



Report on an independent review of progress at

HMP Brixton

by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

3–5 March 2025



Contents

Section 1 Chief Inspector’s summary 3

Section 2 Key findings 5

Section 3 Progress against our concerns and Ofsted themes 7

Section 4 Summary of judgements 19

Appendix I About this report 21

Appendix II Glossary 24

Section 1 Chief Inspector’s summary

- 1.1

Brixton is one of the oldest and most overcrowded prisons in the country. Located in South London, it has been a category C resettlement prison since 2012, and it held about 680 prisoners at the time of this latest visit. However, since our full inspection in June 2024, national leaders had decided to change Brixton’s function. It was due to become a category B reception prison to ease population pressures in the South East and would accept men directly from court. No final date had been set for this change, but plans were under way when we visited for this review of progress.
- 1.2

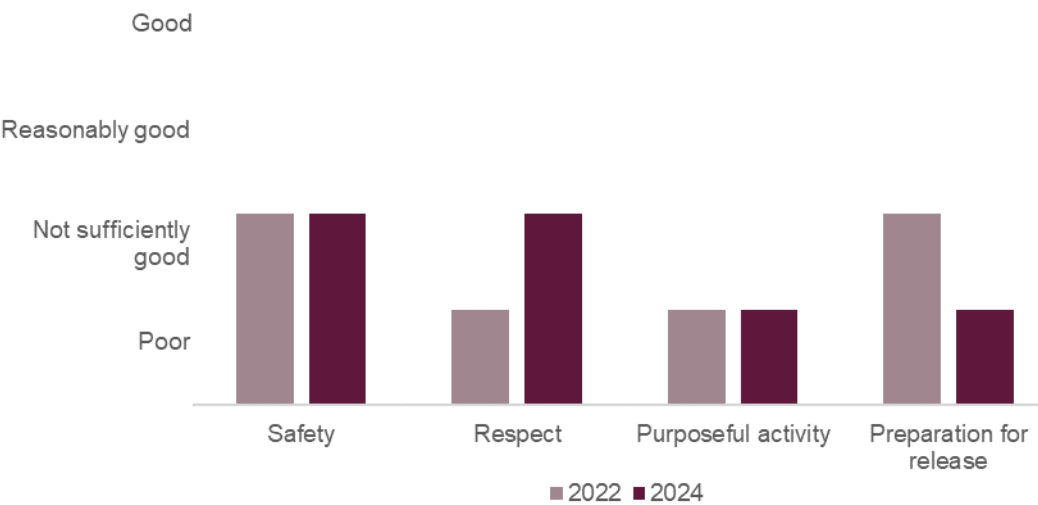
This review visit followed up on the concerns we raised at our last inspection of HMP Brixton in 2024.

What we found at our last inspection

- 1.3

At our previous inspections of HMP Brixton in 2022 and 2024, we made the following judgements about outcomes for prisoners.

Figure 1: HMP Brixton healthy prison outcomes in 2022 and 2024
Note: rehabilitation and release planning became ‘preparation for release’ in October 2023.



- 1.4

At the 2024 inspection, the provision of education, training and employment was poor – and Ofsted awarded its lowest score – as was work to prepare men for their eventual release. Too many prisoners were being released from Brixton without their offending behaviour being addressed, including a large cohort of prisoners convicted of sexual offences, for whom there were no interventions at all. The lack of purposeful activity and overcrowded living conditions both affected prisoners’ feelings of safety; there were high levels of violence and significant drug use. There were not enough middle managers and leaders (see Glossary) visible around the prison who could set high standards and drive improvement.

