



Report on an independent review of progress at

HMYOI Parc

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

9–11 December 2024



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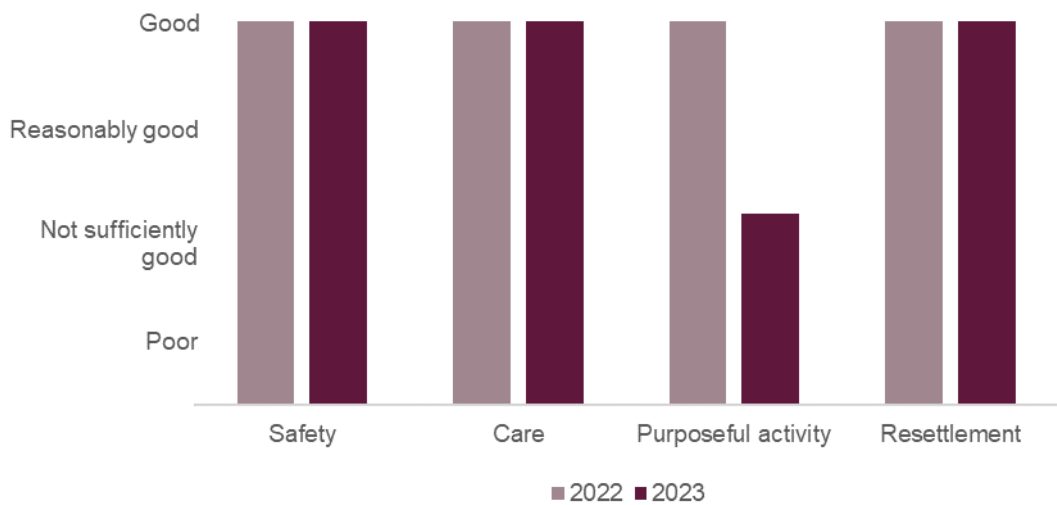
Section 1 Chief Inspector’s summary

- 1.1 The children’s unit at HMP & YOI Parc opened in March 2002 as a 28-cell facility for remanded children aged 15 to 18, and initially housed Welsh children. The unit’s capacity and court catchment area have expanded since then and it now houses up to 46 remanded and sentenced children from courts in Wales and South West England.
- 1.2 At the time of this independent review of progress (IRP), 31 children were housed at Parc.
- 1.3 This review visit followed up on the concerns we raised at our last inspection of HMYOI Parc in 2023.

What we found at our last inspection

- 1.4 At our previous inspections of HMYOI Parc in 2022 and 2023, we made the following judgements about outcomes for children.

Figure 1: HMYOI Parc healthy establishment outcomes in 2022 and 2023



- 1.5 In most respects, the unit was performing well, with a supportive culture that helped to safeguard good outcomes for children, and it achieved ‘good’ judgements in three of our four healthy prison tests. In purposeful activity, however, there had been a decline. The new contract for Parc, from December 2022, had included a change of education provider. When the next inspection took place, 10 months later, the quality of education had declined substantially, from a service rated as excellent by Estyn in July 2022 to one judged as adequate in October 2023.

What we found during this review visit

- 1.6 Leaders had responded promptly to the concerns identified at the 2023 inspection and had made at least reasonable progress in all of the eight reviewed during this visit, with good progress in one. The unit benefited from a visible and proactive leadership team which gave a clear direction to its staff and the children. The supportive culture identified at the inspection continued to be a strength.
- 1.7 The use of separation of children had reduced since the inspection, as had the average length of time spent separated. Oversight was stronger and leaders had a focus on incentivising children to live together as one community, which contributed to the good progress that had been made. More resources were now allocated to diversity and inclusion work and internal training had helped to address the concern about the quality of multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA; see Glossary) information-sharing forms and release on temporary licence (ROTL) assessments.
- 1.8 Most of the concerns followed up during this visit were focused on education, reflecting the decline in provision found during the 2023 inspection. It was reassuring that Estyn found reasonable progress to have been made in each of the five education-related concerns. However, further improvement was still needed to make sure that children had access to a good, or better, education offer.
- 1.9 The education team was now better staffed. Children received 25 hours of education weekly in mixed ability classes, which meant that they all accessed the same subjects during the week. However, some teachers did not plan well enough and lessons were too often prepared for the lowest level of ability in the class without making sure that more able learners also had the opportunity to progress. Teachers were also not assessing individual progress well enough.
- 1.10 The curriculum offer had been reviewed since the inspection, and qualifications introduced that were equally useful to children from Wales and England. Importantly, the working relationship between the education provider and unit managers was now stronger and a reading strategy had been introduced that unit staff could play a part in.
- 1.11 Leaders, including those in charge of the education provision, were to be congratulated on the amount of work they had done and what they had achieved since the inspection.

