

Ofsted report on education, skills and work activities

HMP Bure

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This part of the inspection was carried out by Ofsted inspectors using Ofsted's [Handbook for the inspection of education, skills and work activities in prisons and young offender institutions](#).

Ofsted inspects skills and work in custodial establishments as part of its further education and skills inspection activity. These inspections cover four areas: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management. The findings are presented in the order of the learner journey in the establishment. Together with the areas of concern, this is Ofsted's assessment of what the establishment does well and what it needs to do better.

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: Good

Personal development: Requires improvement

Leadership and management: Requires improvement

Leaders did not offer enough activity spaces for all of the working-age prison population. There was a lack of available space at the establishment. On a few vocational courses, such as multi-skills and practical cleaning, rooms were cramped when prisoners practised their skills. However, leaders had made improvements since the previous inspection. For example, they had knocked down walls to make classrooms larger to increase the opportunities for prisoners to study English and mathematics.

Leaders made sure prisoners were allocated to the spaces available. They offered part-time opportunities so prisoners could study alongside work. However, leaders had not embedded their plans well enough for prisoners to understand and follow clear pathways to progression. Too often, prisoners did not see the value in the activity they were taking part in, particularly if they had been removed from a work role to take part in education.

Leaders had designed a curriculum to build the employability skills of the population of prisoners convicted of sexual offences (PCOSO). Leaders recognised well the additional barriers to employment these prisoners face and focused on offering courses in construction and self-employment. However, leaders did not offer a broad or ambitious enough curriculum, particularly for prisoners who arrived with high levels of prior learning. There were too few qualifications available at higher levels other than Open University (OU) and Prison Education Trust (PET) courses. Leaders had sensible plans to offer higher level courses, but these had not been implemented at the time of inspection.

Leaders rightly prioritised English and mathematics, which aligned with their longer-term strategy to help prisoners progress to higher level study. However, they did not make sure prisoners were consistently placed on a course at the appropriate level. Many had learned useful new knowledge, for example to perform calculations with percentages in

mathematics, structure formal letters in English and how to use adjectives effectively in English for speakers of other languages.

Across education, skills and work, teaching staff and instructors were experts in their subjects and had suitable training to teach prisoners effectively. Staff taught prisoners useful new skills to prepare them for their job roles. For example, before working in the kitchens prisoners completed food safety, food allergens and health and safety training. This gave them a good working knowledge of safe working practices such as how to use Bratt pans to produce large volumes of food.

Leaders had designed clear progression pathways for prisoners working and studying in the welding production workshops. These prisoners read and interpreted job sheets, calculated tolerances for the products they were manufacturing and gradually took on more complex tasks.

In other areas of industries prisoners developed useful skills, but there were not enough opportunities for progression or for them to gain qualifications. In the kitchens, prisoners produced high-quality baked goods, but did not have the opportunity to work towards qualifications that may help them on release. In gardens, due to staff shortages too many prisoners did not complete qualifications in horticulture in a timely manner. Across different work roles prisoners studied manual handling and warehousing qualifications which helped them work safely in the library, waste management and gym.

In most work and industries areas, staff monitored the standard of prisoners' work appropriately. They ensured prisoners worked to industry standards and provided helpful feedback on how to improve. However, the quality of evidence captured in 'progress in work' workbooks was highly variable. In most areas such as waste management and welding, feedback and goals were too generic and did not explain sufficiently what the prisoner needed to do to further develop their skills or improve their practical work. There were inconsistencies in the way the quality of work produced by wing workers was monitored. Some had no way to capture and reflect on what they had learned and the transferrable skills they had gained.

During induction, staff explain adequately the offer of education and work available. Leaders ensured that from the start of their sentence, prisoners had realistic expectations about their career options due to the nature of their offences.

Leaders had made improvements to the allocations process, and available spaces were well-used. However prisoners were not consistently allocated to activities to help them to make progress within the prison or on release.

Careers information, advice and guidance was not effective enough. Prisoners did not consistently receive high quality information, advice and guidance to plan what activities they would take part in during their time in the prison. Staff did not update learning and work plans to reflect prisoners' progress or changing aspirations. As a result, too many prisoners did not have a suitable plan of education and work activities to help them make progress during their time in the prison and to prepare for release.

Leaders suitably incentivised prisoners to take part in education through the pay policy. However, prisoners working in welding production workshops were frustrated as they felt that their pay did not reward the complexity of their roles and work hours.