What we found during this review visit

- 1.5 At this independent review of progress, we considered whether leaders had made progress against eight of our concerns and three themes identified by Ofsted. Overall, the prison had made good progress against one of our concerns, reasonable progress against another, insufficient progress against five and no meaningful progress against one. Against Ofsted's themes, there had been insufficient progress in two areas and reasonable progress in one.
- 1.6 There were still not enough middle managers to ensure high standards across the prison, and much more support was needed from national leaders to help Brixton and other London prisons to recruit successfully. The senior leadership team was very understandably focused on the planned change of function. There was still too little to encourage prisoners to behave well and look after their wings, although we found two examples of notable positive practice. More could have been done to prevent self-harm. However, efforts to stop the ingress of drugs were good.
- 1.7 The prison remained very overcrowded, and the amount of time that prisoners spent unlocked and in purposeful activity had hardly improved since the inspection. Ofsted remained concerned about the quality of education and training, as well as allocation to activities and attendance. However, they identified reasonable progress in staffing the education department. There were still very few interventions to help prisoners think about changing their behaviour, but managers had worked hard to fix the gaps in public protection work.
- 1.8 The transition back to a category B reception prison is a huge undertaking for Brixton and planning had taken much of leaders' attention since the 2024 inspection. Understandably, they had struggled to address some of our concerns with so much in flux. The date for completion had already been pushed back and there was a great deal still to do, including ongoing recruitment of middle managers, improvements in security, the reintroduction of an inpatient unit and expansion of their video-link facilities to serve the courts properly. Although longer-term prisoners were starting to transfer out, the transition was several months away and, in the meantime, other men would still be sent to Brixton to relieve population pressures elsewhere. This review found that those prisoners would still be offered much too little to keep them busy or address their offending behaviour.

Charlie Taylor

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

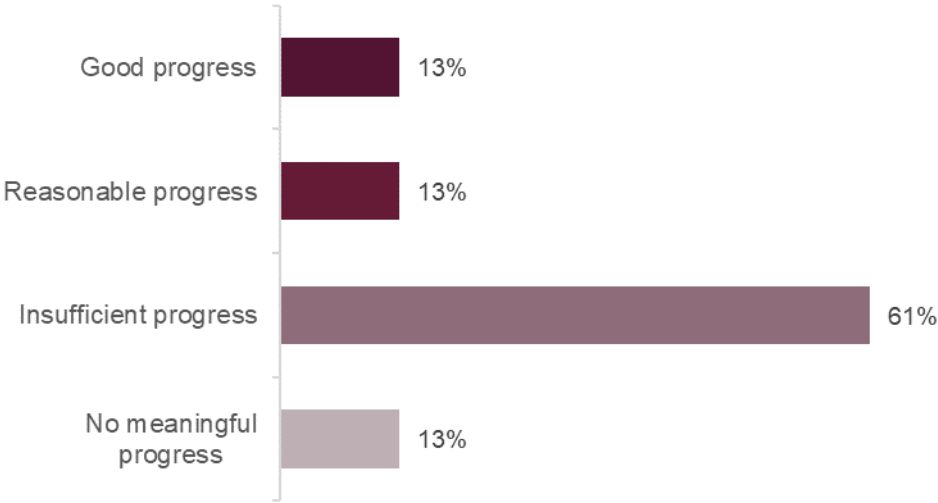
March 2025

Section 2 Key findings

- 2.1 At this IRP visit, we followed up eight concerns from our most recent inspection in June 2024 and Ofsted followed up three themes based on their latest inspection.
- 2.2 HMI Prisons judged that there was good progress in one concern, reasonable progress in one concern, insufficient progress in five concerns and no meaningful progress in one concern.

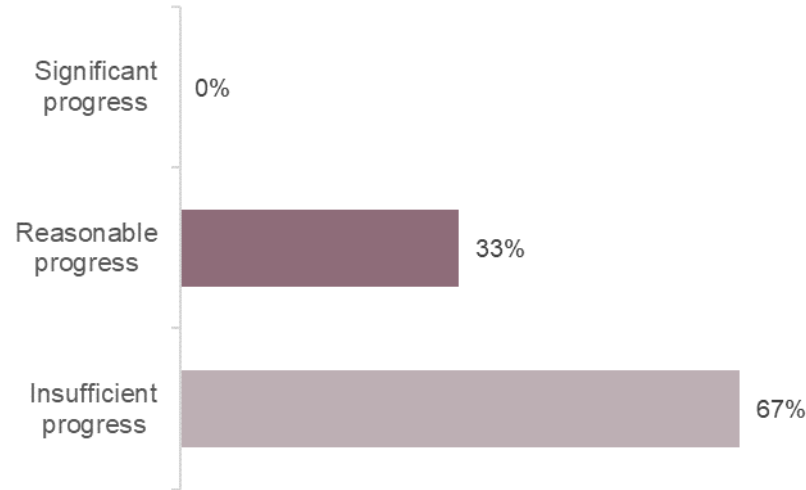
Figure 2: Progress on HMI Prisons concerns from 2024 inspection (n=8)

This bar chart excludes any concerns that were followed up as part of a theme within Ofsted’s concurrent prison monitoring visit.