Charlie Taylor

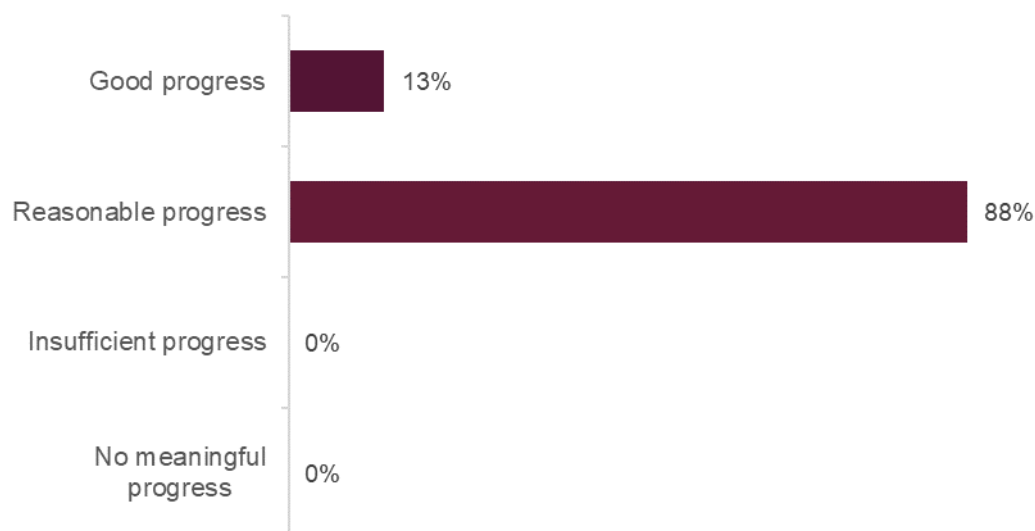
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

December 2024

Section 2 Key findings

- 2.1 At this IRP visit, we followed up eight concerns from our most recent inspection in October 2023. We judged that there was good progress in one concern and reasonable progress in seven concerns.

Figure 2: Progress on concerns from October 2023 inspection (n=8)



Notable positive practice

- 2.2 We define notable positive practice as:

Evidence of our expectations being met to deliver particularly good outcomes for prisoners, and/or particularly original or creative approaches to problem solving.

- 2.3 Inspectors found no examples of notable positive practice during this independent review of progress.

Section 3 Progress against our concerns

The following provides a brief description of our findings in relation to each concern followed up from the full inspection in 2023.

Separation

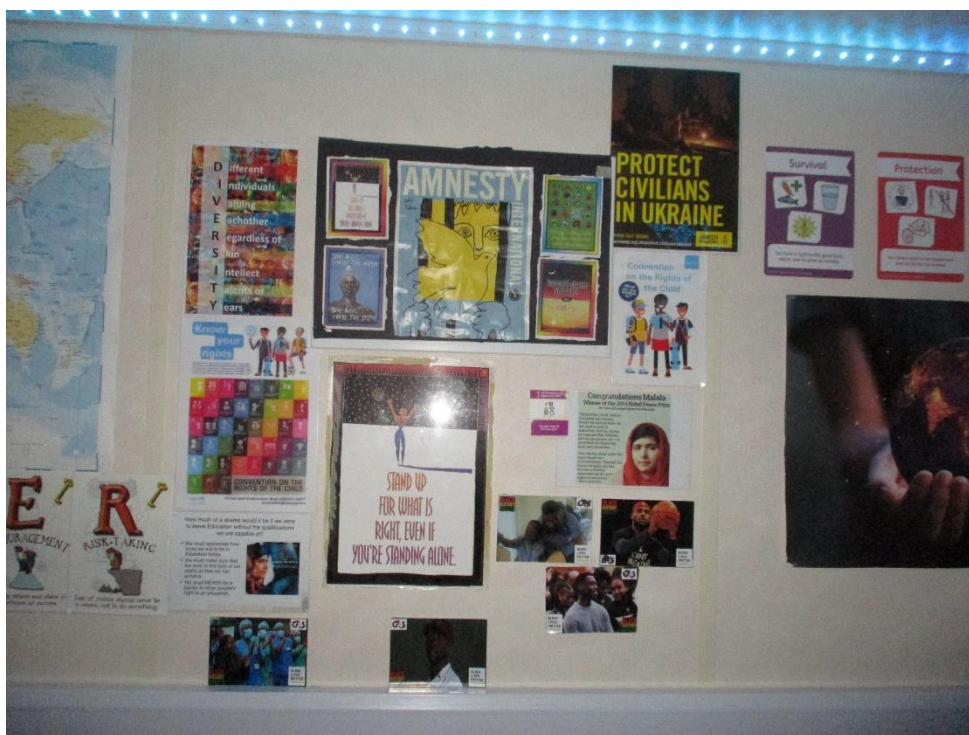
Concern: Some children were separated for too long and their routines were subject to excessive restrictions. The number of children segregated under YOI Rule 49 (see Glossary) had increased and their oversight had deteriorated.

