

# HMP Isle of Wight

## Ofsted report for education, skills and work activities

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## Education, skills and work activities

### Expected outcomes:

**All prisoners are expected and enabled to engage in education, skills or work activities that promote personal development and employability. There are sufficient, suitable education, skills and work places to meet the needs of the population and provision is of a good standard.**

Ofsted made the following assessments about the education, skills and work provision:

Overall effectiveness: Requires improvement

Quality of education: Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes: Requires improvement

Personal development: Requires improvement

Leadership and management: Requires improvement

### What does the prison do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders had taken considered steps to improve education, skills and work since the previous inspection, including introducing additional vocational training and planning to increase the availability of accredited provision. They had developed a more robust approach to monitoring the quality of provision. Leaders had begun to set clearer expectations for teachers and instructors about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the need for continuous improvement. These actions had led to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in some areas. This was not yet consistent across all areas and not all prisoners benefited from teaching that enabled them to build their knowledge securely over time.

Leaders had put in place sufficient part-time activity spaces for prisoners. However, they did not have an adequately accurate understanding of how effectively prisoners were allocated to education, vocational training and work. They did not routinely evaluate how well these arrangements supported participation and progression. As a result, leaders did not identify all the weaknesses in allocation quickly enough.

Leaders had established induction arrangements to introduce prisoners to education, skills and work opportunities. However, these were not consistently timely or sufficiently effective in supporting prisoners to move swiftly into suitable activities.

Leaders had not ensured that the allocation of prisoners to education, vocational training and work supported regular and sustained participation. Allocation decisions

were not always informed by prisoners' starting points or longer-term goals. Although managers allocated most prisoners to activities, too many attended part-time or their time was split across different activities during the week. Some prisoners moved between activities without sufficient time to develop their knowledge and skills.

Leaders had developed a curriculum informed by employment opportunities that reflected the needs of the prison population, including education, vocational training, work and opportunities for higher-level study. They had taken steps to broaden the curriculum and introduce additional options for prisoners. Including qualifications in horticulture, sewing, waste and recycling and industrial plans.

Leaders had not ensured that the curriculum was implemented consistently well across all areas. Teachers and instructors did not plan learning or work activities well enough to support progression. There was insufficient focus on ensuring that prisoners built their knowledge and skills over time. In some cases, prisoners repeated similar tasks or moved between activities without extending their understanding. Consequently, some prisoners did not develop their knowledge in sufficient depth.

The education provider, Milton Keynes College, provided education and vocational training courses that were structured logically and sequenced to support prisoners to build their knowledge over time. Teachers had appropriate subject expertise and planned lessons carefully. They used a range of teaching approaches to help prisoners understand new concepts and develop their skills. Where teaching was effective teachers used a range of resources and activities that helped prisoners to engage and understand the content of lessons. They explained new concepts clearly and used questioning to check what prisoners had learned. Peer mentors supported other prisoners in lessons and, in a few cases, developed useful skills in assessing work and providing feedback. Teachers gave feedback that helped prisoners to improve their work. Prisoners in subjects such as English and art developed confidence and took pride in what they achieved. However, too many teachers did not use information about prisoners' starting points consistently well when planning lessons. This meant that some prisoners completed work that was too easy while others struggled to keep up.

Leaders and staff identified prisoners with special educational needs and/or disabilities and provided appropriate support. Staff made suitable adjustments to help prisoners take part in learning and work activities. This enabled most prisoners to participate and develop their confidence. Prisoners valued this support and engaged positively in their learning.

Most prisoners who attended education developed knowledge and skills that were appropriate to the level of their course. For example, prisoners improved their spelling and sentence structure in English and developed understanding of mathematical concepts such as fractions and probability. However, not all prisoners

attended regularly or remained on their courses. As a result, not all prisoners completed their programmes.

Education staff effectively supported the small proportion of prisoners who participated in open and distance learning programmes. These prisoners worked independently using secure, off-line laptops to support their learning outside of formal sessions. A small number of other prisoners could use laptops for research purposes. However, the Virtual Campus was used too infrequently. As a result, prisoners had limited opportunities to develop digital skills or undertake independent learning.