- 2.3 Ofsted judged that there was reasonable progress in one theme and insufficient progress in two themes.

Figure 3: Progress on Ofsted themes from 2024 inspection (n=3)



Notable positive practice

2.4 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.

2.5 Inspectors found two examples of notable positive practice during this IRP visit, which other prisons may be able to learn from or replicate. Unless otherwise specified, these examples are not formally evaluated, are a snapshot in time and may not be suitable for other establishments. They show some of the ways our expectations might be met but are by no means the only way.

Examples of notable positive practice

a)	Evening 'community centre' association sessions gave enhanced prisoners regular opportunities for off-wing association in the visits hall, with recreational equipment and games consoles.	See paragraph 3.8
b)	As an incentive for good behaviour, the families of enhanced prisoners could buy them baked goods from Brixton's Clink bakery. In the last six months, an impressive 670 items had been delivered to prisoners.	See paragraph 3.10

Section 3 Progress against our concerns and Ofsted themes

The following provides a brief description of our findings in relation to each concern followed up from the full inspection in 2024.

Leadership

Priority concern: There was not enough visible leadership from middle managers upwards, and the lack of consistent and competent management presence, support and drive had contributed to poor standards in various areas and departments.

- 3.1 Despite strenuous efforts by leaders and ongoing rounds of interviews, the recruitment of a sufficient number of uniformed middle managers remained extremely challenging and staffing levels were similar to those at the time of the inspection. At the time of this visit, leaders had only just over half of the 40 supervising officers and custodial managers they would need to run the prison efficiently as a reception prison. There was no realistic prospect of filling all of these roles in the near future and finding enough custodial managers was particularly difficult. More help was needed from national leaders to help Brixton and other London prisons address barriers to successful recruitment.
- 3.2 Consequently, daily oversight and supervision were stretched thinly. There were currently not even enough custodial managers to meet the less demanding staffing profile of a category C prison, and some had to line-manage up to 35 people, so they could not give officers the individual support they needed. There was not always a custodial manager on duty on each wing to whom supervising officers, some of whom were temporarily promoted, could easily turn. Some of these temporarily promoted managers were having to oversee two wings.
- 3.3 Members of the senior leadership team were rightly focused on the huge amount of work needed to turn the establishment into a reception prison, so their capacity to be visible around the prison and lead by example was inevitably sometimes limited.
- 3.4 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress in this area.

Promoting positive behaviour

Key concern: The level of violence remained high and the prison's approach to encouraging positive behaviour was limited and unimaginative.

- 3.5 Levels of violence remained high, and above the average for category C prisons. The number of assaults on staff since the inspection was among the highest in similar prisons.
- 3.6 Overall, there were still not enough creative initiatives to encourage prisoners to behave well, look after their environment and develop a sense of community. Leaders continued to rely on the incentives framework and there were no community-based rewards for keeping residential areas clean. The ongoing changes involved in becoming a reception prison had made it challenging to create a progressive pathway towards an enhanced unit.
- 3.7 Recreational equipment was available on some wings, with a range of board games, books and pool tables available on some. It was disappointing that A and B wings remained relatively bare, with little to occupy prisoners, despite being over-represented in violence data.



C wing chess sets (left) and on-wing bookshelves

- 3.8 Despite this, there were some individual, very positive initiatives taking place to encourage prisoners to behave well. Enhanced prisoners could access evening 'community centre' association sessions from Monday to Thursday. These were run by PE staff in the visits hall, where recreational equipment and games consoles were set up to enable prisoners to socialise off their wings.



