

HMP Humber

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

The purpose of the visit is to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in rectifying the weaknesses identified at the most recent visit by Ofsted. This could be an inspection or a progress monitoring visit. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of the arrangements outlined in the 'Handbook for inspecting education, skills and work activities in prisons and young offender institutions' especially the section entitled 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of this visit is on the themes set out below. Ofsted undertook this monitoring visit in its own right, without accompanying Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP).

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made to reintroduce an appropriate education, skills and work (ESW) curriculum, including access to qualifications and formal recognition of the skills that prisoners develop?

Insufficient progress

The prison offers enough ESW places to occupy all prisoners in full-time or part-time roles. However, around a third of prisoners are not engaged in any activity. In a few instances, ESW places are not appropriate for the unallocated prisoners, and a significant proportion remain vacant.

Senior managers have recently concluded a curriculum review, and have modified the provision to reflect better the skills needs within release areas. For example, the tiling workshop has been replaced with a multi-skills construction course. Currently, only two accredited qualifications are offered in workshops and work areas, and take-up is low. Consequently, many prisoners do not receive credit for the skills and knowledge development that could support their successful job search following release.

Within workshops and work, managers have introduced processes to identify, promote and recognise the development of prisoners' employability skills. However, too often, staff fail to monitor progress towards achievement of targets effectively. In addition, Instructional Officers do not develop or recognise important competences, including those needed to operate specialist machinery and tools, and those needed for the role of quality controller. Leaders and managers rightly recognise the need to develop the curriculum further to support successful resettlement by, for example, introducing accredited waste management qualifications.

As senior managers recognise, the strategy to improve prisoners' English and mathematics skills is ineffective. The proportion of prisoners entering the prison with an identified need to improve their English and mathematics skills is high. The prison has little capacity to deal with this, and lengthy waiting lists exist for prisoners to attend the small number of available education sessions. In vocational training and work areas, prisoners do not have access to an appropriately structured curriculum to develop their English and mathematics skills. As a result, the need for a very large proportion of prisoners to improve their English and mathematics skills is unmet.

What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that prisoners' induction to ESW is effective, including the appropriate assessment of prisoners' learning needs and English and mathematics levels? Reasonable progress

The newly introduced induction process is suitably detailed and helpful in introducing prisoners to the options offered within the ESW curriculum. Prisoners receive an effective evaluation of their English language skills, their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and any learning difficulties and/or disabilities that they may have.

All prisoners attend helpful individual interviews to clarify their career plans and options. At these meetings, realistic targets are agreed and rigorously documented in prisoners' personal development plans. A high proportion of prisoners have these plans, which are routinely reviewed and shared with relevant staff. The personal learning plans contribute effectively to the achievement of prisoners' goals.

During induction, prisoners' English and mathematics skills are correctly identified and recorded. Assessment results are made available to other education and prison staff to facilitate planning designed to address individual prisoners' needs.

Prior to starting an education or vocational training programme, tutors ensure that prisoners undertake a more in-depth evaluation to identify their support needs and starting points. For example, prisoners complete diagnostic assessments to identify their English, mathematics and ICT support needs. Tutors skilfully use these evaluations to create activities that can assist prisoners in overcoming any barriers to their learning and to enable them to progress over time.

Prisoners in workshops and work usually receive a basic but adequate induction to their activity area. However, in a few instances, prison staff do not use the available information on prisoners' English and mathematics skills needs well enough to develop and adjust their support strategies. Managers' plans to ensure that staff responsible for workshops and work areas use the evaluations of prisoners' needs when planning learning have yet to be realised. In addition, prisoners in workshops and work do not receive specialist English and mathematics support or help in relation to any learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

What progress have leaders and managers made in introducing quality assurance actions that ensure prisoners engaged in ESW receive useful feedback which helps them to improve the standard of their work and to build on their skills and knowledge?

Insufficient progress

Senior managers rightly acknowledge that the overarching learning and skills quality assurance arrangements are ineffective. Managers do not have adequate oversight of the quality of the provision. They have an over-reliance on informal processes, rather than a systematic and planned evaluation of the full ESW curriculum.

The ESW quality action plan includes appropriately challenging targets and is subject to frequent reviews by managers. However, it does not include actions to address significant areas for improvement, such as the shortfalls in English and mathematics provision. The quality improvement group has been recently reinstated, but its meetings consider operational issues rather than quality and its improvement.

Following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, the education provider managers have rapidly reintroduced a wide range of quality assurance processes. These are leading to the identification of appropriate teaching improvement actions, such as ensuring that tutors set and monitor personal and social development targets alongside those linked to course completion.

The quality of feedback that prisoners receive about their work when pursuing education or vocational training is generally good. For example, tutors' feedback to prisoners includes the setting and review of targets to accelerate their progress. Prisoners know what and how to improve the standard of their work. They quickly progress and build on their technical skills and knowledge. However, the quality of feedback to prisoners in workshops and work is not consistently high. In particular, written feedback often fails to guide prisoners so they can improve their work and achieve their potential. Leaders' quality assurance processes are not effective in ensuring that staff provide good-quality feedback to prisoners to help them improve their work.

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