessible venue on the ground floor of the prison and the excellent new facilities, the resources are currently insufficiently used by offenders with approximately 600 visits per month. The library has suffered from a lack of clear leadership during the past five months due to the absence of a senior librarian.
42. The prison has been slow to introduce a process for recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement in non accredited learning. Many learners unable to complete learning programmes leave with no formal record of their achievement. The prison has recognised this in their self-assessment report.
43. IAG arrangements and target-setting are insufficient. The London Advice Partnership (LAP) provides insufficient resources to meet the needs of the population. Targets are set for offenders and the number of interventions and approximately 60 offenders per month benefit. All offenders seen by LAP receive good quality IAG during their induction and before release, including advice on disclosure and job applications. Additional IAG services are provided one afternoon per week by a tutor in education.
44. The management of attendance and punctuality in workshops and learning and skills sessions is poor. Offenders sometimes arrive up to 25 minutes late and leave up to 15 minutes early in the contract work areas. When they arrive the work ethic is good and offenders are motivated and work diligently. Some areas provide mundane work such as the collation of medical records but this facility is used mainly for new offenders waiting for appropriate assessment and allocation to work. The prison over allocates the number of offenders to ensure full attendance. However, many education classes observed by inspectors contained

few learners and tutors were unclear about those attending making preparation for individual learning difficult.

45. The prison collects a wide range of data and information relating to learning and skills. The quality assurance procedures for learning and skills activities are appropriately detailed. Regular learner and staff feedback is analysed and used to improve provision. However, implementation of some aspects of the quality improvement is incomplete. Self-assessment is not yet fully implemented prison wide. Targets are not used sufficiently to support the performance monitoring process. Data analysis is weak. Programme data does not easily identify achievement and progression rates. These areas for improvement are recognised in the self-assessment.
46. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The prison has appropriate diversity and disability policies for staff, visitors and offenders. Staff and learners work together effectively in an environment of mutual respect. Prison strategies appropriately reduce barriers to participation in learning. The healthcare day centre is well resourced and accessible to all offenders who need the level of therapeutic support. Equality and diversity issues are well monitored. Learners are well represented on the prison diversity team. Issues raised in this forum are effectively dealt with by the prison wide race equality action team. The prison participates in an adequate range of promotion events to raise staff and offenders' awareness of equality and diversity. Most tutors satisfactorily promote and reinforce learners' understanding of diversity. Most education and training staff access prison training in equality and diversity. Allocations processes for education, vocational training and work are fair, but pay structures are unclear to many offenders.
47. The provision of learning and skills is narrow for those offenders housed on the vulnerable prisoner wing, although they are able to access the day centre. The employment opportunities are also limited, for example, to cleaning wings and visits, prisoner canteen and the clothing exchange store. None of the contract work is accessible to vulnerable offenders.
48. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. The prison focuses strongly on safeguarding including people from external agencies working with children in the visits centre. Appropriate staff vetting and training is carried out. The prison has suitable policies and procedures in place to minimise risk and address identified concerns.

What learners like:

- 'Education is good, you don't waste your time here'
- 'I enjoy being a peer supporter as it gives me the chance to work with people'
- 'I couldn't read or write four months ago and now I've passed my level 1 certificate'
- 'Excellent teachers, lots of care and support'
- 'I've learnt a lot'
- 'I can do a lot more now and I can gain qualifications'
- 'Learning's helped me a lot with my confidence'

What learners think could improve:

- 'I've been waiting over six weeks to get onto a course'
- 'I asked to do the ESOL course three weeks ago but I haven't heard anything'
- 'I don't go to education because there's not enough courses at higher levels'
- 'Not enough vocational courses, such as painting and decorating, needed for jobs'
- 'Not enough lessons – no evening classes available'
- 'Need recording equipment in musical technology to get more practical experience'