‘Community centre’ recreational equipment in the visits hall

- 3.9 The prison had also recently implemented a weekly games session for younger prisoners on Friday mornings, aimed at encouraging engagement with the regime. While young prisoners on any incentives scheme level could attend, their access depended on good behaviour.
- 3.10 Families and friends could order baked goods from the prison’s Clink bakery for delivery to enhanced prisoners on the wings. This was a creative way to encourage prisoners to maintain good standards of behaviour, and the service was popular with prisoners. In the last six months, 670 items had been ordered.



Baked goods ordered by families, waiting for delivery to enhanced prisoners

- 3.11 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress in this area.

Security

Key concern: A significant problem with illicit drugs was not being addressed effectively; searching and drug-testing in response to intelligence were inadequate.

- 3.12 Drugs still presented a serious threat to the stability of the prison, which we often smelt on the wings during this visit. The mandatory drug testing rate was currently below average compared with similar prisons and had reduced from 28% at the time of the inspection to 17% in the period from July 2024 to January 2025.
- 3.13 Leaders were confident that most drugs were brought into the prison through the gate and had taken sensible steps to try to address this. For example, there had been improvements in staff searching, which now took place more often in different areas of the prison, and there was greater use of trained dogs to detect drugs. A regular schedule of covert testing was also helping to identify other problems, such as the poor quality of some staff searches at the gate.
- 3.14 The security department was well led and better resourced. The backlog of intelligence reports waiting to be analysed had reduced from 400 at the time of the inspection to around 35 at this visit. This meant that the prison was better placed to respond to intelligence promptly.

- 3.15 Despite this, there were still too few cell searches and suspicion drug tests completed in response to intelligence. For example, in January 2025 only about 40% of requested cell searches had been carried out and in the last seven months around 40% of suspicion drug tests had been completed, with this figure taking into account prisoners who refused to be tested. Most completed suspicion drug tests (over 80%) were positive, indicating that the intelligence received was worth acting on.
- 3.16 We considered that the prison had made good progress in this area.

Suicide and self-harm prevention

Key concern: Not enough was being done to prevent self-harm: there was no evidence of learning from near misses, and night staff did not routinely carry anti-ligature knives or always know who was at risk of self-harm.

- 3.17 The recorded level of self-harm had increased substantially since the inspection, although it remained below the average for similar prisons. Available data showed that there had been 239 incidents between July 2024 and January 2025, compared with 178 incidents in same period leading up to the June 2024 inspection.
- 3.18 Overcrowded living conditions and a lack of purposeful activity both persisted, particularly on A and B wings, where prisoners expressed frustration at not having enough to do (see also paragraphs 3.7 and 3.25).
- 3.19 The prison had recently moved its first night centre to another wing, without any warning. This change had been poorly communicated to staff and we were not confident that processes were sufficiently embedded to mitigate any risks for new arrivals.
- 3.20 The safer custody team was small and officers attached to it were often redeployed to other duties or night working. No face-to-face suicide and self-harm prevention training for uniformed staff had taken place since the inspection.
- 3.21 The prison lacked a measurable action plan to reduce levels of self-harm and drive improvement. Leaders had not developed an action plan in response to recommendations made in a recent Prisons and Probation Ombudsman report. Local learning from serious incidents of self-harm remained too limited. Only two near-miss investigations had taken place since the inspection, despite over 20 incidents of self-harm which had required prisoners to attend hospital. The quality of these investigations had not been good enough. Cell call bell response times were also not routinely monitored.
- 3.22 Processes to ensure that night staff knew about prisoners at risk of self-harm had improved. They received a clear briefing each evening and were provided with an anti-ligature knife by managers if they did not have one. The safer custody hotline for family and friends to report

individuals at risk of self-harm or suicide was operating well and we received a prompt response when we tested it. The weekly safety intervention meeting was used well to identify and support individuals in crisis.

- 3.23 The prison had three constant supervision cells, two of which were in use during our visit. These cells were clean and decent, which was an improvement since the inspection.
- 3.24 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress in this area.

Living conditions

Priority concern: The prison was severely overcrowded, and some cells did not have space for adequate furniture.