- 3.1 The number of children separated and the average length of time they spent separated had decreased. Over the previous year, 28 children had been separated for an average of 12 days, compared with 44 children separated for an average of 44 days over the same period before the inspection.
- 3.2 The regime for separated children remained variable, usually because of the nature of the events that had led to their separation and the ongoing risk they presented. Some separated children spent over eight hours in daily out-of-cell activity, while others had only two hours. Leaders maintained oversight of each child's daily regime at the morning briefing meetings, to make sure that the minimum of two hours was adhered to and review options to increase this.
- 3.3 Children were encouraged to work with the conflict resolution team as part of their reintegration planning. Leaders aimed to incentivise as many children as possible, including those who were reintegrating, to live as one 'peaceful' community. The children appreciated the regime that this gave them and a few had referred themselves for conflict resolution work to address emerging issues with others before these escalated.
- 3.4 Case management was more consistent than previously, with each separated child assigned to one of the senior managers. Separation paperwork and quality assurance had been reviewed recently.
- 3.5 A weekly safety intervention meeting had been introduced, to help with early identification and intervention in children whose behaviour was leading towards separation. The psychology team was an integral part of this multidisciplinary meeting and helped with reintegration planning and understanding children's behaviour, with individual assessments of their short-term risks and needs.
- 3.6 The intensive support unit had not been used since the inspection.
- 3.7 We considered that the YOI had made good progress in this area.

Equality and diversity

Concern: The promotion of equality had not been prioritised and was undermined by the absence of consistent staffing to coordinate and drive the work. This hindered leaders' understanding of the perceptions of children in this area.

- 3.8 Support for, and prioritisation of, diversity and inclusion (D&I) work had been strengthened. The absence of consistent D&I staff had been remedied and there was a clear staffing structure for this work which included a dedicated officer.
- 3.9 Consultation forums took place monthly. While there was scope to involve more children in these, the D&I officer's presence on the unit made it easy for children to raise any issues or suggestions. Follow-up actions had been taken in response to feedback from children.
- 3.10 The appointment of a small number of child D&I representatives was also positive. Members of the senior leadership team had responsibility for different protected characteristics (see Glossary) and there was capacity to develop further their input with these groups.
- 3.11 Data discussed at meetings was analysed for disproportionality and there was evidence of further investigation when this was identified. This had included getting input from children for areas such as use of force. The small size of the population made it harder to identify trends or patterns. However, staff and managers had good knowledge of the children, and in practice could usually relate spikes or dips in the data to the behaviour of one or more individual children.
- 3.12 Events to raise awareness of different protected characteristics had taken place monthly. Improved links with the adult site D&I team meant that more joint planning was possible, and some events organised for the adult site – for example, during Black History Month – had been replicated on the children's unit. The education team continued to be supportive of D&I work.



Diversity and inclusion display in a classroom

- 3.13 We considered that the YOI had made reasonable progress in this area.

