Case study: Delivering education at HMYOI Cookham Wood

CfBT works with young men at HMYOI Cookham Wood providing an education programme rated as ‘good’ by Ofsted.

Her Majesty’s Young Offender Institution (HMYOI) Cookham Wood is situated in Rochester, Kent, between the Medway Secure Training Centre and HMYOI Rochester. Currently, 143 young people can be accommodated within the prison; this number will increase to 180 young men with the expansion of the site, on which building work began in the autumn of 2012. CfBT works in collaboration with the prison and was graded ‘good’ at the last inspection by Ofsted in November 2011.

From bricklaying to business studies

CfBT provides all young people with access to a minimum of 15 hours education a week, including access to vocational workshops and outreach provision. CfBT delivers a curriculum which includes English and mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), employability, business studies, catering, computer graphics, computer game-making, project-based learning, painting and decorating, DIY and bricklaying.

All lessons are designed to be contributing towards achieving Qualifications and Credit Framework-recognised accreditation from entry level to level three. The young people at Cookham Wood have consistently excelled with regards to educational attainment and they have exceeded targets set within the OLASS 3 contracts and many national achievement rates.

All young people participate in a two-week education induction programme. In the first week, they have an interview with an IAG (information, advice and guidance) worker to ascertain their educational history, prior qualifications, work experience and any special...
educational needs (SEN). An individual learning plan (ILP) is created with the young people to set targets while at Cookham Wood and to record their achievements.

Initial assessment and diagnostics to ascertain the young people’s academic levels in mathematics and English are conducted during the induction period. These levels and the interviews ensure the young people are enrolled on to an appropriate course. During the second week, the young people also work towards achieving a health and safety qualification. Classes have up to eight young people and are always taught by an appropriately qualified teacher. The tracking and monitoring of the young people’s progress is captured in their ILP; these are shared with all agencies working with the young people.

Additional educational needs

CfBT strives to meet the needs of all our learners. Learning support staff provide the young people with additional assistance in the classroom and in one-to-one situations. The support staff play a key role in facilitating the young people in meeting their full potential and overcoming any special educational needs (SEN); a large proportion of young people in Cookham Wood have SEN.

The hidden disabilities questionnaire screening tool is used during the induction period to highlight individuals who, without some adaptations or additional help, may perform below their potential.

Young people requiring support with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are integrated into the mainstream provision with a qualified ESOL tutor available to support. Discrete ESOL sessions are also provided for young people wishing to further develop their skills.

Celebrating success

CfBT recognises and celebrates the achievements of the young people, by nominating them for a variety of awards each week. The winners receive a certificate and a ‘green card’, which forms part of the prison’s incentives and earned privileges scheme. There are also award ceremonies for the young people when their accreditation certificates arrive. These are in addition to prison-run award ceremonies to which CfBT’s education department also contributes and nominates young people. Guest speakers are encouraged to visit and recently Levi Roots attended the education department and met with catering and business studies students, discussing his journey to success.

Our courses devised around project-based learning were runners-up in the Literacy Action Net Award November 2011. CfBT have participated in a number of action research projects linked to prison education. We also have close working relationships with local schools in the community.

Cookham Wood has a student council made up of young people who have been recommended to become the students’ voice. The council meets on a monthly basis, with the deputy education manager in attendance. Actions and suggestions are discussed with the young people. The results and suggestions made in student perception of course surveys (SPOCs) are essential to the efficacy of the council.

Testimonial

‘... New courses had been introduced since the previous inspection. Good quality information, advice and guidance were provided. Learning support was generally good. Teaching and learning were good overall ... Levels of accreditation had increased...’

Ofsted, November 2011

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