- 3.25 Brixton remained one of the most overcrowded prisons in England and Wales, but the operational capacity (see Glossary) had been slightly reduced and an overall reduction of 10% would be achieved soon as part of the transition to a category B prison.
- 3.26 However, most prisoners continued to share very cramped cells designed to hold one person. These cells had poor light and ventilation, and had no space for tables and chairs. There was hardly room to walk or stand comfortably in some. As a result, most prisoners ate while seated on their beds, very close to the toilet, with some even using the toilet as a seat while they ate.



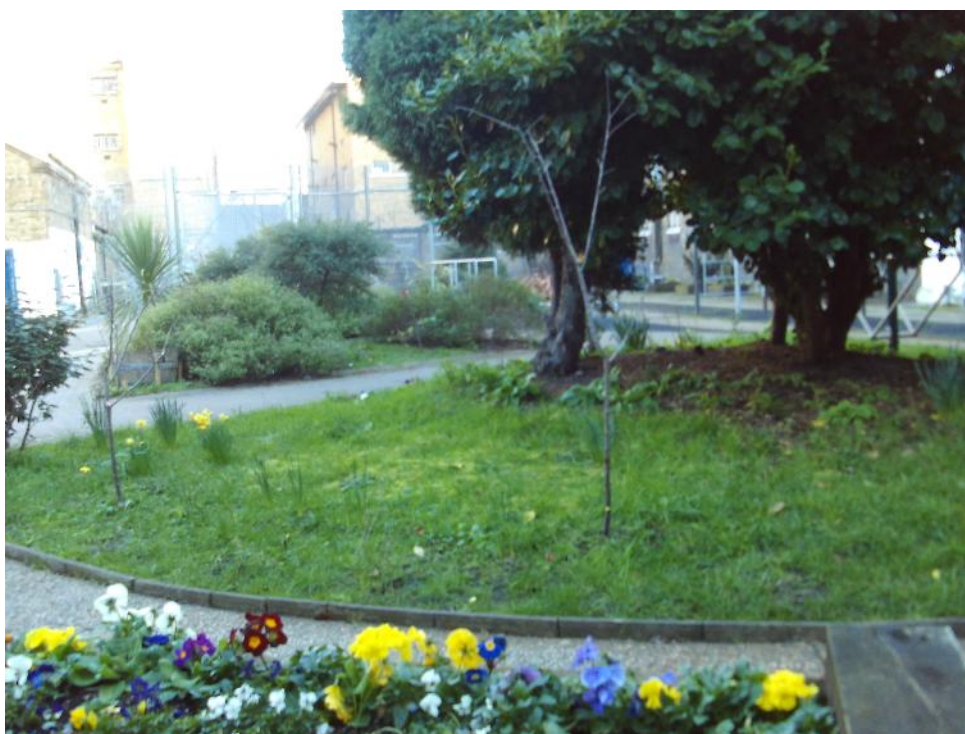
Typical shared cells on A, B and G wings

- 3.27 Since the inspection, leaders had made efforts to improve the conditions in cells. Decency checks helped to make sure that prisoners were provided with items that they needed.
- 3.28 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress in this area.

Time out of cell

Key concern: While time out of cell had improved, it was still insufficient, and prisoners could not rely on published regime times.

- 3.29 In the last three months, the prison had usually operated the advertised working day and significant curtailments to the daily regime had been rare. The day-to-day wing routine was generally more reliable, with prisoners receiving their planned association and outdoor exercise periods, although there were still some slippages. Prisoners described inconsistencies across the wings, such as wing workers not always being unlocked to perform their duties (see paragraph 3.46).



A wing exercise yard

- 3.30 Our roll checks were virtually identical to those at the inspection. We found 14% of prisoners locked in their cells during the working day and 37% in some form of purposeful activity. However, much of the available work was part time or wing based, and only 21% of prisoners had gone to work or education off the wings.
- 3.31 About 200 prisoners, approximately 30% of the population, were not allocated to any work or education during this visit and, as at the time of the inspection, they generally had about 3.5 hours out of cell each day. Some residential units, such as the incentivised substance-free living unit and G wing, offered better time out of cell (see Glossary).
- 3.32 At the time of our visit, about 50 prisoners were on the basic level of the incentives scheme. While time out of cell had improved to around an hour and a quarter a day for some of these individuals, some wings

continued to offer them only 45 minutes a day for exercise, domestic tasks and association, which was punitive.

