Dros ddysgwyr, dros Gymru
For learners, for Wales

Estyn's contribution to the HMIP Inspection of HMP Parc YOI

In March 2026, Steve Bell, Mamta Arnott, Baljit Gandhi, Mererid Wyn Williams and Rachel Hackling visited **HMP Parc YOI** to inspect the education, skills and work activities on behalf of HMI Prisons. This report contains the text and judgements about the education, skills and work provision.

Read the full HMIP report on their website.

This report is also available in Welsh

Inspection Area 1: Standards

In their lessons, many learners made sound progress and developed skills and subject knowledge well. Learners who were segregated because of vulnerabilities or other reasons overall received fewer education contact hours and made slower progress than their peers. Their attendance was lower and their degree of engagement less.

Across the provision, learners practised and developed their literacy appropriately. They spelled and hand wrote appropriately according to their ability and referred to tools such as dictionaries when needed.

In sessions focused on developing discussion, listening and reasoning skills, such as citizenship, learners engaged thoughtfully, they listened to others' viewpoints appropriately and expressed their own views well.

In the one vocationally focused programme currently available, the course in railway maintenance, the majority of learners engaged well with practical tasks, used tools and developed vocationally relevant skills and knowledge.

In most classrooms, reading books relevant to the subject, such as biographies of sports people, were present and a minority of learners took the opportunity to browse or borrow books to read during the lesson or in their own time.

Learners successfully completed their qualifications at rates comparable or slightly better than at other YOIs. Learners completed Essential Skills Wales qualifications at an appropriate level compared with their starting points. Learners from ethnic minority backgrounds succeeded in their qualifications at rates comparable to white British learners and learners with ALN succeeded at a higher rate than non-ALN learners.

Inspection Area 2: Well-being and attitudes to learning

Nearly all learners reported that they felt safe in education and knew who to talk to if they had concerns or worries. Overall, learners attended well and unauthorised absence levels were low.

In lessons, there were positive relationships between learners and staff. There was a close working relationship between operational staff and teachers, and combined they provided appropriate support for learners to regulate their emotions. This supported engagement in learning well.

In education sessions during this inspection, nearly all learners were respectful with their peers, staff and visitors. They engaged in conversation confidently and appropriately. Nearly all learners valued the new behaviour incentive approach and were clear in how it supported them.

Overall, learners behaved well during unstructured times such as break times. They enjoyed the opportunity to engage in social interactions with staff and their peers. In the sessions observed, most learners arrived promptly, indicating an eagerness to engage with learning.

Nearly all learners engaged well with the health and well-being programme and gained relevant qualifications that supported healthy choices and physical activity. Through citizenship and employability sessions, learners developed important skills and knowledge to support their future employability.

Many learners in lessons engaged well with subject content as teachers were successful in linking themes to their interests. In lessons, nearly all learners took pride in the presentation of their work and were keen to discuss it when prompted. Most learners were confident in working independently as well as in small groups and were able to produce thoughtful responses such as the skills required to survive on a desert island.

Inspection Area 3: Teaching and learning experiences

Nearly all teachers developed respectful, supportive and purposeful relationships with learners. This was a key element to generally good behaviour in class. Teachers set appropriate expectations for learners' achievement. They were good behaviour and language models for learners.

Most teachers planned their sessions well and included a diversity of tasks, resources and activities which helped keep learners engaged and motivated. Most took account of learners' preferences and behaviours. For example, in the health and well-being class, learners rotated between physical activity, completing assignment and written work, and

self-directed study, such as reading.

Most teachers provided useful feedback to learners which helped them understand what they need to do to improve. They questioned well, to determine knowledge, engage, motivate and differentiate. Nearly all teachers circulated well in classes and provided useful one-to-one support and feedback for learners. They used these opportunities to differentiate learning effectively.

Most teachers encouraged learners to read for pleasure and interest, with books available in classrooms, on residential wings and in the library.

In the very few cases where teaching was less effective, learners made slow progress. These lessons were not sufficiently challenging, did not give learners clear direction as to what they needed to do, or teachers lacked confidence in managing learners' behaviour and engagement.

The provision offered a useful range of subjects which helped improve learners' literacy and numeracy skills and developed their awareness of citizenship, music, art, business studies, health and well-being. Leaders had improved the vocational offer since the time of the last inspection, notably with the introduction of short-course vocational provision in areas such as railway engineering or roofing. These opportunities were valued by learners. Leaders had weekly provision planned to broaden vocational options to include barbering and catering programmes, although these were unstaffed at the time of the inspection. As a result, learners had access to limited vocational provision.

The timetable offered learners 25 hours of planned education time per week. The timetable was well structured and allowed for short breaks between sessions, where learners could socialise or relax, and this contributed to learners' generally good levels of concentration in class. Learners who were segregated received a reduced timetable, but still had valuable daily contact with teachers and access to in-cell learning materials.

There was worthwhile provision that allowed learners to use the Welsh language and learn more about the culture, history and heritage of Wales. This was notable, given the context of the provider, where the majority of learners were English, but were still accessing this provision. The prison's Welsh tutor delivered a half-day session every week which all learners attended on a monthly rota basis. A very few teachers embedded Welsh language and culture into their subject sessions very effectively. Learners practised basic Welsh phrases and Welsh speaking learners benefited by peer-teaching their fellow learners.

