

HMP Long Lartin

Ofsted report for education, skills and work activities

Unique Reference Number:	52308
Inspection type:	Full inspection
Last day of inspection:	2 March 2026
Type of establishment:	Category A
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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 workplaces 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 not ensured that there were enough places in education, skills or work (ESW) to keep prisoners productively engaged. In addition, in several workshops there had not been enough work to keep prisoners occupied. Two workshops were sometimes closed due to staffing shortages, further limiting prisoners' opportunities for meaningful engagement.

New managers of the allocation process had reduced prisoner waiting lists for ESW places. They had streamlined the process and introduced more effective systems for capturing and using information. Managers held weekly meetings with relevant stakeholders to ensure that prisoners' placements in ESW were appropriate. However, because of the inherited backlog, some prisoners still had to wait too long before starting the courses they needed, and workshop utilisation was not yet consistently effective.

Leaders had implemented a curriculum that was too narrow. Substantial budget reductions had limited the range of learning opportunities leaders could offer

prisoners. Because many prisoners were serving long sentences, leaders had appropriately focused on preparing prisoners for careers in custody and helping them adapt to prison life. However, they had not established an English for speakers of other languages curriculum for prisoners whose first language was not English. As a result, a few prisoners did not receive the help they needed.

Leaders had recently implemented a new induction process to ensure that prisoners received their ESW induction promptly on arrival at the prison. Assessments in reading, English and mathematics were carried out swiftly. Staff used this information effectively to provide careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) sessions. This enabled staff to identify prisoners' starting points and direct them to the most appropriate next steps. However, a small number of prisoners were still awaiting a review of their CEIAG plans due to historic delays.

Leaders had introduced a pay policy that encouraged prisoners to participate in education. Its flexible approach had allowed prisoners to pursue education alongside work. The banding system linked pay to work experience and the achievement of educational milestones, and bonuses were used to incentivise the achievement of qualifications.

The prison education services (PES) provider, Milton Keynes College, provided a high standard of education for most prisoners. Most tutors planned their teaching well and designed the curriculum effectively. For example, in mathematics, tutors sequenced learning so that prisoners progressed from simple perimeter calculations to more complex shapes, then to missing-figure problems. Tutors also adapted and contextualised theory through practical gardening activities, helping prisoners embed their learning. As a result, many prisoners achieved the qualifications they studied for.

Most tutors in education were knowledgeable and experienced in their subject areas. They held teaching qualifications or were working towards achieving them. Tutors selected appropriate learning resources and used a range of teaching techniques, including demonstrations and clear explanations, successfully. Tutors in areas such as cleaning and art blended theory and practice skilfully, supporting prisoners to reach their potential.

In a few workshops, instructors did not set high expectations for prisoners' work performance and lacked the necessary training and skills to support effective learning. Most instructors were specialists in their vocational subjects. However, they did not hold relevant teaching qualifications or undertake training to improve the quality of education provided to prisoners. They planned too little work, gave

insufficient priority to personal protective equipment, and did not adequately consider prisoners' skills development and personal growth.

Instructors on the wings had ensured that wing cleaners and server workers were appropriately trained. However, the standard of work produced by wing cleaners was inconsistent. On some wings, cleaning was thoroughly completed by dedicated, well-supervised prisoners. In other cases, wing cleaners were poorly supervised, so wings remained dirty, and cleaners were allowed to wander around their wings unsupervised.

Instructors did not develop prisoners' employability skills consistently well. Prisoners new to the workshops monitored their progress by recording activities in the progress in work workbook. However, instructors did not set individual performance targets for prisoners who had worked in the workshops for a long time to promote productivity during sessions. Wing workers and prisoners in longer-term job roles were not routinely encouraged to move into alternative work or to develop additional skills. As a result, prisoners became complacent, their ambition was limited and most were not focused on improving their own skills.

Outreach tutors had provided highly effective support for prisoners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). They implemented assessments to identify prisoners' broader support needs successfully, followed by detailed, individualised assessments of need. Accurate support plans were in place, and the curriculum was adapted well for in-cell learning. Therefore, prisoners with SEND received the support they needed to settle into prison life quickly.