At the prison education service contractor, People Plus, the quality of teaching was not consistently high enough. Teaching staff structured the curriculums logically and considered the starting points of prisoners and built on their knowledge over time. Prisoners followed individually tailored programmes that improved their areas of weakness. They gained useful new knowledge and skills. For example, in information technology prisoners used lookup functions to analyse data in spreadsheets and in multi-skills prisoners fitted radial and ring circuits, simulating domestic wiring systems. Generally, tutors used assessment effectively to prepare prisoners for their examinations. On the construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) course and in English and mathematics prisoners completed mock tests and tutors revisited topics where they had knowledge gaps. However, the feedback tutors provided on prisoners' work was not consistently focused to help them know what they needed to do to improve. Prisoners achieved well in most education courses, except for in mathematics at levels 1 and 2.

The Virtual Campus was used appropriately to support prisoners studying distance learning through the OU and PET, and by tutors on a small number of courses such as employability skills. Prisoners studying OU courses benefitted from the use of laptops and effective support from education staff. Staff had only recently been able to use systems to support prisoners with suitable job searches.

Leaders and managers had implemented a range of useful strategies to help support prisoners to improve their reading skills and to read for pleasure. They had checked the reading levels of the population and commissioned the Shannon Trust to support prisoners who had low reading levels. Prisoners were offered support with reading to help prepare them to join English classes. Sessions were held in the library for them to have one-to-one support to learn phonics, and novice readers improved their confidence in reading through structured initiatives and competitions. There were libraries on each residential unit and prisoners were set reading goals. Time was allocated in workshops and lessons to read books and magazines. Prisoners were supported effectively to improve their reading skills and enjoyed discussing the work of their favourite authors.

Leaders and managers carefully identified prisoners with special educational needs and/or disabilities when they entered the prison. Staff put in place helpful strategies and support plans. They shared these with education and prison staff, so they knew how to support prisoners in classrooms and the wider prison environment effectively. However, in a few instances the support strategies used in education and across the prison did not fully align. Peer mentors provided effective support in lessons. Consequently, prisoners with barriers to learning made progress and achieved in line with their peers.

Attendance was consistently high across education, skills and work areas. Prisoners arrived on time and ready to take part in their activities. They worked professionally and, in many cases, autonomously. Prisoners worked productively in calm, orderly and respectful classrooms and workshops. In the welding production workshops they were proud of their skills development, working independently on machinery producing products such as hinge

brackets to a high standard. In the kitchen prisoners used their knowledge about nutrition to produce menus that aligned with the prison's focus on healthy eating.

Teachers deepened prisoners' understanding of fundamental British values. Prisoners in English debated changes in legislation and respected the differing views of others. In ESOL, teachers promoted team working and respect during activities in the class. Leaders and managers promoted equality and diversity well and ran specific sessions to raise prisoners' awareness of protected characteristics. Prisoners learned about different cultures and backgrounds and valued their new perspectives.

Leaders offered a range of enrichment activities, mainly run by peer mentors, such as art club, yoga, needlework, band practice, reading groups and games. Taking part in activities in the gym scheduled around education or work helped to support prisoners' mental and physical health.

Prisoners supported each other and contributed to the prison community, for example by becoming orderlies. Collaboration between the neurodiversity team, gardening team and the welding workshop team had resulted in a sensory garden project. Prisoners had designed and created a musical wind chime. This activity helped raise prisoners' awareness of inclusion.

Leaders and managers had worked very hard to engage employers, but had not built relationships to offer enough opportunities for prisoners on release. The prison employment lead worked well with prisoners to identify support needs to prepare them for the future, but despite several efforts to engage with employers to offer employment opportunities, too few prisoners had gained employment on release.

Leaders had worked hard to improve the quality of provision and had achieved 2 of the 3 recommendations from the previous inspection. They had an awareness of the need for reading support and encouraged reading across the prison. They had also renewed their training needs analysis and had oversight of the PES contract. However, the pathways they had developed were not being implemented effectively.

Priority concern

Leaders did not provide sufficient activity spaces for the population to take part in full-time education and/or work.

Priority concern

Leaders did not offer an ambitious enough curriculum, with a range of suitable training and qualifications at level 2 and above to improve progression opportunities for prisoners during their time in the prison and on release.

Priority concern

Leaders had not built effective enough links with employers to provide sufficient work opportunities for prisoners on release.