Inspection Area 4: Care, support and guidance

Staff developed highly effective and productive working relationships with learners, which

supported a positive learning environment. Staff had established an effective behaviour management system, which had led to improved positive behaviour and increased engagement in learning, particularly in reading for pleasure.

Education staff used information from the initial induction process well to identify, where possible, learners' additional learning needs and other relevant background information, such as their previous experiences of reading. They also carried out a comprehensive education induction, which included discussions about learners' aspirations and initial assessments of literacy and numeracy skills.

Individual learning and work plans supported learners' engagement and progress effectively. Staff reviewed these plans regularly to ensure that strategies remained relevant and maintained a clear focus on enabling learners to achieve qualifications within their sentence.

Leaders had developed systematic approaches to gathering and using information about learners, which supported those with additional learning needs effectively. Staff demonstrated a sound understanding of how to respond to learners' emotional and well-being needs, for example through the use of supportive resources such as fidget tools to aid engagement. However, staff's more in-depth understanding of how to adapt teaching approaches to meet specific learning needs was less well developed.

Targeted education interventions supported learners to make progress in key areas. Staff tracked learners' progress clearly through the learner progress tracker, which provided an overview of courses completed and those in progress, and highlighted learners' achievements effectively.

Learners received appropriate advice and guidance about their next steps on release. There were a few examples of positive outcomes linked to vocational provision, such as the roofing course, where learners had progressed to employment. There were also suitable arrangements in place to support children to transition into other secure settings, including adult men's prisons.

The use of release on temporary licence (ROTL) to support learners' progression and preparation for release was underdeveloped, with very few learners accessing this opportunity.

Inspection Area 5: Leadership and management

Leaders at Parc Young Offenders Institution had worked purposefully to strengthen the quality of provision and improve outcomes for learners since the last core inspection. They had made secure progress against the previous recommendations.

Collaboration between Novus Gower and G4S had improved, and relationships between education, operational and health care staff were more effective. These partnerships supported the day-to-day running of the provision well, for example through regular education partnership meetings where leaders monitored learner progress and addressed emerging challenges.

Leaders had strengthened their self-evaluation arrangements. They had introduced more robust processes, including cross-provider observations and the use of expertise from Gower College Swansea and Novus. As a result, the self-evaluation report was suitably self-critical and identified strengths and areas for improvement clearly.

The associated quality development plan was detailed and aligned well with identified priorities. Leaders also made better use of data, including improved analysis of the progress of different groups of learners, such as those with additional learning needs. However, difficulties in accessing information about learners' post-release destinations limited leaders' ability to evaluate the longer-term impact of the provision fully.

Leaders engaged meaningfully with learners and staff. They used learner feedback effectively to inform improvements, for example involving learners in the recruitment of new teaching staff.

Leaders had also invested in professional learning, including a beneficial induction programme for new staff, which drew effectively on expertise across partners. There was a range of professional learning to improve teaching and meet the individual needs of learners. These improvements, alongside stronger self-evaluation and planning processes, had contributed positively to the quality of teaching and learner outcomes. However, professional learning to develop pedagogy to meet the specific additional learning needs of learners was less well developed.

Staff generally felt well supported by leaders, and there were regular opportunities for communication, such as team meetings, ALN check-ins and staff voice sessions.

Leaders had established a clearer vision for the curriculum and overall provision, and in many cases, this was understood by staff. They used useful information, including learner feedback and labour market intelligence, to inform curriculum planning. However, the strategic direction was not consistently understood by all staff.

In addition, despite planned improvements and developments to the learning environment, the curriculum was not sufficiently focused on vocational pathways, partly due to staffing challenges and delays in vetting. Poor or unreliable ICT infrastructure limited teachers' opportunities to use electronic resources and some classrooms were either too hot or too cold, with teachers having limited opportunities to control the

environment.

Leaders showed appropriate flexibility in their arrangements for provision for the full range of learners' needs – for example, drawing on expertise and support from the adult men's prison to support learners working towards A levels or with English as an additional language.

Leaders had introduced initiatives to support learners' wider development, including a reading strategy. This was developed in collaboration with operational staff, the prison librarian and the reader in residence. This was beginning to improve engagement in reading.

The summative judgement that Estyn awards in relation to Estyn's inspection framework contribute to HMIP's judgements against the healthy prisons test for purposeful activity.

Judgement descriptors:

Outcomes for prisoners are good.
There is no evidence that outcomes for prisoners are being adversely affected in any significant areas.

Outcomes for prisoners are reasonably good.
There is evidence of adverse outcomes for prisoners in only a small number of areas. For the majority, there are no significant concerns. Procedures to safeguard outcomes are in place.

Outcomes for prisoners are not sufficiently good.
There is evidence that outcomes for prisoners are being adversely affected in many areas or particularly in those areas of greatest importance to the well-being of prisoners. Problems/concerns, if left unattended, are likely to become areas of serious concern.

Outcomes for prisoners are poor.
There is evidence that the outcomes for prisoners are seriously affected by current practice. There is a failure to ensure even adequate treatment of and/or conditions for prisoners. Immediate remedial action is required.

Overall judgement: the overall judgement for the inspection of HMP Parc YOI is that outcomes for prisoners are **good.**

What needs to improve:

Concern 1 The vocational offer within the curriculum was not sufficiently broad

Concern 2 Professional learning did not focus consistently on developing teachers' pedagogy for learners' specific learning needs

Estyn uses the following terms to describe quantities and proportions:

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. 'most learners…' or 'very few learners…'. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%