Leaders and managers had established a suitable range of work activities and deployed instructors with relevant industry experience to supervise them. Instructors showed prisoners how to complete tasks safely and to a professional standard in areas such as gardening, refurbishment and design. Prisoners developed practical skills and positive work habits. For example, in the wood mill, prisoners learned to use industrial cutting and milling machines, while in tailoring they developed skills in using a range of sewing equipment to complete different tasks. In some areas, prisoners also developed broader employability skills, such as teamwork and sustainability through activities like gardening and recycling. Leaders had not ensured that these activities were structured consistently well to support progression. A minority of prisoners repeated similar tasks or did not move on to more demanding work. As a result, they did not extend their skills beyond basic tasks.

Leaders had developed well-considered plans to introduce qualifications in work activities. However, these had not yet been implemented. Delays in implementation, including those related to staffing issues, meant that work activities were not linked closely enough to recognised qualifications. Instructors did not routinely plan or record learning so that prisoners could gain recognition for the skills they developed or understand how these related to employment. Consequently, some prisoners could not demonstrate what they had learned or build on their skills to support progression.

Leaders and managers did not analyse information about attendance, withdrawals and achievement well enough to identify patterns or take timely action to improve outcomes. Most prisoners who remained on their courses achieved their qualifications, although this was not the case in mathematics. Too many prisoners did not stay on their courses or complete their learning, often linked to changes in allocation or movement between activities. As a result, not all prisoners gained the qualifications they needed to support their next steps.

Leaders' actions to improve attendance in education had not been sufficiently effective. Leaders had introduced preferential pay rates for prisoners attending education to encourage participation. However, this had not secured the intended increase in attendance and too many prisoners still chose not to take part which disrupted their learning and slowed their progress. However, prisoners who attended activities arrived punctually and ready to start their activity.

Teachers and instructors created calm and supportive environments in education and workshops. As a result, prisoners felt safe when attending education and work activities and engaged positively in their learning. Through discussion and group activities, teachers and instructors reinforced the principles of equality and respect. Consequently, many prisoners developed an understanding of fundamental British values and worked well with others from diverse backgrounds.

Leaders had identified and carefully considered plans for a personal development curriculum. However, these had not been sufficiently developed or implemented to ensure that enough prisoners could benefit. Opportunities were limited and not available across the prison, and prisoners access to them was inconsistent. Leaders had not ensured that activities were planned and coordinated effectively to support progression.

Leaders had implemented the reading strategy effectively, supported by a proactive and well-managed library service. Library staff introduced a range of initiatives to promote reading, including a regular newsletter and a structured reading challenge for prisoners. Prisoners had ready access to a wide range of reading materials in workshops, education areas and on the wings, including trade magazines donated to the prison. Staff identified prisoners who needed support and provided appropriate interventions, including peer mentoring. As a result, many prisoners improved their reading skills and engaged positively with reading. This contributed to a positive and increasingly well-established culture in which reading was valued across the prison by staff and prisoners.

Leaders had a clear rationale for prioritising newly arrived prisoners and those preparing for release for careers information, advice and guidance. This was to maximise the use of limited adviser capacity. However, this prioritisation meant that not all prisoners received timely and meaningful guidance. As a result, some prisoners were not able to make informed choices about their next steps.

### **Key concerns**

Leaders' oversight and use of data were not sufficiently effective to evaluate participation or to improve the quality of education, skills and work.

Leaders had not ensured that prisoners were allocated efficiently to education, vocational training and work so that they could participate consistently.

Leaders had not established a sufficiently developed or coherent personal development curriculum.

### **Notable positive practice**

Leaders had established an innovative approach to developing reading, informed by effective collaboration with national organisations and the adaptation of identified good practice for the prison. This resulted in a highly inclusive and particularly effective strategy that engaged prisoners with diverse needs, including differing levels of motivation, interests and language skills. Consequently, prisoners, including those who had previously disengaged as well as more confident readers, read independently and applied their skills effectively in their studies, lessons and workshops, increasing their confidence and participation.