Education, skills and work activities



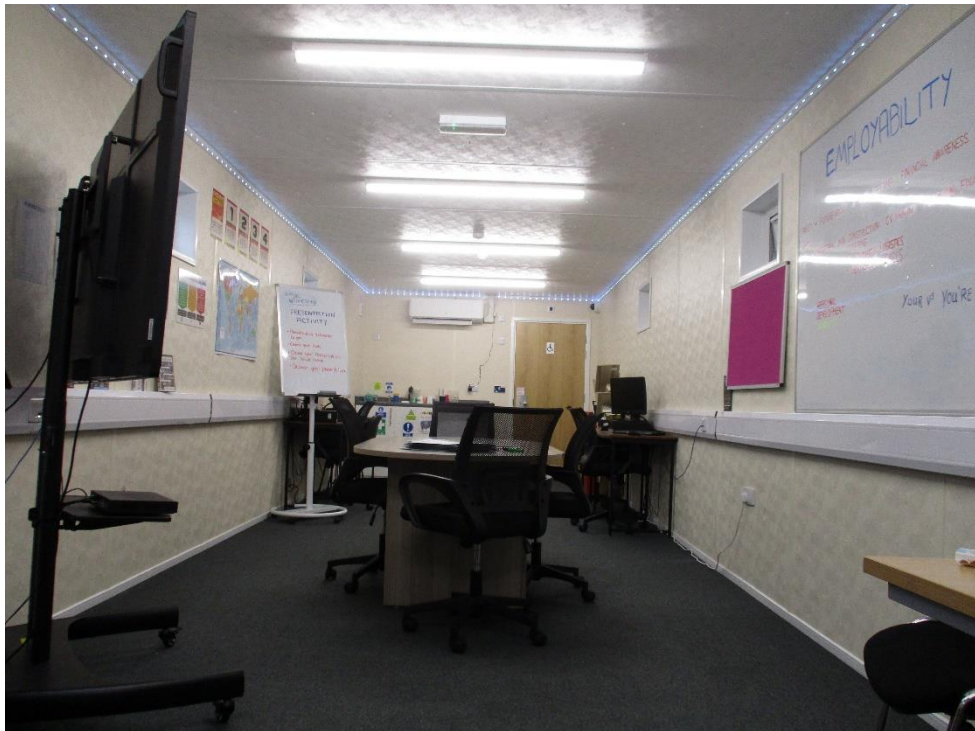
Arolygiaeth Ei Fawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

This part of the report is written by Estyn inspectors.

Concern: There were inconsistencies in the deployment of education staff, and shortcomings in the quality of teaching and assessment. There was insufficient oversight of learners' development; many were disengaged and made slow progress towards accreditations, and attainment in a few subjects was low.

- 3.14 Teachers showed a strong commitment to developing their teaching skills and providing appropriate education to learners in the education and training provision at HMP Parc's Young Offender Institution (YOI). They had developed secure professional relationships with learners. They helped learners well to understand the behaviours needed to make progress in learning and the interpersonal skills required to be employable.

- 3.15 During this visit, many learners demonstrated positive behaviour during sessions. They treated staff and visitors with respect and followed instructions. Most learners settled quickly into their work and were compliant during lessons. In the best cases, learners offered each other positive support with their learning. For example, they explained the methods needed to complete a mathematics task. However, a few learners became disengaged during extended periods of teacher input or simply copied work from their peers or staff.
- 3.16 The majority of teachers planned suitably for lessons, providing a range of activities and work which helped to promote learning and sustain concentration. However, in around half of the lessons, teachers did not plan well enough. For example, they planned activities that did not sufficiently challenge learners, meet their individual learning needs or develop their skills progressively. This limited learners' progress in sessions. Questioning to build knowledge, understanding and thinking skills was underdeveloped. While teachers showed secure and up-to-date knowledge of their subjects, they did not always help learners understand clearly enough how their learning might be applied in real-life contexts. As a result, learners did not always see the value of their learning.
- 3.17 In citizenship sessions, most learners developed a basic knowledge of world events and how they relate to their own lives and experiences. In employability sessions, many learners developed a sound understanding of social skills needed in the workplace, such as how to communicate positively during a presentation. Learners were beginning to develop important healthy living skills through guided exercise in gym sessions.



Employability classroom

- 3.18 Over time, many learners worked appropriately towards accreditation. However, completion rates in literacy and numeracy had slowed. Learners' development of digital skills was limited.
- 3.19 Teachers used diagnostic assessments appropriately to assess their starting points and any additional learning needs. In a few cases, teachers provided helpful verbal feedback, but, overall, teachers did not provide learners consistently with formative feedback. Learners benefited from weekly tutorials to review their learning, partly through reviews of individual learning and work plans (ILWPs). However, the quality of ILWPs was inconsistent. Too often, progress reviews focused on attitudes to learning and qualifications without considering progress towards shorter-term learning targets. In a few instances, reports were not consistently individual to the learner. The use of targets to help learners understand their progress and to provide challenge was underdeveloped.
- 3.20 Estyn considered that the YOI had made reasonable progress in this area.