- 3.33 We considered that the prison had made insufficient progress in this area.

Education, skills and work



This part of the report is written by Ofsted inspectors. Ofsted's thematic approach reflects the monitoring visit methodology used for further education and skills providers. The themes set out the main areas for improvement in the prison's previous inspection report or progress monitoring visit letter.

Theme 1: What progress had leaders and managers made in improving the quality of education and training, and making sure prisoners were allocated promptly to suitable activities?

- 3.34 Leaders had not made sure staff provided prisoners with clear information about their education, skills and work options. Although leaders had increased the number of staff providing information, advice and guidance, too many prisoners did not have a suitable plan to develop their knowledge and skills. As a result, too many prisoners were not taking part in purposeful activity.
- 3.35 Leaders and managers did not offer a broad enough curriculum, particularly to prisoners in work and those residing on G wing. Leaders did not offer enough spaces in English, mathematics or English for speakers of other languages to meet the needs of the population. Leaders offered a limited number of courses which would help prisoners in their next steps, such as the construction certification scheme, food safety and textiles, where prisoners learned how to use analogue and digital sewing machines to repair clothing. Leaders had plans to increase the range of courses offered to include barbering and waste management; however, it was too early to judge any changes in curriculum.
- 3.36 While leaders and managers had started to allocate most prisoners to activities promptly, they had not made sure that enough spaces in education and work were filled. Prisoners on G wing waited too long to take part in education. The few spaces on English and mathematics courses were not allocated effectively. Staff took too long to remove prisoners who had withdrawn from courses from registers, which prevented spaces from being allocated to prisoners who needed them. As a result, too many prisoners did not take part in suitable full-time activity to help them reach their next steps.

- 3.37 Leaders had taken appropriate action to improve the order in which curriculum content was taught in English and mathematics. They had also trained teaching staff to give prisoners helpful feedback on their work. Most prisoners knew what they had done well and what they needed to do to improve. However, in a few instances, staff did not help prisoners to improve their spelling and grammar. On construction courses, a few prisoners had not corrected their work when they made mistakes and did not remember enough of what they had been taught.
- 3.38 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Theme 2: What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure the education provider had enough suitable staff in place for all teaching and management roles?

- 3.39 Novus had recruited enough staff to teach the current education offer. There were very few vacant positions, but where these existed, leaders had arranged for appropriate staff based in other prisons to cover teaching and management of provision. As a result, most lessons took place as planned.
- 3.40 Most teaching staff were suitably qualified in the subjects they taught and held teaching qualifications. Where tutors did not hold level 5 teaching qualifications, most had plans to take these. Most tutors taught well-planned courses. For example, in horticulture, tutors first taught prisoners the basics of propagation, before teaching them how to plan a flower bed with suitable plants. Prisoners used their new knowledge to maintain planted areas across the prison well.
- 3.41 Leaders had appointed suitable managers to oversee the quality of education. In addition, managers from Novus had conducted suitable activities to check the quality of teaching and provided relevant training and support for staff to help them to improve their practice. Leaders were aware of the main strengths and areas for improvement. Managers and tutors had made improvements to the quality of teaching and assessment in English and mathematics. For example, they had reviewed the curriculum structure and made amendments to make sure tutors gradually built on prisoners' knowledge.
- 3.42 Leaders and managers had trained teaching staff to teach prisoners with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including on how to support prisoners with dyslexia. As a result, teachers were equipped with strategies and techniques to support prisoners in the classroom. Often, there were only a small number of prisoners in classes. Tutors provided useful individual support to prisoners to meet their needs. However, education support staff had not received training to administer reading assessments.
- 3.43 Ofsted considered that the prison had made reasonable progress against this theme.

Theme 3: What progress had leaders and managers made in improving attendance across education, skills and work, and in making sure prisoners arrived on time to their activities?