Outreach tutors provided high-quality education for prisoners with SEND. Tutors responded to prisoners' interests and abilities, making learning interesting and removing barriers. They developed prisoners' personal behaviours through effective targets, such as improving relationships with officers. In some cases, tutors set specific targets to help prisoners improve their healthy eating and exercise. As a result, many prisoners with SEND achieve their goals.

Leaders had introduced an appropriate reading strategy that promoted reading across the establishment and encouraged reading for pleasure. Prisoners' literacy was assessed quickly, and their reading skills were developed through a range of initiatives. These included providing prisoners with well-developed reading corners, the reading-ahead literacy program, storybook dads, a low-level reading group, and collaboration with an external partner to create a reading festival.

Outreach tutors developed the skills of low-level readers effectively through skilful phonics teaching and the appropriate selection of vocabulary and texts. Prisoners benefited from individual support, qualified tutors and Shannon Trust mentors who helped them develop their reading skills. Tutors in English lessons used a broad range of reading materials to develop prisoners' reading skills, while deepening their understanding of life in modern Britain.

Attendance and punctuality at education sessions was mostly high. When prisoners attended workshops, they generally arrived on time. However, overall workshop attendance was poor.

Most prisoners in education, skills and work were respectful and polite. They demonstrated positive relationships with peers and staff. In education, many were motivated to learn and enjoyed learning. However, in a few instances in workshops, staff did not challenge inappropriate language. As a result, a few prisoners saw this as acceptable behaviour.

Leaders provided a broader curriculum to support prisoners' wellbeing and help them settle into prison life. Enrichment activities included art, tapestry and creative writing groups. Health initiatives, such as yoga, gym sessions and health-champion roles, helped prisoners learn about topics such as diet and nutrition. However, many prisoners in the workshops did not routinely learn about topics such as respect, equality, diversity or protected characteristics. Some prisoners outside of education did not routinely know what was available to them. As a result, they missed opportunities to develop their interests.

Staff had supported the very few prisoners due for release, ensuring they were prepared for life outside prison. They assisted prisoners with tasks such as setting up bank accounts, obtaining birth certificates and creating a curriculum vitae. Careers advisers helped prisoners to access the digital education platform and supported them with job searches. Advisers also assisted prisoners in finding and applying for Open University courses.

Since the previous inspection, leaders had made progress in rectifying two of the three recommendations. Waiting lists for English and mathematics had been substantially reduced. Workshops that had previously been mundane were improved by introducing new activities, such as barbering and textiles. However, attendance at a few workshops remained poor.

Leaders had provided appropriate staff development opportunities for tutors and instructors. They set tutors' personal development targets derived from quality

assurance activities and shared best practice through a 'speed-dating' session. Instructors had received training on target-setting and on completing the in-work progress workbooks. Tutors and instructors had also attended wider prison enrichment activities, such as self-defence and neurodiversity training. However, a few tutors and many instructors had not received training to update their teaching practices, ensuring they consistently provided high-quality education for prisoners.

Leaders listened to staff's concerns and ensured that teams were regularly informed and updated. They were considerate of staff's workload. Staff had access to a prison-wide wellbeing programme offering relaxation therapies. Staff enjoyed their work and felt valued by leaders.

Recently appointed leaders had a realistic understanding of the quality of ESW within the prison. They had implemented and used appropriate quality assurance processes and had worked closely with other education managers, including the PES provider, to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Their quality improvement plan reflected the actions that leaders needed to take to improve the provision.

What does the prison need to do to improve?

Priority Concern

The curriculum was too narrow and did not provide education for prisoners for whom English was a second language.

In a few workshops, instructors had planned too little work, given insufficient priority to personal protective equipment and had not adequately considered prisoners' skills development or personal growth. Instructors did not hold relevant teaching qualifications or undertake training to improve the quality of the education they provided to prisoners.

Concern

Attendance at workshops was too low.

Prisoners who worked and learned in workshops were not prepared adequately for life in modern Britain.