Concern: Partnership arrangements and key stakeholders had been slow to support the successful transition of education providers. Partnership arrangements to support improvements in the quality of education provision or to enhance the curriculum were only recently or not yet in place.

- 3.21 The introduction of a monthly strategic partnership board, on which both the head of learning and head of the unit sat, and weekly operational meetings between partners had led to improved understanding of challenges and more prompt and effective action.
- 3.22 Staffing had stabilised. The education team had begun to strengthen relationships and communication with operational staff, to promote positive educational experiences and reduce any disruption to learning. Teachers reported that they felt safe and appropriately supported by leaders.
- 3.23 Weekly staff meetings and regular opportunities for professional development, internally and externally, with Gower College and Novus had started to help teachers develop greater confidence and teaching skills when working with young people with complex needs and to share practice with other teachers of similar learners. Teaching staff, particularly early-career teachers, appreciated the funded opportunities to improve their qualifications and teaching skills. Regular dialogue with colleagues from Gower College provided valuable support and challenge for educational leaders in the unit.
- 3.24 Working with partners, education leaders had introduced new quality assurance procedures. Teachers appreciated these developments, as these were starting to lead to a shared understanding of standards and professional development targets for improvement. Leaders had reviewed the curriculum and the qualifications offered to learners, with a focus on improving the vocational offer.

- 3.25 These developments contributed well to creating a strong team ethos between partners and a shared sense of purpose. However, many of the actions in this area had been recently established, and it was too soon to evaluate their impact on learners' outcomes fully.
- 3.26 Estyn considered that the YOI had made reasonable progress in this area.

Concern: There was no reading strategy. The library did not work with education to promote literacy and children who did want to read could not search for and get a book of their choice.

- 3.27 Leaders had devised a prison-wide reading strategy, implementing a range of approaches to support engagement in and enjoyment of reading. Learners arriving at the YOI received a book for their first night and information on accessing further reading material. There were books in all classrooms and residential areas. All young people received a new book each month that was read and discussed in a few education sessions, and on wings by reading champions during group and paired reading. A 'reader in residence' promoted reading for pleasure across the prison through activities such as weekly book groups.
- 3.28 The YOI library was inviting and well stocked, with interesting materials appropriate to learners' ability levels. Staff used the library for reading sessions as part of the English curriculum, and learners could order reading materials to be delivered to their cells. However, this had not led to a significant change in the number of books ordered by learners from the library.
- 3.29 These strategies had been designed to help normalise reading as part of everyday life, and a few learners reported that they had read a book from cover to cover for the first time since arriving at the YOI.
- 3.30 Learners with weak literacy skills were assessed for their reading ability and participated in appropriate interventions. All education staff had received some basic training on how to provide opportunities for reading as part of cross-curricular learning and these had been identified in schemes of learning. However, staff did not use strategies in lessons to support learners to develop their comprehension skills well enough. This was also true of activities designed to help learners to read their 'book of the month'.
- 3.31 Overall, there was a lack of robust monitoring of the impact of interventions, teaching strategies and other activities to promote engagement in reading. This hindered leaders' ability to identify what was working well or to refine approaches.



Library

- 3.32 Estyn considered that the YOI had made reasonable progress in this area.

Concern: The education curriculum did not consider labour market or learners' needs well enough. It was not sufficiently vocationally focused, and the education department had too little involvement in the development of education pathways for children.

- 3.33 Since the time of the core inspection, leaders had reviewed the curriculum offer at the YOI with a consideration of important employment market information. This had been considered at both a local and national level, based on the typical destination of leavers. Further, leaders had made changes to the qualifications and accreditations offered to learners, to strengthen the employability skills that learners developed across the whole curriculum and ensure that these qualifications would be recognised at each learner's destination. However, it was too early to see the full impact of these changes.
- 3.34 Leaders were developing the staffing team and learning environment, in order to improve the broad educational offer to learners, including introducing a vocational offer by developing a new barbering workshop. At the time of our visit, however, the workshop was still being set up. This meant that the vocational offer for learners at the YOI remained insufficient.
- 3.35 The YOI no longer offered learners individual pathways. Rather, all learners accessed the same subject areas across the week. As a result, there was little disruption to learning when learners moved

groupings because of compatibility issues. Actions, such as new working arrangements with operational staff and the provision of a new staff room for teachers, helped teachers feel valued and share ideas daily.