- 3.44 Leaders had not been successful in improving attendance and punctuality at education, skills and work. Attendance to education was too low. A few prisoners did not attend as the course they were placed on did not help them to prepare for their next steps.
- 3.45 Most prisoners who attended education, skills and work arrived prepared to learn. For example, prisoners employed by Mitie arrived wearing the correct personal protective equipment.
- 3.46 During the visit, too many prisoners arrived late to their activities. Many were late to education because the regime was delayed. Some prisoners in wing work roles were locked in their cells during their working hours; for example, wing cleaners only worked for two hours each day. As a result, too many prisoners did not take part in their activities for the expected time.
- 3.47 At the time of the previous inspection, leaders had not assessed reasons for absence. Since then, leaders had started to monitor attendance daily. They had held managers to account for unacceptable absences and made sure that staff recorded reasons for non-attendance. Leaders recognised that further work was required to ensure that all staff completed absence records consistently and diligently. Leaders knew that there had been slight improvements in attendance, with some dips. However, they had not analysed the data and therefore were not able to identify where these were. Consequently, they were not able to assess the impact of their interventions or identify and replicate examples of good practice.
- 3.48 Leaders had implemented schemes such as award ceremonies to celebrate achievement and attendance to promote the benefits of education, skills and work to both prisoners and staff. However, these actions had not had enough of a positive impact at the time of the visit.
- 3.49 Ofsted considered that the prison had made insufficient progress against this theme.

Public protection

Priority concern: There were significant weaknesses in the oversight of public protection: prisoners' risks were not systematically identified on arrival and before release, and public protection monitoring was not kept up to date.

- 3.50 The senior probation officer and head of offender management services (HOMS) worked well together and had begun to address weaknesses in public protection arrangements. This work was now

better staffed by two clerks, although more resources would be needed when the establishment became a reception prison.

- 3.51 Leaders had learnt from good practice at other prisons and had introduced quality assurance processes. Managers completed weekly checks to make sure that the risk presented by new arrivals was spotted and they had better oversight of prisoners whose public protection risks still needed to be reviewed. Leaders also delivered monthly public protection training to clerks and prison offender managers (POMs). However, the imminent departure of the HOMS, who had driven much of this work, meant that progress was fragile.
- 3.52 Managers had developed a process for confirming prisoners' multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA; see Glossary) management levels with community offender managers ahead of release, as well as escalating these requests to senior probation officers in the community where necessary. Fewer prisoners subject to MAPPA had been released without a confirmed management level since the inspection.
- 3.53 A system to ensure the prompt completion of child contact reviews had been introduced only recently, so it was too soon to see evidence of improved oversight in this area.
- 3.54 There were still delays in telephone monitoring. Only six prisoners were currently subject to monitoring, and it typically took staff around nine days to listen to calls. A lack of information sharing between the security department and offender management unit (OMU) meant that POMs could not easily access monitoring logs.
- 3.55 There was still no one in the prison with access to the violent and sexual offenders register, even though the establishment currently held around 190 prisoners whose offences required this national database to be regularly updated.
- 3.56 We considered that the prison had made reasonable progress in this area.

Interventions and support

Priority concern: The prison was not adequately fulfilling its function as a resettlement prison, nor was it providing sufficient offending behaviour interventions for prisoners who needed them.

- 3.57 The prison's function was due to change from a category C resettlement prison to a category B reception prison which would serve the courts. The uncertainty about when and how this would happen made it hard for leaders to plan and deliver interventions.
- 3.58 The OMU could still not meet the needs of a category C population. There were not enough probation officers and administrative staff.

Caseloads were currently high, with POMs supervising around 80 prisoners and probation officers managing around 50 cases.

- 3.59 There were still no offending behaviour programmes for the population of over 680 category C prisoners, and none would be introduced because of the prison's change in function. Many prisoners convicted of sexual offences had not been able to progress with their sentence plan targets or reduce their risk.
- 3.60 There were very few other short interventions available. Despite some good efforts from the senior probation officer to develop a much-needed domestic abuse intervention, the prison's change in function had stalled progress and this course had not materialised.
- 3.61 Positively, the employment advisory board had restarted and the employment hub had reopened. Prisoners who were within three months of their release could now access a range of help, including opening bank accounts, gaining identification and arranging benefit claims before release.
- 3.62 We considered that the prison had made no meaningful progress in this area.

Section 4 Summary of judgements

A list of the HMI Prisons concerns and Ofsted themes followed up at this visit and the judgements made.

HMI Prisons concerns

There was not enough visible leadership from middle managers upwards, and the lack of consistent and competent management presence, support and drive had contributed to poor standards in various areas and departments.

Insufficient progress

The level of violence remained high and the prison's approach to encouraging positive behaviour was limited and unimaginative.

Insufficient progress

A significant problem with illicit drugs was not being addressed effectively; searching and drug-testing in response to intelligence were inadequate.

Good progress

Not enough was being done to prevent self-harm: there was no evidence of learning from near misses, and night staff did not routinely carry anti-ligature knives or always know who was at risk of self-harm.

Insufficient progress

The prison was severely overcrowded, and some cells did not have space for adequate furniture.

Insufficient progress

While time out of cell had improved, it was still insufficient and prisoners could not rely on published regime times.

Insufficient progress

The prison was not adequately fulfilling its function as a resettlement prison, nor was it providing sufficient offending behaviour interventions for prisoners who needed them.

No meaningful progress

There were significant weaknesses in the oversight of public protection: prisoners' risks were not systematically identified on arrival and before release, and public protection monitoring was not kept up to date.

Reasonable progress

Ofsted themes

What progress had leaders and managers made in improving the quality of education and training, and making sure prisoners were allocated promptly to suitable activities?

Insufficient progress

What progress had leaders and managers made to ensure the education provider had enough suitable staff in place for all teaching and management roles?

Reasonable progress

What progress had leaders and managers made in improving attendance across education, skills and work, and in making sure prisoners arrived on time to their activities?

Insufficient 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 in 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 raised 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://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

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 concern we have followed up. The reader may find it helpful to refer to the report of the full inspection, carried out in [MONTH, YEAR] for further detail on the original findings (available on our website at [Our reports – HM Inspectorate of Prisons \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)).

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 (see Glossary) 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

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders had begun to implement a realistic improvement strategy (for example, with better and embedded systems and processes), but prisoner outcomes were improving too slowly or had not improved at all.

Reasonable progress

Leaders were implementing a realistic improvement strategy, with evidence of sustainable progress and some early improvement in outcomes for prisoners.

Good progress

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

When Ofsted attends an IRP its methodology replicates the monitoring visits conducted in further education and skills provision. Each theme followed up by Ofsted is given one of three progress judgements.

Insufficient progress

Progress has been either slow or insubstantial or both, and the demonstrable impact on learners has been negligible.

Reasonable progress

Action taken by the provider is already having a beneficial impact on learners and improvements are sustainable and are based on the provider's thorough quality assurance procedures.

Significant progress

Progress has been rapid and is already having considerable beneficial impact on learners.

Ofsted's approach to undertaking monitoring visits and the inspection methodology involved are set out in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook*, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework>.

Inspection team

This independent review of progress was carried out by:

Jonathan Tickner	Team leader
Rick Wright	Inspector
Jessie Wilson	Inspector
Rebecca Stanbury	Inspector
Rebecca Jennings	Ofsted inspector
Paul Mannings	Ofsted inspector
Carolyn Brownsea	Ofsted 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>

Certified normal accommodation (CNA) and operational capacity

Baseline CNA is the sum total of all certified accommodation in an establishment except cells in segregation units, health care cells or rooms that are not routinely used to accommodate long stay patients. In-use CNA is baseline CNA less those places not available for immediate use, such as damaged cells, cells affected by building works, and cells taken out of use due to staff shortages. Operational capacity is the total number of prisoners that an establishment can hold without serious risk to good order, security and the proper running of the planned regime.

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.

Time out of cell

Time out of cell, in addition to formal 'purposeful activity', includes any time prisoners are out of their cells to associate or use communal facilities to take showers or make telephone calls.

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