- 3.36 Learners benefited from full-time education. They received 25 hours of education each week. For many learners, this represented a significant increase in their time in education since their last placement. Many learners attended well and levels of unauthorised absence were low.
- 3.37 The curriculum offer had been strengthened to include more detailed personal, health and social education, employability skills, music and provision for Welsh language. In addition to this, learners benefited from weekly tutorial sessions to give feedback on their learner experience and reflect on their progress. Learners had very recently started to access online learning via a secure system. Much of this work was recently established and it was too soon to evaluate its full impact.
- 3.38 Learners benefited from a wide range of enrichment activities, including equality and diversity themed events for each month.
- 3.39 Estyn considered that the YOI had made reasonable progress in this area.

Concern: Self-evaluation of learning and skills, including the use of data, was not good enough to identify areas for improvement.

- 3.40 Leaders had implemented a new quality assurance calendar, with suitable approaches to drive improvement priorities forward. As part of this revised approach, they had implemented a range of self-evaluation processes to assess the quality of teaching using first-hand evidence.
- 3.41 Leaders used a wide range of helpful data to monitor the pace of learners' progress towards accreditations and qualifications, and their attainments. They used these data well to identify lines of enquiry as part of reviews of teaching and the progress of groups of pupils at risk of adverse outcomes, such as those from ethnic minority backgrounds or with additional learning needs. This information had informed a future programme of professional learning to support improved attainment of ethnic minority learners. Although assessment information was used to inform individual learning and work plans, they varied in quality and had not been quality assured robustly enough. This limited their usefulness in informing teaching approaches and tracking learners' progress.
- 3.42 Direct observations of teaching provided pertinent information on learner engagement and teachers' planning. Regular check-ins with learners also helped to identify areas for improvement, particularly in the curriculum offered. Together with data analyses, these self-evaluation approaches helped leaders form a general understanding of the key strengths and areas for development in teaching and the

curriculum. Leaders used the information appropriately to prioritise staff professional learning and development, and share effective practice. However, direct observations of teaching frequently focused on the existence of provision rather than its quality. Therefore, leaders did not evaluate the impact of teachers' short-term planning or teaching strategies on learners' progress or skill development precisely enough.

- 3.43 Estyn considered that the YOI had made reasonable progress in this area.

Pre-release and resettlement

Concern: Some ROTL risk assessments and MAPPA information sharing reports were poor.

- 3.44 At the inspection, we found that the analysis of information in some ROTL risk assessments and MAPPA information-sharing reports needed improvement. Since then, inhouse training had shared good practice within the team and clarified for the practitioners who prepared these documents the level and type of analysis needed.
- 3.45 Discussion of identified risk, and how it could be mitigated, was now expected to be included in all ROTL assessments and MAPPA reports, and assurance processes had been reviewed to reflect these expectations.
- 3.46 Opportunities for resettlement team members to gain expertise in completing ROTL assessments and MAPPA information-sharing forms were limited because of the small number of children eligible for ROTL or nearing release with a MAPPA offence. This made it harder to reinforce the training provided.
- 3.47 The ROTL paperwork and MAPPA information-sharing forms we reviewed during this visit showed some analysis of custodial behaviour, rather than just describing it, drawing parallels with offence-related behaviour and underlying attitudes – for example, 'has not always responded well to being told no while in custody'. The input of external partners, such as youth offending teams and police forces, were now more clearly referenced in documentation.
- 3.48 We considered that the YOI had made reasonable progress in this area.

Section 4 Summary of judgements

A list of the concerns followed up at this visit and the judgements made.

Concerns

Some children were separated for too long and their routines were subject to excessive restrictions. The number of children segregated under YOI Rule 49 (see Glossary) had increased and their oversight had deteriorated.

Good progress

The promotion of equality had not been prioritised and was undermined by the absence of consistent staffing to coordinate and drive the work. This hindered leaders' understanding of the perceptions of children in this area.

Reasonable progress

There were inconsistencies in the deployment of education staff, and shortcomings in the quality of teaching and assessment. There was insufficient oversight of learners' development; many were disengaged and made slow progress towards accreditations, and attainment in a few subjects was low.

Reasonable progress

Partnership arrangements and key stakeholders had been slow to support the successful transition of education providers. Partnership arrangements to support improvements in the quality of education provision or to enhance the curriculum were only recently or not yet in place.

Reasonable progress

There was no reading strategy. The library did not work with education to promote literacy and children who did want to read could not search for and get a book of their choice.

Reasonable progress

The education curriculum did not consider labour market or learners' needs well enough. It was not sufficiently vocationally focused, and the education department had too little involvement in the development of education pathways for children.

Reasonable progress

Self-evaluation of learning and skills, including the use of data, was not good enough to identify areas for improvement.

Reasonable progress

Some ROTL risk assessments and MAPPA information sharing reports were poor.

Reasonable progress

Appendix I About this report

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMI Prisons) is an independent, statutory organisation which reports on the treatment and conditions of those detained in prisons, young offender institutions, secure training centres, immigration detention facilities, court custody and military detention.

All visits carried out by HM Inspectorate of Prisons contribute to the UK's response to its international obligations under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT). OPCAT requires that all places of detention are visited regularly by independent bodies – known as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) – which monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is one of several bodies making up the NPM in the UK.

Independent reviews of progress (IRPs) are designed to improve accountability to ministers about the progress prisons make towards addressing HM Inspectorate of Prisons' concerns in between inspections. IRPs take place at the discretion of the Chief Inspector when a full inspection suggests the prison would benefit from additional scrutiny and focus on a limited number of the concerns made at the inspection. IRPs do not therefore result in assessments against our healthy prison tests. HM Inspectorate of Prisons' healthy prison tests are safety, respect, purposeful activity and rehabilitation and release planning. For more information see our website: [Expectations – HM Inspectorate of Prisons \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/expectations/)

The aims of IRPs are to:

- assess progress against selected priority and key concerns
- support improvement
- identify any emerging difficulties or lack of progress at an early stage
- assess the sufficiency of the leadership and management response to our concerns at the full inspection.

This report contains a summary from the Chief Inspector and a brief record of our findings in relation to each recommendation we have followed up. The reader may find it helpful to refer to the report of the full inspection, carried out in October 2023 for further detail on the original findings (available on our website at [Our reports – HM Inspectorate of Prisons \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/our-reports/)).

IRP methodology

IRPs are announced at least three months in advance and take place eight to 12 months after a full inspection. When we announce an IRP, we identify which concerns we intend to follow up (usually no more than 15). Depending on the concerns to be followed up, IRP visits may be conducted jointly with Ofsted (England), Estyn (Wales), the Care Quality Commission and the General Pharmaceutical Council. This joint work ensures expert knowledge is deployed and avoids multiple inspection visits.

During our three-day visit, we collect a range of evidence about the progress in implementing each selected concern. Sources of evidence include observation, discussions with prisoners, staff and relevant third parties, documentation and data.

Each concern followed up by HMI Prisons during an IRP is given one of four progress judgements:

No meaningful progress

Managers had not yet formulated, resourced or begun to implement a realistic improvement plan to address this concern.

Insufficient progress

Managers had begun to implement a realistic improvement strategy to address this concern but the actions taken since our inspection had not yet resulted in sufficient evidence of progress (for example, better and embedded systems and processes).

Reasonable progress

Managers were implementing a realistic improvement strategy to address this concern and there was evidence of progress (for example, better and embedded systems and processes) and/or early evidence of some improving outcomes for prisoners.

Good progress

Managers had implemented a realistic improvement strategy to address this concern and had delivered a clear improvement in outcomes for prisoners.

Inspection team

This independent review of progress was carried out by:

Charlie Taylor	Chief Inspector
Angela Johnson	Inspector
Mamta Arnott	Estyn inspector
Rachel Hackling	Estyn inspector
Penny Lewis	Estyn inspector

Appendix II Glossary

We try to make our reports as clear as possible, and this short glossary should help to explain some of the specialist terms you may find.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

CQC is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. It monitors, inspects and regulates services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety. For information on CQC's standards of care and the action it takes to improve services, please visit: <http://www.cqc.org.uk>

Leader

In this report the term 'leader' refers to anyone with leadership or management responsibility in the prison system. We will direct our narrative at the level of leadership which has the most capacity to influence a particular outcome.

MAPPA

Multi-agency public protection arrangements: the set of arrangements through which the police, probation and prison services work together with other agencies to manage the risks posed by violent, sexual and terrorism offenders living in the community, to protect the public.

Protected characteristics

The grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010).

Rule 49 of YOI Detention Centre Rules

Authorises children to be segregated from the main population.

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